

# This Is How To Use Aluminum Cans For Survival

From hurricanes and flash floods to major disasters, chances are you will have at least a few tin or aluminum cans of food set aside for a time of need. Are you wondering if they can be put to good use?

Here are 10 ways that every prepper can use aluminum and tin cans for direct survival needs. From simple, “bare bones” essential vital devices to more decorative options, you can truly use aluminum cans in more ways than expected.

## Basic Tools

If you expect to use aluminum and tin cans to their fullest potential, you need a few [simple tools on-hand](#), and some of them are mandatory to get the job done. Without these tools and the skill to use them, you will either fail to finish your project, or you can get hurt if you don't know how to handle and dispose of sharp metal edges and can remains.

- Metal cutting scissors
- Hand drill and drill bits capable of cutting through metal.
- Sand paper, files, or sanding blocks suitable for metal working
- Heavy, fireproof gloves – no matter whether you cut into a large food can or a “thin” soda can, the edges of the metal are more than sharp enough to cut into your skin. Always wear heavy gloves when working with metal. No matter how hard you try to avoid all those sharp edges, it only takes one cut to create a wound that can take a long time to heal or become easily infected.
- Tarp or other coverings to cover the work surface and work area – working with metal cans is one of those

things that makes more little snips of stuff than you might expect. Unlike paper or fabric, these little bits of metal splinters can get embedded in your feet or hands and wreak havoc. Keeping the work area and floor covered makes it easier to simply pick up the whole mess and discard it.

- A magnet – if you are working with metals that are drawn to magnets, you can use the magnet to retrieve shavings or other sharp bits of metal that are hard to find.
- Goggles – when you are cutting metal, there is always a chance that pieces will snap off, fly into the air, and land right in your eyes. If you decide to use power tools for drilling holes, the risk of flying debris will be even higher. Even in the best of times, eye injuries are some of the most tedious and difficult to deal with.
- Permanent markers – for drawing out patterns and creating cutting guides
- Rulers, compasses, paper, and cardboard – there are few things sloppier and more wasteful than going into a building project without a solid plan and patterns for each part of the object being built. Always start your designs on paper using rulers, compasses, and protractors so that you get precise parts and sizing. You will also always be well served by building cardboard models so that you can recheck measurements and make sure that most, if not all the parts are accounted for.
- Vices and clamps – No matter whether you are using power tools or hand tools to cut or drill into metal, keeping the work piece stationary makes it much easier to make precise cuts and also reduces the risk of injury and damage to the item you are working on.
- Brazing torch – a torch that can fuse metals together is very important. Choose brazing equipment that runs on propane as opposed to one that runs on electricity. Try to get at least one pen sized torch and also a nozzle/valve system that will fit on a propane cylinder.

If you know that you are going to have to work with metal in the post crisis world, now is truly the best time to learn how to solder and braze. Even if you do not have access to a welder or do not know how to weld, brazing is still a valuable survival skill that you can use for your own needs or barter in exchange for other goods and services.

## **Skills to Master**

Along with the proper tools, you must also know how to use them. Here are [some things you should practice](#) so that you have a better chance of completing your tasks with minimal problems:

- how to cut metal accurately into straight lines and curves without warping the metal or creating sharp, rough points where each snip ends
- how to use files and sanding blocks to remove imperfections created while cutting and drilling
- how to use sand paper to build up sharp edges for blades and other needs
- how to bend metal for fan blades or other uses that require a bow shaped object.

## **DIY Projects to Recycle Your Aluminium Cans**

### Solar Heater

A solar can heater is the easiest and most inexpensive way to heat individual rooms now and in a crisis situation.

*Video first seen on [RICH ALLEN](#).*

The basic solar heater design will not heat up water, however you can amend it by simply running copper or other metal pipes through the core area for each can. Aside from giving you a medium that holds heat longer, it is much easier to pump water through radiators located in other rooms.

You will also find it more efficient to [pump water](#) in through a pipe than trying to vent hot air into a window.

*Video first seen on [Nik The Cat's Travels](#).*

For a final innovation, make your solar heater cells portable or build smaller units that take advantage of sunlight from different areas during the day.

*Video first seen on [tensleep](#).*

### Tin Can Rocket Stove

If you have two tin cans, you can make a stove that will burn paper, small bits of wood, and just about anything else. You can also modify the basic design to burn rubbing alcohol or other liquid flammable materials.

*Video first seen on [LDSPrepper](#).*

Before a crisis hits, you would be well served to make a few stoves of different sizes. Since the cans will fit easily enough into each other, you can carry four or even five stoves if you need to evacuate or bug out to another area. At the very least, you should have one rocket stove for wood and solid materials, and one for liquid flammables in your bug out bag at all times.

*Video first seen on [tetkoba's Alcohol Stove Addict](#).*

### Candle Holder

In a world without electricity, you can rest assured that candles will be primary source of light. Tin and aluminum soda cans can both be cut to size for most candles.

You can also get creative with these cans and make different slit designs for the light to go through, as well as bend the

metal to make legs, or for purely decorative purposes.

*Video first seen on [fixitsamo](#).*

## Metal Forge

When there are few sources of flat metal available, you will need a source of heat so that you can flatten available metals into blades and other important items. A tin can forge is easy to make and can be used to flatten out everything from iron to drill bits.

While you will still need some other tools to repurpose different metals into other shapes, having a metal forge is still an excellent start.

*Video first seen on [clkindred](#).*

## Lamps

As wonderful as light bulbs are, they still require a fire proof enclosure for safe operation. Tin and aluminum are perfect for creating lamp cases and light socket holders.

You can also make shields for the light bulb in case you are going to use the lamp as a utility light. For an added bit of innovation, bend some metal into a hook so that you can suspend the lamp from beams, nails, or anything else that suits your needs and safety concerns.

## Fan Blades

*Video first seen on [Indian LifeHacker : Science, Art & Magic](#).*

If you love camping, hiking, and hunting, you may be led to believe that there is very little use for fan blades in a pure survival scenario. On the other hand, if you need to generate power, dry off damp areas, cool down electrical equipment, or

even repair the fan blade attached to an automobile radiator, being able to make fan blades from tin cans is a very important skill.

Here's an example on how you can reuse aluminium cans and turn them into fan blades for a water pump:

*Video first seen on [Milan Vitéz](#).*

Even though you may be able to use lighter weight, plastic fan blades for some applications, remember that you will still need to use metal for high heat areas or others where a plastic blade simply isn't good enough.

### Bulletproofing

Even in these "relatively safe" times, there is increasing interest in figuring out how to survive a live shooting situation. This includes scenarios where bullets from a surrounding area may find their way into your home.

On the other side of the equation, the average citizen that truly needs bulletproofing is denied access to the best in terms of quality and efficiency. You can still make bullet proof armor from tin cans. The secret to your success will not be so much in the cans themselves, but what you put in the cans.

For example, if you want to bullet proof your home, six inches of sand will stop most bullets. If you cannot afford to build a fortification all at once, then just start with a few cans at a time. You can even choose to build eight inch fortification walls or more and enjoy the insulative properties of the fortified wall at the same time.

### Automobile Repairs

When the warranty runs out on your vehicle, most car dealers figure that you will buy a new car rather than try to deal

with all the expenses associated with repairing an older vehicle.

To add insult to injury, if you are a dedicated prepper, then you may already know that the older vehicles are sturdier, easier to fix, and better for survival situations because there is no way for computers to shut down your vehicle from a remote location.

But what happens when [a radiator blows or something else springs a leak](#)? If you have a few tin cans, you can cut the metal to cover the leaking area, and then braze the tin to cover the leak. Even though some parts may not hold up very long after being patched this way, others may remain in good working order for years on end.

*Video first seen on [Richard Lloyd](#).*

## Fire Starters

There are at least two ways to use tin and aluminum cans as fire starters:

- Take the shiniest portion of the can and use it to concentrate sunlight onto dry tinder. This process is helped immensely with tinder cloth as well as other materials that catch fire easily. If you do not have a shiny or smooth enough surface, you can also try fitting tin foil over the can to make it shinier.
- When combined with suitable tinder such as pine cones, dry grass, or tinder cloth, candles always make an excellent fuel. If you are out in the rain, or all the materials around you are very damp, you can use a tin can as the foundation for a fire starter. The can will build up heat faster and it will also give an easy way to hold tinder in place if the breezes are too strong.

*Video first seen on [ROBwithaB](#).*

## Planters

Container gardens are very nice and useful for prepping, however the cost of commercial planters can be prohibitive when you survive on a budget.

Also, most planters that you buy aren't suited for vertical gardening or other situations where space and water may both be at a premium. By contrast, metal cans can be used to grow plants on just about any surface. Just be sure to paint the cans on the outside to make sure they do not rust. When choosing the paint color, you can also make the planters more suitable for different temperatures:

- For hot weather and cooler weather loving plants, paint the planters white so that they reflect heat outward. This will keep the roots cooler and also help reduce moisture evaporation. If you are concerned about white being easy to see by other people, try using very pale greens, blues, or even tans. There are many pastel shades that can still mimic dried grass or other natural materials if you paint them as camouflage patterns.
- If you are planting in the fall or cooler weather, paint the cans black so that they absorb more heat from the sun. You may get several weeks of additional growing time for outdoor vertical gardens simply by changing the paint color and also covering the plants with plastic. Since can based vertical planters are much smaller than a whole garden, you can use anything from clear freezer bags to clear vinyl scraps to cover each planter.

Aside from acting as a valuable storage vessel for emergency and daily use foods, metal cans can also be used for many other things. If you are serious about being ready for as many disaster situation types as possible, master the use of tin cans and make sure that you can build and operate some basic equipment made from metal cans.



While some of these ideas may seem redundant to other equipment that you may have on-hand, remember that physical possessions can be lost, stolen, or ruined at any moment. When all you have is are a few tin cans and other used materials, knowing how to turn crap into something useful is one skill no one can ever take from you.



In a SHTF situation that's  
all you have.

**3 SECONDS**

Will you  
**SURVIVE?**

[TAKE TEST](#)

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