

Water Purification On The Go

When it comes to bugging out or mobile wilderness survival, clean water is an absolute necessity. Chances are that you won't be able to carry enough water to sustain yourself, or you'll run out after a few days; either way you'll need fresh, clean water to drink and cook with. Fresh, clean drinking water doesn't just bubble up from pristine springs anymore, though.

In an emergency situation, mobility is often a key component to surviving the initial disaster. Portable water filtration allows you much greater freedom to move around, as you will neither be tied to a certain water source nor will you be as heavily weighted down with the water you have to carry.

And at 8.3 pounds per gallon, don't underestimate how heavy water can get. The average adult needs 2 – 3 liters a day, minimum, so having a reliable, portable method of effective water filtration or purification really comes in handy.

So, starting with the worst filtration methods and working our way up, let's examine some of the common options for portable water filtration and purification.

If you have nothing else, a t-shirt or a bandana can be used as a makeshift [water filter](#). Simply secure your shirt or bandana over the container of your choice and pour the water you wish to filter through the material of the shirt / bandana. This is a very down and dirty method of water filtration, which does nothing for microbes, bacteria or fine sediment, but t-shirt / bandana filtering will get leaves, twigs, rocks and other large sediment out of the water.

{adinsertter usdeception}Once you've filtered your water through a shirt or bandana, if you have no other method of purifying your water at least boil it. Boiling your water will kill most pathogens and bacteria, although it won't help with

any heavy metals and other chemical contaminants. Remember when you're at higher altitudes that the boiling temperature of water drops, so you'll need to boil your water longer to achieve the sterilizing effects.

Activated charcoal filters are a slightly better form of water filtration than the shirt / bandana method, but they are far from perfect. Generally used in conjunct with another filtration method, activated charcoal filters are capable of cleaning the water of many impurities and absorbing heavy metals and other chemical pollutants in the water. One of the main uses of activated charcoal filters is in cleaning water of foul-tasting odors.

Another method of [water purification](#), rather than filtration, is the use of iodine droplets or tablets. [Iodine is often sold specifically as a survival tool](#) for the purpose of purifying water, but it can also be used topically as a disinfectant and taken internally to reduce the uptake of radioactive iodine by the thyroid in the case of a nuclear event.

Used with boiling of the water and/or basic filtration, iodine treatment can render your water much safer to drink due to its antibacterial, antifungal, antimicrobial and anti-pathogenic effects. The only real downside of iodine treatment is that your water might taste slightly odd.

Finally, there is my personal favorite: the Katadyn Microfilter. With a re-cleanable ceramic filter designed to filter out all particles and organisms down to 0.2 microns and rated with a filter life of 13,000 gallons of water, the pocket Microfilter is a veritable beast. Katadyn makes a number of portable water filters, but this is their premier portable unit, and with good reason.

Weighing in at 20 ounces, the Katadyn Microfilter has a 20 year warranty from the manufacturer and is only 10 inches tall by 2.4 inches wide. Indeed, this portable filter is so cool

that it comes with an outtake hose that will clip onto the rim of your water bottle or container and it has an internal gauge to indicate when you should replace the ceramic filtration element.

Output of the Microfilter is approximately 1 quart per minute, and the filter has a very convenient pump-action handle for ease of operation.

On the downside, the ceramic filter doesn't last forever. In some cases ceramic filters of a similar design have become breeding grounds for the very bacteria and fungus that they filter out of the water, as well, though this hasn't been known to be an issue with the Microfilter. Unfortunately, the Katadyn Microfilter comes with a rather steep price-tag, generally \$270 – \$300.

A final method, albeit not the most feasible of methods for most people, is the use of ultraviolet light (UV light) to purify water and kill microorganisms, pathogens and bacteria.

Regardless of which method of filtration or purification you use, always choose the best water you can to start with. Water from running streams and rivers is always preferable to water from still pools or ponds. If you have a tarp or bucket to collect it in, you can also collect rainwater for consumption; simply run it through your filter or purification system, boil it and use it. Beware of collecting water from rivers downstream of established cities, though, due to the frequency with which sewage overflows from the sewers and spills into the river.

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