

The smart storage and management of your survival supplies

At this very moment, there's probably an area in your house hosting all sorts of oddly shaped boxes that most certainly contains one or more items you would need in a time of crisis. And, most probably, you won't have ten or more minutes to rummage through boxes and crates full of survival gear when the proverbial brown stuff hits the fan.

You've spent a lot of time and money amassing a great amount of gear and supplies, and yet, it won't do you any good when push comes to shove. You're wasting precious time trying to find batteries for your flashlight, ammo for your .22 LR rifle, or that extra gear you put together for the cold season.

Why is this happening?

Well, you, just like many others out there, spent too much time on accumulating stuff and not nearly enough time on the accumulated stuff. To keep a record of all your usable and reliable gear, you must organize your cache, store it accordingly, keep an updated inventory and rotate your supplies every so often.



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(That Most Of Us Have Forgotten)

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Storing your survival supplies

Before you go into the buying frenzy that takes hold of many preppers, you need to have a dedicated space to store the items you plan on purchasing. Most certainly, you will buy items you won't need to use every day, or even once a week for that matter. So, with that in mind, giving those items shelf space in the pantry or in the closet may not be the best course of action. That space should be assigned to items that have day-to-day use.

Finding a corner in your garage or building a series of shelves in your basement for the specific purpose of storing your gear and supplies is the right way to go. Your supplies will not be in the way, and they will be easily accessible when you need them. You won't have to move things around just to reach them as you would do in case you mix them with other stuff in your pantry.

"But I don't have room for all of them..."

If that's the case, you can break your supplies into smaller groups and store them in various places within your house. For example, you can store emergency lighting items (flashlights, headlamps, etc.) and batteries on the top shelf of your closet. Another example would be the canned goods that would make it on a bug-out trip which can occupy the space above your refrigerator.

Breaking your gear into smaller groups also helps with security, and if someone attempts to steal your stuff, they won't get everything in one sweep since all of it is stored in different parts of the house. The same goes in case your home is affected by a natural disaster, and if parts of it get destroyed, you won't lose the entire stockpile.

As far as storage options go, people have various preferences when it comes to storage containers, but in my opinion,

nothing beats hard plastic, transparent boxes.

You can store anything you can possibly imagine in such boxes, and your items will be protected against elements and pests. Most of these boxes are stackable, and you can also label them to keep a better inventory.

The size you go with is entirely up to you, but you must consider how big your stash is or how much you plan on growing it. When planning the storage space for your boxes, make sure you include some space for boxes that would remain empty for a while. By doing so, you will be able to expand your inventory without having to worry about where you would store your newly purchased gear.

Supplies organization

You went to the store, and you bought a new hatchet that seems perfect for the day when your area will be flooded, and you need to hack through the roof to escape the rising waters to reach safety. You place it on a shelf of your choosing, and you await the day when that flash flood warning is issued.

However, that day never comes, and in the meantime, you've added other gear on that shelf. Burying the hatchet underneath it. And when that day finally comes, you probably won't know where your hatchet is, and you will have to figure out how to break that roof with the items you did manage to find in the pile of survival items.

Start anew

Take everything you have off the shelves and start organizing them. Sort your stuff into categories and decide which should remain in your survival supply and which needs to go. Knives and other edged items will go here, medical supplies there, camping and sleeping gear over there, and so on.

When you start to pack the items, make sure you're packing similar items together. For example, if you need to get that hatchet we mentioned earlier, you will open the box that contains your knives and every other edged item you own.

Groups of similar items

You need to keep similar and corresponding items together since this will help you better retrieve the items if needed. For example, it makes no sense to keep flashlights in one box and the batteries needed for those flashlights in a different box. You've grouped all knives and edged items together, but don't forget to include blade sharpeners.

In case you have multiple items of similar nature, you can either store them together or put some of them in an extra box intended for trades or bartering. Every extra item you bought can be stored separately in case you want to sell them or find other uses for those items. For example, I have a box full of Lifestraw water filters that I keep for bartering purposes. In time, I took advantage of various sales and ended up with lots of these water filters.

Duplicate items

There are certain duplicate items we all have that serve different purposes. If you have some as well, you should create specialized gear groups and store them in vantage points inside your home. For example, you can use these items to make a survival kit for your office, or you can add them to your get-home bag.

Extra supplies could be placed in a box that you plan on taking with you when bugging out becomes mandatory. Place that box close to the front door, and you will be able to reach it easily on your way out. All the duplicate gear you own should provide peace of mind if you organize it properly since you

will have what you need, where you want it, and most importantly, when you need it.

Keeping records

As time goes by, you will add inventory to your storage area, and it becomes mandatory for all to be cataloged and recorded. It does you no good knowing you have sleeping bags that can be used during a winter blackout if you don't know how many you have, where they are, and what type they are.

When you are clearing the shelves and organizing everything using whatever method or organization system you feel comfortable with, take the time and inventory you already own. Even a simple list containing nothing more than the type of items and showing how much of everything you have can help.

Get into details

If you start keeping a record of everything you own, keep a practical and easy to understand list. For example, you can have something like:

Box #1 contains:

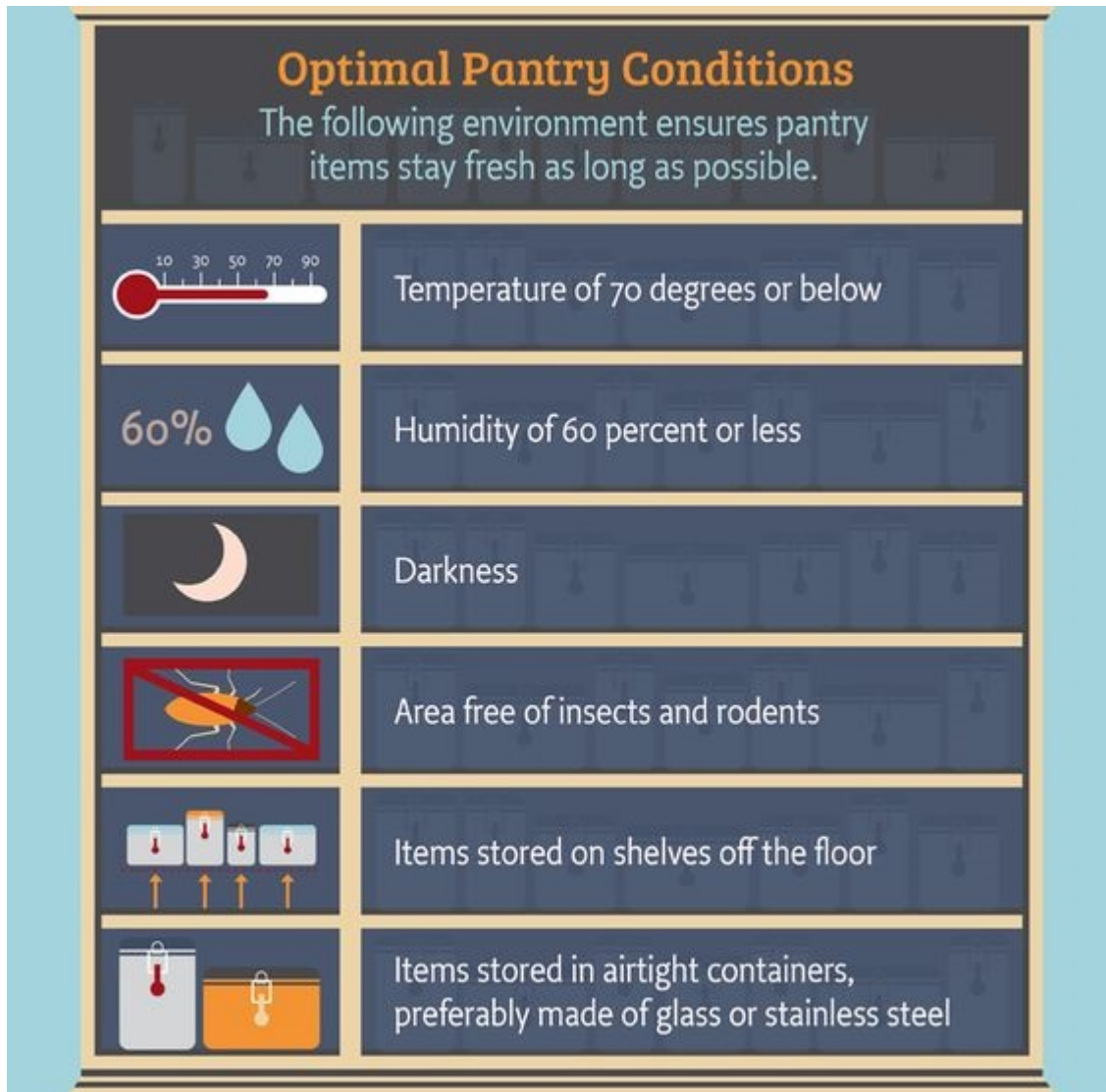
KA-BAR fixed blade knife (black), Gerber utility knife – 2, Gerber hatchet, sharpening stone -3, and any other bladed objects listed accordingly.

Box #2 contains:

AAA batteries – 24, 9-volt batteries – 6, hearing aid batteries for grandma – 2 packs of 12, etc.

Box #3 contains:

Protein bars – 10 packs of 12, MREs -12, ground coffee – 10 bags, hard candy – 3 bags, etc.



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Now, if you get into details, there's no need to specify anything other than the type and name of items and the quantity. There's no need to add the date of purchase for your knife and where you got it from since such information is of no use. For example. However, when it comes to perishable items such as food and medicine, you need to add the expiration dates since it will help you rotate your stock and replace the expired items.

Keep in mind your inventory and records should contain all the information you feel would be helpful when you refer to your supplies list in the future.

Keeping food records

The food and water you store plays an important role in your survival whether you decide to bug out or hunker down. It goes without saying that since most foods you store are highly perishable, you won't be able to keep them forever. This is the main reason why stock rotation needs to be done properly.

Every perishable item or foodstuff you store should have a record of when it expires, with the longest expiration date placed at the back of the shelf or at the bottom of the box. Write down when you bought the items and how long they will remain edible (even if, in certain cases, some foodstuff remain edible after their expiration date).

And just like you grouped together all your survival gear, the same thing should be done with the foodstuff you bought. For example, baking goods should go here, condiments there, alcohol and vice items way over there, and so on.

Keeping updated records will help you save money since you won't have to rebuy food that went bad just because you forgot to write down the expiration date or rotate it when you bought new stuff. It is recommended to check all your perishable items every three to six months to ensure your inventory is still accurate and up to date.

Rotating your survival supplies

Rotating your supplies becomes mandatory, and it's not something you have to do with just the foodstuff. For example, dead batteries or gasoline that are left sitting for a few months will do you no good when the SHTF and you need them.

Checking your inventory records becomes a constant need and rotating all your perishable items that are nearing their shelf life is required. To do so easily, start by buying and storing the foods you and your family eat. If everyone in your

family is accustomed to eating the foods you store, there will be no need for experimenting with new recipes, and you will be able to rotate your supplies into your meal-planning more easily.

By constantly rotating your perishable items, your stockpile can last indefinitely. Remember, out with the old, in with the new!

Figuring out what's missing

The great thing about organizing your survival supplies and keeping updated records of all the items you buy is that sooner or later, you will figure out what's missing from your stockpile. While you are inventorying your stuff, you will also be able to create a list of what's missing from your cache.

For example, you've inventoried your camping gear, and you have only two sleeping bags while there are three of you (since grandma is now living with you). In case you need to use your camping gear for other purposes (like surviving a blackout during a blizzard), how will you fit three persons inside a two-person tent? How about those sleeping bags? Aren't you one sleeping bag short?

After inventorying all your gear and supplies, you will end up with a "wish list" or, in certain cases, a "needs list" that can be fulfilled the next time you have the budget for it. You will be able to focus your attention on what's missing from your cache and allocate some resources for filling up those needs.

Concluding

The storage and management of your survival supplies are just as important as all your other combined efforts to obtain said supplies. You must figure out a way to keep track of

everything you bought, everything that needs to be rotated, but also how to make those resources readily available when you need them the most.

Keep everything organized and categorized if you don't want to get lost in a pile of your own hoard.



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