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# THE PREPAREDNESS REVIEW

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Fall 2012

Inaugural Edition

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**From the Editor:** It is with great joy that I write this introduction to the Inaugural Edition of The Preparedness Review. TPR is filled with articles from well known authors in the preparedness community. Some of these articles have been published before, hidden from sight, buried somewhere on the blogosphere. Others have been written just for this edition. My hope is that you will find these articles worthy to be downloaded, read, printed, archived and emailed ([CLICK HERE](#)). You might find links within the articles that have been published here. Every link is clickable and adds more value to your preparedness. You will also find ads interspersed within TPR. Ads are also clickable. And although they don't cover the time and effort put into publishing this review, I appreciate everyone who has sponsored TPR. Please visit their online establishments.

This Inaugural Edition is heavy in preparedness planning. This is important because the first step in preparedness is having a plan. Without a plan, you might find yourself acquiring gear, food and guns without a real focus. Also, within this edition you will find articles on medical and financial preparedness, firearms, security and wild edibles.

I have tried to make this eReview optimal for printing; to save ink and to look appealing on the page. Pics that are included are the work of the author. I did not add any pics myself. Also, you will find text boxes that emphasis a sentence or thought within some articles. This was done when it didn't push the text of the page to another page.

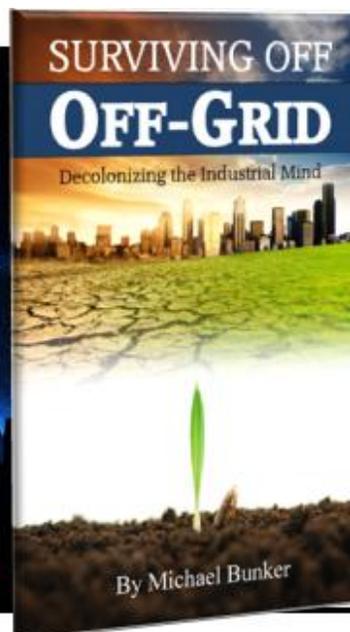
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Peace,  
Todd

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## The Rock and The Hard Place

By Joe Alton, M.D. aka Dr. Bones

It seems to me that, nowadays, the entire financial mindset in America is changing. In the good old days, everyone wanted to know how to get rich. Now everyone wants to know how to keep their heads above water and survive the zombie apocalypse and the economic collapse that is sure to follow. You can't turn your computer on without seeing this video or that regarding the coming hard times. Economic pessimism is everywhere and there are all sorts of surveys, by reputable folk, that indicate the American people are rapidly losing faith in the U.S. economy.

48 percent of Americans believe that will likely be another great Depression, and that it might begin soon. According to Gallup, the percentage of Americans that lack confidence in U.S. banks is now at an all-time high of 36%, compared to just 14% of Americans less than 5 years ago. The end result of this for most people outside of the preparedness community is fear. Preppers might comprise a small segment of the population, but that's changing. Even people who are paid to be cheerleaders for the American Dream are jumping on the bandwagon, like Tony Robbins, confidence guru, and Robert Kiyosaki, author of Rich Dad, Poor Dad. When these guys say to dump the stocks and buy food, guns and silver, you have to wonder just what's going on?

In order for society to function correctly, there has to be a measure of trust in the populace for the major institutions that hold society together. That trust, and the trust that people even have of each other, seems to be eroding more and more each year. More and more people around the world are suspicious of their own governments, and the ability of those governments to provide for the common good, whether they're capitalists or socialists.

Once confidence in our major institutions is gone, it's nearly impossible to get it back. The American people are becoming increasingly dissatisfied with an economic system where the vast majority of the rewards flow to large corporations and the ultra-rich. In 1975, the top 0.1% of the U.S. population accounted for 2.6% of the nation's earnings. 30 years later, they were taking home 10.4%. The Washington Post says that, after adjusting for inflation, the average income of the top 0.1% of all Americans jumped by 385 percent between 1970 and 2008 while the average income for the bottom 90 percent DROPPED by one percent. A widening gap between the poor and the wealthy is not a formula for national stability.

Meanwhile, the debt continues to skyrocket. Right now, U.S. government debt is expanding at a rate of \$40,000 per second. That's just plain scary, But if we stop this debt cold turkey, it would throw the U.S. economy into an economic crisis that might be worse than what we are experiencing right now. That's why politicians on either side of the aisle don't have the intestinal fortitude to do it, even if it is probably the only way we can get out of the hole we dug ourselves. The American population and those of many other countries are so used to relying on the government to make their lives comfortable, we can't be weaned off of it. Once the government gives us a service or benefit, it's almost impossible to remove. Why? Because the recipients of that benefit or service will campaign and vote aggressively for keeping it, even if it's ruinous for the rest of the country. We know we can't sustain ourselves financially as we are, but we're afraid of what austerity programs will take away from us. The recent protests in various European countries are just an example of what we could expect here.

When the government entitles us to a public service, it's kind of a juggling act. They balance the coverage you get, how much if anything it will cost you, and what choices you will have. If they give you more choices, it'll cost you more, or you'll get less coverage. If they increase your coverage, you'll have less choices. If they decrease costs, you'll probably get less choices and less coverage. If one of the three improves, the other two will usually get worse. This is what I call being between a rock and a hard place!

Take Great Britain, for example. The British government offers universal coverage but, to control costs, has to severely limit your choices of hospitals and doctors. The American health system is not universal, but you have MORE choices, but it costs you more to have that freedom. Once the costs get very high, we might begin to see the beginning of rationing. If something can't be eliminated completely, the government can control how it's dispensed. We saw a lot of this in the U.S. during WWII. Food, gas, medical care, pension benefits, even cash has been rationed in one country or another even today. Even more strategically important is the rationing of power and energy. When it comes to this, the government will decide who gets it: hospitals, factories, law enforcement will all get it before you do.

**DECADES OF  
PROSPERITY HAVE  
ACCUSTOMED US TO  
HAVING UNLIMITED  
CHOICES.**

Any of this happening would be a culture shock to the majority of people in this country. Decades of prosperity have accustomed us to having unlimited choices. There are 31 flavors at Baskin Robbins ice cream. Even when you go to a restaurant, if you don't see exactly what you want in the menu, you tell the waiter you'd like it cooked this way instead, or with this side dish instead of that. If you're used to this, you'll have a conniption if rationing ever comes to town.

Maybe most people will freak out, but we Preppers can see what's coming. If pep-talk gurus are starting to sock away food and medical supplies, you should too. Think about it: Even if prices go up, everything you need to succeed in times of trouble is still available for purchase. You can buy as much as you're willing to pay for. That might not be the case forever. And although prices are higher, all these things will never be cheaper than they are right now. Talk advantage of that fact, and you and your family will keep it together even if everything else falls apart.

*Joe Alton, M.D. and Amy Alton, A.R.N.P., are the authors of the "Doom and Bloom(tm) Survival Medicine Handbook", which has been ranked #1 on Amazon in the categories of Survival Skills and Safety/First Aid. They are also the owners of the highest ranked medical preparedness website on the Internet at <http://www.doomandbloom.net>, and design their own line of unique survival medical kits. You can contact them at [drbonespodcast \[at\] aol.com](mailto:drbonespodcast[at]aol.com).*

## **Jerusalem Artichoke: It's not from Jerusalem and it's not an Artichoke, but it should be in your Survival Garden.**

Creek Stewart

What if I told you there was a low maintenance, nutritious, hardy, prolific, delicious, and perennial (keeps coming back year after year) root vegetable. Would you be interested? Sure you would. You might suggest that something like this sounds too good to be true and only exists in the world of Willy Wonka, but I would reply back with:

“Welcome, my friend, to the wonderful world of Jerusalem Artichokes.”



Before I get ahead of myself, let's clear up where that crazy name came from. Well, this plant is not from Jerusalem nor is it an artichoke. The general consensus is that the name came from a series of mispronunciations and miscommunications of French and Italian words that described the plant. Sorry to leave you hanging, but the source of the crazy name is still unclear. However, the source of the plant itself is not. It's a native wild plant to the Eastern United States and was a staple food in the diet of many Native Americans. It grows from Canada to our Southern Coast and I have friends that grow them in California and Texas. It is a very hardy and adaptable plant.

## **The Tuber**

The tuber is the edible portion and looks strikingly similar to ginger root, but is prepared like a potato and tastes like one too – though with a unique flavor all it's own. I've seen the root for sale in high end organic food stores like Whole Foods under the name SUNCHOKE and SUNROOT. I guess Jerusalem Artichoke confuses some customers. I'll admit, the name is a little misleading.

It's a pretty gnarly looking root – covered in little bumps. The bumps and the peel are edible so preparation is very simple. The JA is a cultivated crop in many parts of the world but is surprisingly not very well known. I just found out about it a few years ago and then realized I had some growing wild in the field behind Willow Haven.



## **Identification**

The Jerusalem Artichoke (*Helianthus tuberosus*) is a member of the sunflower family and dons a small yellow sunflower-esque bloom in late summer/fall.



The stalk is quite thick and rigid and is covered in small bristly hairs. Similar looking plants with yellow blooms have smooth stalks, but not the bounty of edible tubers.

The leaves have toothed edges and are ovate shaped with a pointed tip.

As you can see by the photo they also grow very tall. I'm 5'10" and I've seen them grow even taller than this – some as tall as 10 feet.

## **Preparation**

Think of the Jerusalem Artichoke root like a potato and you can't go wrong. However, unlike a potato, JA roots are very tasty raw – sliced in salads. This is actually one of my favorite ways to eat them. These slices add a very refreshing crunchy element and nutty flavor to salad. I've also boiled them, fried them, mashed them and stewed them. They soften much quicker than potatoes so keep an eye out. And, they don't keep nearly as long. Once harvested, they get soft in just a couple days.



## **Harvest**

The Sunchoke Tubers are best harvested after the first couple of frosts between October and April. They will stay good all winter long when undisturbed in the ground and are best left in the ground until you are ready to eat them. Each plant produces a surprising number of tubers varying in size.



You plant them just like you would a potato – the eyes on the JA tuber will sprout when left in a cool dry area (like potatoes) so just plant them in the early spring. However, if you leave some tubers in the ground each fall, they will multiply like crazy into more plants the next year. I've seen some of my chokes sprout up as many as 40-60 new plants from one tuber set left in the fall. They are insanely aggressive. Consequently, they spread really fast and can overtake an area if you don't watch out.

I have mine contained in a raised bed but I also have some growing 'wild' along a field edge where they do incredibly well just left to themselves.



### ***TOP 10 REASONS to consider the Jerusalem Artichoke in your Survival Garden:***

1. **Perennial:** Unlike any other root vegetable I know, the Sunchoke comes back year after year with little to no maintenance.
2. **Hardy:** Because they were originally wild, this is a very hardy and versatile plant. It thrives in wasteland environments unlike many cultivated crops.
3. **Prolific:** Once you plant these guys you'll have no trouble keeping them 'in-stock'. They are incredibly prolific plants.
4. **Storage:** This crop doesn't require inside storage. The best place to store them is in the ground until you are ready to eat them.
5. **Winter:** This is an excellent cold weather food source, unlike many of the fresh greens and vegetables that are only ripe during spring and summer months
6. **Versatility:** The JA tubers can be prepared many different ways and complement a variety of other foods and meats.
7. **Discrete:** The JA looks like a weed you would see growing in a field or roadside. Small crops of these can be discretely planted and most (if not all) 'garden-raiders' in bad times wouldn't even look twice at them. This is one food source that will be safe from looters.
8. **Nutritious:** Once fall sets in and the nutrients flush back into the tubers and the sugars begin to break down, these roots are very nutritious.

9. Tasty: Sunchokes are delicious. They have a very sweet, smooth and nutty flavor. For a wild plant, they are among my favorites. NOTE: They are also notorious for flatulence (bad gas).
10. Deadline: You don't have to worry about a harvest deadline like many vegetables. Just leave these in the ground until you are ready to eat them. No time to harvest? No worries!

## CONCLUSION

I'll conclude with a few photos of dishes I've prepared using Jerusalem Artichokes. The simplest is a basic salad with raw Sunchokes sliced thin.

Like many root vegetables, Sunchokes make excellent additions to stews or roasts. I added several sliced Jerusalem Artichokes along with garlic, onions and mushrooms to this roasted chicken dish. It was delicious.

So if you weren't familiar with the Jerusalem Artichoke, hopefully this has been some good information to tuck away in your mental survival tool-chest. Don't forget, the JA is a wild plant. Even if you decide not to cultivate them in your garden, they may just be your best food source one day in an unexpected survival scenario.

Remember, it's not IF but WHEN,

Creek



**Creek Stewart** is the Owner and Lead Instructor at Willow Haven Outdoor - a leading Survival and Preparedness Training Facility located on 21-acres in Central Indiana. For more information on Survival Courses and Clinics offered at WHO, visit <http://www.willowhavenoutdoor.com>. Creek is also author of the new book [Build the Perfect Bug Out Bag: Your 72-Hour Disaster Survival Kit](#). You can contact Creek directly at [creek@willowhavenoutdoor.com](mailto:creek@willowhavenoutdoor.com).

# What is Money When the System Collapses?

Mac Slavo

## What is money?

Economist [Mike Shedlock defines money](#) through the eyes of Austrian economist Murray N. Rothbard as “a commodity used as a medium of exchange.”

*“Like all commodities, it has an existing stock, it faces demands by people to buy and hold it. Like all commodities, its price • in terms of other goods is determined by the interaction of its total supply, or stock, and the total demand by people to buy and hold it. People buy • money by selling their goods and services for it, just as they sell • money when they buy goods and services.”*

## What is money when the system collapses and the SHTF?

In disaster situations, the value of money as we know it now changes, especially if we are dealing with a [hyperinflationary collapse](#) of the system’s core currency. This article discusses money as a commodity in an event where the traditional currency (US Dollar) is no longer valuable.

In a collapse of the system, there will be multiple phases, with the first phase being the “crunch”, as discussed in [James Rawles’](#) book *Patriots*. The crunch is the period of time directly preceding a collapse and the collapse itself.

## Traditional Currency

Initially, the traditional currency system will maintain some value, though it may be rapidly depreciating in buying power. For those with physical, non-precious metal denominated currency on hand (paper dollars, non-silver coins), spending it as rapidly as possible is the best approach.

It is during the crunch that ATM machines around the country will run out of currency as people aware of the rapidly devaluing dollar will be attempting to withdraw as much money as possible. This immediate increase in money supply, coupled with the population’s general knowledge of the currency depreciation in progress, will lead to instant price increases for goods, especially essential goods.

If your physical cash has not been converted into tangible assets, this would be the time to do so. Acquiring as much food, fuel, clothing and toiletry items as possible would be the ideal way to spend remaining cash before it completely collapses to zero, as it did in the Weimar inflation in 1930’s Germany, or Zimbabwe’s hyperinflation in recent years.

## Precious Metals

During the initial phase of the ‘crunch’ precious metals will be a primary bartering tool, but this may not last long. The old survivalist adage “*you can’t eat your gold*” will become apparent very quickly. In a total breakdown of the system, food, water and fuel will be the most important tangible goods to acquire.

Consider someone who has a two week or one month supply of food on hand. Do you believe they would be willing to part with that food for some precious metals? The likely answer is *no*. There will be almost no bartering item that one would be willing to trade their food for once it is realized that food supply lines have been cut.

That being said, since most will not barter their food, not even for fuel, the next recognized medium of exchange by merchants, especially those selling fuel, will be precious metals. For the initial crunch, silver coins, especially

recognizable coins like 90% silver quarters, dimes and half dollars, along with one (1) ounce government mint issued silver coins like US Silver Eagles, will be accepted by some, probably most, merchants. For those trying to flee cities to bug-out locations, silver coins of the aforementioned denominations may be a life saver, as they can be used to acquire fuel. While we recommend having gold, as well, the issue with gold is that its value is so much higher than that of silver, that breaking a one ounce gold coin into 10 pieces just to buy a tank of gas will not be practical. It is for this reason that having silver on hand is highly recommended. Packing at least \$25 – \$50 of silver coins in each bug-out bag would be a prudent prepping idea.

In a total SHTF scenario, silver and gold may eventually break down as a bartering unit, as contact with the “outside” world breaks down. One reason for this, is that the fair value price of precious metals will be hard to determine, as it will be difficult to locate buyers for this commodity.

This, however, *does not* mean that you should spend all of your precious metals right at the onset of a collapse. Precious metals *will* have value after bartering and trade is reestablished once the system begins to stabilize. Once stabilization begins, the likely scenario is that precious metals will be one of the most valuable monetary units available, so having plenty may be quite a benefit. At this point, they could be used to purchase property, livestock, services and labor.

## Water

Water is often overlooked as a medium of exchange, though it is one of the most essential commodities for survival on the planet. Had individuals in New Orleans stockpiled some water supplies during Hurricane Katrina, much of the loss of life there could have been avoided.

For those bugging out of cities, it will be impractical to carry with them more than 5 – 10 gallons of water because of space limitations in their vehicles. Thus, having a method to procure water may not only save your life, but also provide you with additional goods for which you can barter.

An easy solution for providing yourself and others with clean water is to acquire a portable water filtration unit for your bug-out bag(s). While they are a bit costly, with a good unit such as the [Katadyn Combi](#) water filter running around \$150, the water produced will be worth its weight in gold, almost literally. This particular filter produces 13,000 gallons of clean water! A Must have for any survival kit.

Because we like reserves for our reserves, we’d also recommend acquiring water treatment tablets like the EPA approved [Katadyn Micropur](#) tabs. If your filter is lost or breaks for whatever reason, each tablet can purify 1 liter of water. In our opinion, the best chemical water treatment available.

**Clean water is money.** In a bartering environment, especially before individuals have had time to establish water sources, this will be an extremely valuable medium of exchange and will have more buying power than even silver or gold on the individual bartering level.

## Food

In a system collapse, food will be another of the core essential items that individuals will want to acquire. Survival Blog founder James Rawles suggests storing food for 1) personal use 2) charity 3) bartering.

Dry goods, canned goods, freeze dried foods can be used for bartering, but only if you have enough to feed yourself, family and friends. They should be bartered by expiration date, with those foods with the expiration dates farthest out being the last to be traded. You don’t know how long the crunch and recovery periods will last, so hold the foods with the longest expiration dates in your possession if you get to a point where you must trade.

Baby formula will also be a highly valued item in a SHTF scenario, so whether you have young children or not, it may not be a bad idea to stockpile a one or two week supply. (For parents of young children, this should be the absolute first thing you should be stockpiling!). In addition to water, baby formula may be one of the most precious of all monetary commodities.

Another tradeable food good would be seeds, but the need for these may not be apparent to most at the initial onset of a collapse, though having extra seeds in your bug-out location may come in handy later.

### **Fuel**

Fuel, including gas, diesel, propane and kerosene will all become barterable goods in a collapse, with gas being the primary of these energy monetary units during the crunch as individuals flee cities. For most, stockpiling large quantities will be impractical, so for those individuals who prepared, they may only have 20 – 50 gallons in their possession as they are leaving their homes. If you are near your final bug-out destination, and you must acquire food, water or firearms, fuel may be a good medium of exchange, especially for those that have extra food stuffs they are willing to trade.

Though we do not recommend expending your fuel, if you are left with no choice, then food, water and clothing may take precedence.

For those with the ability to do so, store fuel in underground tanks on your property for later use and trading.

### **Firearms and Ammunition**

Though firearms and ammunition may not be something you want to give up, those without them will be willing to trade some of their food, precious metals, fuel and water for personal security. If the system collapses, there will likely be pandemonium, and those without a way to protect themselves will be sitting ducks to thieves, predators and gangs.

Even in if you choose not to trade your firearms and ammo during the onset of a collapse, these items will be valuable later. As food supplies diminish, those without firearms will want to acquire them so they can hunt for food. Those with firearms may very well be running low on ammunition and will be willing to trade for any of the aforementioned items.

In James Rawles' *Patriots* and William Forstchen's *One Second After*, ammunition was the primary trading good during the recovery and stabilization periods, where it was traded for food, clothing, shoes, livestock, precious metals and fuel.

### **Clothing and Footwear**

We may take it for granted now because of the seemingly endless supply, but clothing and footwear items will be critical in both, the crunch and the phases after it. Having an extra pair of boots, a jacket, socks, underwear and sweaters can be an excellent way to acquire other essential items in a trade.

As children grow out of their clothes, rather than throwing them away, they will become barterable goods.

It is recommended that those with children stock up on essential clothing items like socks, underwear and winter-wear that is sized a year or two ahead of your child's age.

## Additional Monetary Commodities

The above monetary units are essential goods that will be helpful for bartering in the initial phases of a collapse in the system. As the crunch wanes and recovery and stabilization begin to take over, other commodities will become tradeable goods.

In [A Free Falling Economy Makes Bartering Go Boom](#), Tess Pennington provides some other examples of items that will be bartering goods during and after a crunch including, vitamins, tools, livestock, fishing supplies, coffee and medical supplies.

Another important monetary commodity after the crunch will be trade skills. If you know how to fish, machine tools, hunt, sew, fix and operate radios, fix cars, manufacture shoes, or grow food, you'll have some very important skills during the recovery period.

*This article has been contributed by Mac Slavo of [SHTFplan.com](http://SHTFplan.com)*



The advertisement is a vertical rectangular graphic with a yellow background. At the top left is the Mountain House logo, which features a stylized mountain peak and the text 'Mountain House'. To the right of the logo, the text 'Survival Supplies Including' is written in a bold, sans-serif font. Below this, 'Mountain House Food' is written in a larger, bold font, followed by 'From' in a smaller font. The central part of the ad features the words 'READY MADE RESOURCES' in very large, bold, blue capital letters. Below this, 'Solar Supplies & Water Filters' is written in a smaller, black font. The phone number '1800.627.3809' is displayed in large, bold, blue digits. At the bottom, the words 'ECONOMIC COLLAPSE' are written in large, bold, orange-to-yellow gradient capital letters.

## Biological Night Vision

### Joe Nobody

We humans are not natural night stalkers. Unlike many animals on the planet, our vision is severely limited in low light conditions. In a grid down situation, it's not unreasonable to assume we will be required to perform at some level in low light conditions. It doesn't take much to expand this scenario further and imagine a lifestyle where we have to do so without other people being aware of our activities.

These days, technology is often used to enhance our capabilities at night. As I have stated in numerous books and articles, I believe night vision devices (NVDs) are one of the best investments any prepper can make. They are, however, expensive and like any piece of equipment - they can fail. This article concentrates on our natural, issued-from-God night vision.

Does anyone remember the SCUD missile hunts on the First Gulf War? Saddam Hussein was launching SCUD missiles at Israel from mobile launchers. These semi-truck sized units were randomly moving around the vast deserts of western Iraq, and the allies had a heck of a time finding them.

Several Special Forces teams were sent in to hunt SCUDS. One of the most famous roles of the war was played by the British SAS (Special Air Squadron, similar to our Green Berets). Small teams of these elite warriors were inserted behind enemy lines where they hoped to go undetected by resembling the locals. The average Iraqi citizen didn't have night vision, so for that reason among others, they decided to leave their high-tech NVD behind. After several nights of hunting in the desert, they all reported that the lack of NVD equipment wasn't an issue, and many were amazed at how well they could see at night.

To begin with, it helps to have a basic understanding of how our eyes receive, react to and process light. As most 5<sup>th</sup> graders know, our eyes absorb light via the rods and cones that line the back of our eyeballs. These tissues transfer light energy to electrical impulses which are sent to our grey matter (brain). What most people don't know is how our eyes react to various levels of brightness. The cones, for the most part, handle bright light and can differentiate colors and provide depth perception. The rods handle black and whites. The following facts should be known by anyone wanting to maximize their natural ability to see in low light conditions:

1. Night vision, primarily through the rods, does not provide for color separation. What you see at night is mostly shades of gray.
2. The rods, at best, can provide 20/200 vision by themselves.
3. The rods are thickest along the edges of the eye, as opposed to directly behind the pupil. Cones are more prevalent directly behind the pupil where the lenses of our eyes focus the most light. This is why you are taught to avoid looking directly at oncoming car headlights at night. If you look slightly away, the light is striking the less sensitive rods.

The rods have a group of chemicals generally classified as photopigments. Bright light causes these chemicals to decompose - almost instantly. It takes the average person between 30-45 minutes of low light to replenish about 80% of the photopigments. It can take several hours to reach 100%. This is the reason why adapting to the darkness takes a while - your eyeballs are building up these chemicals used to process low light. The SAS soldiers mentioned above found that the longer they were operating in the desert at night, the better their vision became.

So what does all this mean to the typical prepper? The science of how our eyes work can help us function better in the darkness, which is about half of our life.

To begin with, there are several unscientific “tricks” to improve both the speed and level of photopigments, thus improving our capability to operate nocturnally:

- Soviet SPEZNAZ Special Forces (like our Green Berets) were reportedly trained to push the edges of their hands into their eye sockets and push gently until they begin to see white. After a few minutes, most of the black turns to white, and night vision should be somewhat restored. I have tried this method, and it actually works to some degree – at least for me. Others have claimed it has no effect on them. Give it a try; just don’t push to the point of pain.
- American Special Forces are taught to squint their eyes, as tightly as possible, for about 10 minutes. This technique is used to improve the speed of photopigment regeneration - no doubt similar to the SPEZNAZ method above. Again, I have found this suggestion works for me personally.
- We all know pirates wore eye patches, right? No doubt they suffered grievous injury during adventurous swashbuckling activities. Well, some historians believe the patch had nothing to do with battle wounds. Many now believe the patch was more likely used to preserve night vision when traveling from above to below decks, or from bright light to the dark innards of their vessels. The popular television show **Mythbusters** did an episode on this topic and proved that the eye patch did indeed help preserve night vision. Medical science concurs, given that the generation of photopigments is independent for each eye.
- When trying to see in the dark, look slightly away from the objective. To refine even further, focus a little left or right. This action causes your pupils to concentrate the available light into the area of your inner-eye where more rods are located and should improve the image.
- Red light does not cause the decomposition of photopigments. Air Force pilots, before proper cockpit lighting was installed in war planes, wore red filtered goggles so as to preserve their night vision. If you know you are going to be going from a light area to darkness, wearing red filtered lenses of some sort will accelerate the adjustment of your eyes.
- Speaking of red light, having a flashlight that is capable of illumination in a color other than white is a good tool for the average prepper. If you find yourself in the dark, but need to read a map or navigate a gully, using red light will not hurt your night vision. Blue and green light is almost as effective.
- A retired Secret Service agent once taught me a handy trick. To increase peripheral vision, tilt your head forward a few degrees. The geometry of most male eye sockets is such that a slight downward angle allows for a wider range of view. This also works at night. Let’s say you are trying to watch an area directly in front of you in very low light. Look right/left about 30 degrees and then tilt your head forward another 5-10 degrees. You should be able to discern a clearer image.
- I’ve spent my fair share of time in the woods at night. One of my least favorite experiences is to walk into a spider web. In some parts of the world, this can be downright dangerous. Some years ago, I took to walking with my rifle barrel held vertically in front of my face. Purely by accident, I found out that if I held the barrel about 10 inches directly in front of my nose, it improved my night vision. It seems as though my eyes having to “focus” around the barrel causes them to misalign just slightly, and that results in ambient light hitting more rods than cones. Give it a try.

- Vitamin A is known to help with night vision. Nicotine is known to degrade night vision.
- The U.S. Air Force recommends pilots who are going to be flying night missions wear sunglasses during the day as much as possible. There is some empirical evidence that photopigment levels and recovery are enhanced if not entirely depleted during daylight hours. I think I look pretty cool in shades anyway, so this was a no brainer for me.
- Some people believe that a sugar rush helps generate photopigments. I've never had good results with this, but if you want to shove a candy bar into your pie hole before heading out for nocturnal activities, give it a whirl.

## Night Moves

In addition to how our eyes process low light, there are other factors involved in night operations. One of the most obvious is to avoid bright light once you have adapted to the dark. If you spend any time at all in the field after dark, you will be surprised at what can mess with your night vision.

Most modern battle rifles have a device on the barrel called a flash hider (or suppressor). Almost everyone knows this is intended to subdue the bright cloud of expanding gas that exits the barrel when the weapon is discharged. This keeps the soldier from being silhouetted to the enemy while fighting at night. Most, but not all, flash hidings will help protect the shooter's supply of photopigments. You should test your weapon. This is all well and good for military grade weapons. What may be an unhealthy surprise is the resulting effect when discharging a pistol (no flash hider) or shotgun (rarely a flash hider). Most hunting rifles are not equipped with any sort of flash suppression either. Even if the action is to engage a burglar in your house at night, you are going to be blinded after the first shot. This is why I don't mind students closing one eye to aim a pistol, and another justification why my go to weapon is still a military grade carbine.

Butane lighters, lightening, a passing car, flood lights, explosions and even a campfire can ruin night vision. The one guy in your group who forgets to put a red filter on his super-duper-megawatt flashlight can render you practically blind for 30 minutes or more.

If you study the history of WWII, specifically the Pacific side of the war, you will find that the Japanese initially schooled our forces, on both land and sea, in night fighting. In reality, Nippon's military was one of the first to embrace night operations and had a long history of such tactics. They routed the Russian army several times during the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), in part by successful implementation of nighttime maneuvers and attacks. One of the first military manuals on the subject was written by a Japanese officer of that period, strongly advising to train as much as possible at night. I have found this to be sage advice especially for preppers. Get out at night and practice. If you wait until things fall apart, it might be too late to develop this skill.

*Joe Nobody is the author of numerous instructional books on the subject of preparations and self-reliance, including the fictional series Holding Their Own. You can read more about his work in helping others become prepared at [www.holdingyourground.com](http://www.holdingyourground.com).*

## The Survival Skill No One Talks About

Gaye Levy

I am absolutely thrilled to be asked to contribute to the new Preparedness Review. As the blogging diva at [Backdoor Survival](#), I have been sharing my knowledge, my experience and my quest for new information with the prepping world for just under two years. There is simply so much to learn and so much to do. Sometimes, even for me, it can be too much to cope with.

That brings me to the subject of this article, namely the survival skill that no one talks about. Let me explain.

The past four or five years have been difficult on many fronts. The lousy economy and the wonky weather patterns have put most people on edge. There is a justified distrust for our government leaders and many of the CEOs that steward the largest companies in the nation. These leaders and CEOs appear to abide by a set of elitist rules that compromise our freedoms and jeopardize our ability to maintain our positions as part of the middle class.

What this boils down to is that ordinary folks, myself included, are not just living on a temporary edge but an edge that seems to get steeper over time with no end in sight.

In this type of environment, it is easy to become stressed, frustrated and immune to taking steps to effect change. Instead, many go about their day, fearful of rocking the boat and too fearful to even think about the consequences of a major crisis or natural disaster. And even though they have stockpiled food and water and have learned survival skills such as fire building, sheltering and emergency medicine, when push comes to shove, there is still an underlying fear that things will be bad - so bad - that we will not make it through.

There is an idiom that is commonly used to describe one's ability to deal with difficult and stressful situations. It is called "Rolling with the Punches" and it means accepting whatever happens, dealing with it and moving on in a healthy and productive manner. It means having the skills to deal with difficult situations, no matter what.

Today I would like to propose that *Rolling with the Punches* is the secret survival skill that no one talks about. And like all skills, learning to roll with the punches is a survival skill that can be honed and polished, ready to serve you when faced with the distress of a tough life situation.

Today I would like to share 12 tips for helping you learn to roll with the punches - 12 tips for learning how to cope and how to endure when the SHTF and your world falls apart.



## Twelve Tips for Learning to Roll with the Punches

**1. Be Decisive.** Face it; most problems will not disappear by themselves so you might as well take action and get something done to solve the issue at hand. Make decisions and act. You may not always make the very best decision but you will be doing something and it is that something is what really matters.

**2. Establish good ties and social connections within your community.** Establish close ties with friends and family, stressing quality rather than quantity. Having these relationships you provide you with positive enforcement not only when times are good, but also when times are bad.

**3. Have goals.** Even in difficult times, goals are important. They don't have to be big goals and, as a matter of fact, smaller, more manageable goals are far more attainable. Say, for example, you want to begin a preparedness program. Identify small tasks and complete them one by one, month by month, task by task. (You might want to check out my series of articles on [12 Months of Prepping, One Month at a Time.](#))

**4. Turn difficult situations into avenues for personal growth.** Learn from each challenge. If you have a problem that seems difficult to solve, let your innate curiosity take over and educate yourself. Become stronger through education, secure in the knowledge that no matter what your age, you are still learning and growing.

**5. Trust your instincts and remember you are capable of doing great things.** Instincts are developed from a lifetime of experience. It does not matter if you are 20 or if you are 80. You still have life experiences upon which to draw some conclusions and to help you make the right decision. Trust yourself to make the very best decision you can and remember that you have the ability to prevail, no matter what.

**6. Maintain your optimism.** You can't change what has happened in the past, so accept the past and begin to look forward to the future. Anticipate what is coming with a sense of challenge even if the only challenge is to get through the day with food in your belly and love in your heart.

**7. Understand your strength and weaknesses.** Get out a pad of paper and make two columns; one for strengths and the other for weaknesses. You don't necessarily have to change you ways but from this list you can learn to understand and appreciate those circumstances where you will excel as well as those where you may fall short. Use this knowledge as a tool for building your confidence and your self-esteem.

**8. Don't forget that time will heal.** It is natural to feel overwhelmed and stressed during a crisis situation. But remember, time really does heal. Take baby steps toward overcoming the bad situation and congratulate yourself each time you meet with even the smallest modicum of success. Remind yourself that a month, a year, a decade from now, things will be different.

**9. Appreciate and accept change.** It is trite to say that change is good because sometimes it is not. But whether the change is good or not, it is a part of life and is often something that we cannot control. The best way to cope with unwanted change is to accept it and adjust your plans accordingly.



**10. Stay fit and healthy.** Take care of yourself. Eat a healthy diet, drink plenty of water and get some exercise each and every day. And most important, take some time for yourself so that you can enjoy simple pleasures such as a good book, some delightful music and the company of good friends.

**11. Be proactive.** Do something meaningful each and every day. By doing something worthwhile each and every day, you will have a sense of purpose. Just remember to make this an individual thing, Meaningful should be defined wholly in your own terms and not those of someone else.

**12. Ask yourself “what is the worst than can happen?”** Dale Carnegie said: “*First ask yourself: What is the worst that can happen? Then prepare to accept it. Then proceed to improve on the worst.*” To this day, that remains sound advice.

## **Moving on from a stressful situation**

Increasing your ability to quickly recover from a crisis or a disaster may mean the difference between getting through life’s challenges with gusto and gumption instead of simply muddling through the day with fear and distress. Just remember that success can come from the smallest of accomplishments. The baby steps that seem inconsequential while doing them have the ability to add up and become something much greater than the individual components.

I hope that you will take a good look at these twelve tips and practice at least two or three so that you can build up your resilience and ability cope no matter how tough the situation in your life and our world might get. For at the end of the day, it your ability to recover quickly that may hold the key to your long term survival in these uncertain times.

*Gaye Levy, the Survival Woman on Backdoor Survival*

*About Gaye: Gaye Levy, the [Survival Woman](#), grew up and attended school in the Greater Seattle area. After spending many years as an executive in the software industry, she started a specialized accounting practice offering contract CFO work to emerging high tech and service industries. She has now abandoned city life and moved to a serenely beautiful rural area on an island in NW Washington State. She lives and teaches the principles of a sustainable, self-reliant and stylish lifestyle through emergency preparation and disaster planning through her website at [BackdoorSurvival.com](#). The Survival Woman speaks her mind and delivers her message with optimism and grace, regardless of mayhem swirling around us.*

*You can also find Gaye on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/thesurvivalwoman> and on Twitter at [https://twitter.com/Survival\\_Woman](https://twitter.com/Survival_Woman).*

## 3 Ways To Naturally Make Yeast

Tess Pennington

Where would we be without the discovery of yeast? Fresh, puffy bread would be non-existent, and need I not mention the fact that beer, wine and alcohol products would cease to exist. Of course, all yeasts were not created equal. Some yeasts are made for making bread and baked goods, and some yeasts are made for distilling spirits.

Knowing ways of making this essential prep would be beneficial to anyone trying to live off of the food supply they have. Grains, vegetables and fruits are three of the easiest ways to find yeast. Some have even used herbs to get their yeast.

### How Does It Work?

Did you know that yeast is actually alive on plants? As long as it has warmth, moisture, and food to grow, it will stay alive. Fruits, vegetables, herbs, and all edible sources have yeast living on it's surface. As a result, using different produce will add to the flavor of the bread you make. Simply by soaking the produce in water, you can separate the yeast and use the water it is floating in. The water and yeast actually start the fermentation process that when mixed with flours creates that desirable baked good we love so much. This fermented concoction is also called a bread starter by some.

By using this method, however much water the recipe calls for is how much water to soak the fruit, vegetable, herb or grain in. Those that have used this method rave about raisins as being one of the best fruits to use for acquiring yeast.

### Grains

In the book, [The Little House Cookbook](#), Ma Ingalls explains how she ferments her bread dough using what she has on hand, "You start it by putting some flour and warm water in a jar and letting it stand till it sours..." Then you use it, always a little. And put in the scraps of biscuit dough...and add warm water, and cover it and just set it in a warm place."

Because yeast is already present on grains, when combined with water, the yeast will separate from the grain. As a result of the soaking process, the combination will begin to ferment.



To create this starter you will need:

1 1/4 unbleached all-purpose white flour

1 cup of warm water

Glass jar with lid or piece of cheesecloth

Mix flour and water in the jar and let stand until the batter bubbles and rises. This may take anywhere from overnight to a week!

[Source](#) (p.77-78)

**\*Bonus\*** [Here is another method you could use.](#)

## Potatoes

Wild yeast naturally lives on potatoes as well, making this a popular choice for making alcohols, such as vodka. According to the article, "[Home Made Yeast: Making and Using Yeast For Bread](#)," the author states that using potatoes to make yeast starters dates back to 4,000 B.C.!

### Yeast Starter 1

one medium potato (peeled)  
4 cups water  
1 tsp. salt  
1 tsp. sugar

Boil potato in the unsalted water until done. Drain, but save the water. Mash potato then add sugar and salt. Cool to lukewarm, add enough potato water to make one quart of mixture. Cover and set in a warm place and let ferment. If you like, you can add a package of store bought yeast to speed up the process, but it will be just as good if allowed to ferment without the yeast. This recipe is about right for a large family requiring more than one loaf at a baking.

### Yeast Starter 2

one potato (about the size of a large hen egg)  
3/4 cup potato water  
2 Tbsp. sugar  
flour

Boil potato, drain and save potato water (unsalted). Mash potato well, and then add potato water, sugar and enough flour to make a fairly stiff batter or soft dough. Keep in a warm place until well fermented. Then put in a wide mouth jar and cover loosely—never use a tight fitting lid. In about five or six days it should be ready. Old-fashioned Light Bread from Everlasting Yeast Starter. In order to make bread from the starter first set the sponge. To do this, use the following ingredients:

### Yeast Starter 3

1-1/2 cups potato water or sweet milk  
1 Tbsp. sugar  
flour

Get a large bowl and put the starter, potato water or sweet milk (heated to a little more than lukewarm), sugar and enough flour to make a stiff batter. Beat well, cover loosely and set over night in a warm place. The next morning the mixture should be nice and bubbly. If it isn't, no use going any further. You'll have a flop!

If the sponge is bubbly, take out of this mixture the starter you want to keep for the next time you make bread. Put it in a wide mouth jar and Put in refrigerator. You'll probably want a lid on it because the odor will transfer to other foods but don't put it on too tightly.

[Source](#)

**\*Bonus\*** [Here's a quick and easy way to make a potato starter](#)

## Fruit Yeasts

Many fruits can be used to make yeast for bread. Oranges, apples, grapefruits, grapes and even dried raisins all have traces of yeast on them. Using yeasts from fruits will create different flavors to the breads that you make. Skins of fruit can be used as well as cores of apples and even tomatoes. The only fruits that should be *avoided* are kiwi, pineapple and papaya. These fruits contain actinidin, an enzyme that breaks the dough down and it creates a sticky mess.

3-4 tbs. raisins (or any fresh or dried fruit), bottled water, clean jar

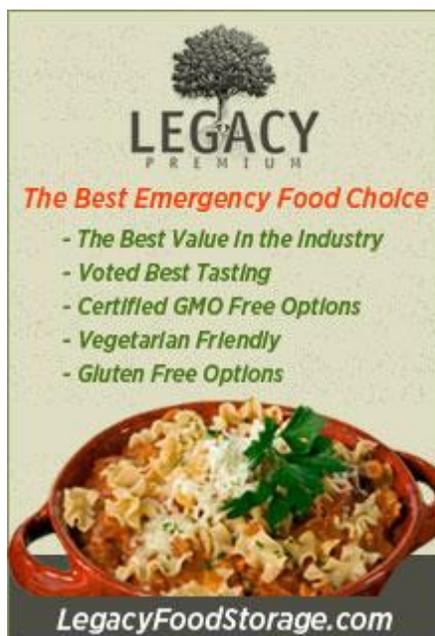
Place raisins in clean jar and pour bottled water into the jar until it is 80% full. Loosely cover the jar and leave at room temperature. This process should take a few days. You will notice small bubbles and “activity” occurring inside the jar. At this point, all the raisins should be floating at the top. The jar should smell like wine. Once it is done, store in the refrigerator.

Tip: Adding 1-2 tbs. of honey or sugar to your mixture speeds up the fermenting process and leads to a better result.

### Source

Without yeast, our lives would be void of many of our day-to-day products. Getting back to the basics and learning how to make yeast yourself will give you an invaluable skill to hold onto and share with others. Using different produce such as oranges, potatoes, herbs and grains is not only a great science experiment, but a way for you to play around with the flavors of your favorite bread recipes.

*Tess Pennington, a former Red Cross employee founded [www.ReadyNutrition.com](http://www.ReadyNutrition.com) in 2008 as a way to document her preparedness path and to help others create a preparedness foundation they can rely on. Her website introduces easy to understand concepts and strategies for dealing with man-made or natural disasters and emergencies. Tess is also the author of the successful online preparedness series: [52-Weeks to Preparedness](#) and the book, [The Prepper's Cookbook: 365 Recipes to Turn Your Emergency Food into Nutrition, Delicious Life-Saving Meals](#).*



## The Well-Prepared Kitchen

Amy Walker

For my family, prepping typically falls into one of three main categories: emergency preparedness, food storage, and sustainable living. Of the three, *the best solution is always a sustainable one* and therefore, my goal is to transform our homestead so that it's as enduring as humanly possible, rather than just stock piling food in a pantry that will all too quickly be consumed and gone (although we do have a reasonably well supplied larder).

Whether growing your own food or obtaining it from a local farmer, eating and caloric intake will always be necessary, even in a disaster situation. But will you be able to prepare meals? The twenty-first century kitchen is typically ill equipped for non-electric food preparation, particularly if faced with a long-term catastrophic event.

Sleek electronic, stainless steel "maidens", serving at our beck and call, are the envy of many a designer magazine while our dependency on pre-packaged foods requires little more than an electric can opener and a microwave! No longer are homes heated by a source that provides warmth for our bodies, while cooking food that nourishes us at the same time. Most modern kitchens contain no less than 4-5 major electric cooking appliances with an additional 5-6 smaller gadgets such as coffee pots, blenders, food processors, mixers, griddles, and other specialty devices.

If that isn't enough, more and more of our population is so removed from a healthy agricultural lifestyle, we've become obsessed with sterile environments, particularly in the kitchen where antibacterial cleaners abound. Yes, the contemporary kitchen is definitely a space best suited for consuming, not producing.

If an event happened today, could you open a can without electricity? How would you heat a meal, boil water, or bake bread? Do you have the resources to wash dishes properly and clean up after preparing food?

I know this sounds ultra simple, but try going 24 hours in your kitchen without using a single electric appliance or water on tap. Still think it's a piece of cake? This past summer, our refrigerator was out for more than four weeks. Talk about a reality check! On the other hand, I'd rather know our weakness now while I still have time to do something about it.

Events like the long term loss of an appliance can set one to thinking about what a well prepared kitchen should be equipped with, not just for a crisis, but for sustainability. Here's a list of things I recommend:

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STERILE ENVIRONMENTS,  
PARTICULARLY IN THE KITCHEN  
WHERE ANTIBACTERIAL  
CLEANERS ABOUND.**

• **Simple, Non-electric Tools.** Each time you purchase a gadget, ask yourself if you really need it and if there's a non-electric alternative. Typically, I find that the non-electric versions are not only less expensive initially, but long term, they provide more bang for the buck. Often they're *less difficult to clean and maintain*, don't break as easily, and take up less storage space. If it's something that's been around for decades (or even centuries), you can be sure there's an alternative that works *more efficiently* than the electric version. Personally, I find them more attractive as well. Here's a list of what I consider essential:

- coffee pot (Chemex, French press, or percolator)
- a tea kettle (for heating water)
- large thermos (for keeping liquids hot without using extra fuel)
- can openers (get the kind that leave a "safe edge" rather than a sharp one so you can recycle cans for other uses).
  - canning equipment (for when God blesses you with extra all at once)
  - non-electric dehydrator (for preserving foods – use two screens from a window or adapt your electric dehydrator trays to fit a hanging mesh bag)
  - manual hand mill (for grinding grains, corn, coffee beans, etc.)
  - manual food mill (for making sauces from tomatoes and apples, etc.)
  - mortar and pestle (for herbs and spices)
  - glass juicer or reamer
  - dish racks (for drying)

• **Water Filtration System.** Even if you should still have running water, lines might be compromised so be sure to filter all cooking and cleaning water. Every kitchen should have a gravity operated Berkey Water Filter or one like it (even if you have to drive across state lines to buy one – it's worth the gas money.) We use our Berkey on a daily basis and I consider it an essential kitchen item.

• **Food Cooling System.** Consider building a root cellar or find the coolest place in your home, such as a basement or crawl space, where you can store root crops and other canned goods long term. There are whole books devoted to this subject and I highly recommend you work toward a sustainable solution for keeping foods well below typical room temperature.

• **Good Knives.** Too often consumers want to purchase the cheapest knives on the market. But this would be a huge mistake. Knives are the workhorse of the kitchen. No respectable chef would be without a well constructed, sharp set and often they take them with them wherever they cook. Not because they're fussy, but because they can get twice the work done in half the time, safer and with less effort than if they tried to do the same task with a poor set. And let's be clear about another thing... if you have to hunt and fish for your food, you're going to have to process it, so be sure to have fillet knives and butcher knives, besides just the typical paring knife and such. A strong pair of kitchen shears is great for cutting through small bones as well (so get several pair!). Good knives are not optional.... invest wisely in a set that will last your lifetime, and don't forget a means to keep them sharp (non-electric of course!).

• **Glass & Stainless Steel Bowls.** Plastic is typically more porous and absorbs food particles and bacteria. If you're in a crisis situation, clean up needs to be easy, efficient, while using as little water as possible. Ditch the plastic for food prep.

- **Buckets, Washtubs & Large Pots.** You'll have your kitchen sink for washing, but instead of running the water to rinse, you'll need a bucket or washtub with clean water. Receptacles like this come in handy for all kinds of other uses, like storing produce, butchering, hauling, mixing, etc. so get more than you think you'll need. I get my buckets for free from a local bakery, but you'll probably need to purchase a couple of washtubs. And make sure you have more than one large pot so you can heat plenty of water.

- **Extra Rags & Towels.** Since the electric dishwasher probably won't be an option, stock up at white sales and thrift stores for extra wash rags and towels. Store them in containers for "someday" if you have to, but get plenty because if a crisis lasts more than a month (like the aftermath of a tsunami or earthquake!), you'll run out of paper goods before the stores re-open. Might be nice to have a clothesline or drying rack while you're at it.

- **Bulk Cleaning Ingredients.** Now is the time to start learning how to make your own cleaning supplies from just a few basic ingredients. While not indefinitely sustainable, you can store the bulk ingredients a lot more efficiently and make more products than if you tried to purchase a different cleaner for every job (which is how products are typically marketed to consumers). Start with...

- vinegars
- baking soda
- bars of soap
- bleach
- essential oils

- **Alternative Cooking Sources.** There is no way to address this topic thoroughly in the remaining space of this article. But that doesn't mean it's any less of a priority! Consider the food you're currently stocking, what's in your garden, and what you might hunt as well as how you can prepare it. Then plan accordingly. I highly recommend having more than one option! Some sources may be excellent for baking, but next to impossible for heating water for clean up.

Here's just a few:

- Camp stoves (stock fuel)
- Fire pits (stock wood)
- Wood stoves (stock wood)
- Fire place (stock wood)
- Smokers (stock wood/chips)
- BBQ pit (stock supplies)
- Solar ovens (pray for sun!)

- **Matches.** Often these will go on sale in late spring, so stock up. You'll need them for everything from lighting fires to candles.

- **Non-battery Operated Thermometers.** Unless you regularly cook on an alternative heat source, you'll need some way to know the temperature of foods. Pick up a few of these. (Can you tell I like multiples?)

- **Basic Small Tools.** Speaking of multiples, be sure you have a good supply of basics such as measuring spoons, measuring cups, and an assortment of spoons, spatulas, whisks, skewers for roasting over an open fire, a good BBQ spit, pans, etc.

- **Disposables.** The first three days of any catastrophic event is typically the most traumatic. Having a supply of disposable plates, utensils, and paper goods will buy your family a little time until you can adjust and organize. Don't forget things like wax paper, foil, baggies, trash bags, paper towels, etc.

So... how does your preparedness measure up? I suspect we all need a kitchen reformation to some degree. But the good news is all this can be used on a daily basis (and should be for practice!). It's not *just* for a crisis, it's a more sustainable way of life! And here's the best part... you really won't miss *most* of the electronic stuff. Sure, you can enjoy the more modern tools, but you'll be blessed by knowing you don't have to be depend on them for survival.

**Amy Walker** has been blogging for the past several years at *Homestead Revival* <http://homesteadrevival.blogspot.com> where she hopes to inspire others to live closer to the land and pass along skills to the next generation. She's passionate about building community among homesteaders, both locally and through the world wide web. Her monthly Preparedness Challenge was launched to motivate readers to develop a lifestyle of regular prepping.



# Firearms for WROL

Brandon

Rightly or wrongly, Without Rule of Law (WROL) has been on a lot of people's minds lately. Perhaps it's our country's ever worsening financial situation, the slew of prepping TV shows that have cropped up, or the ludicrous zombie craze, but whatever the cause, a lot of folks are at least embracing the *possibility* that we might face WROL at some point.

So how do you prepare from a security standpoint for WROL?

Preparing for WROL security, or Rule of Law (ROL) for that matter, is a lengthy and ongoing process that should include multiple layers of defense, and we can't cover it all here. What we can do is talk about *some* of the tools you should be acquiring now while times are good and ROL still exists in order to prepare for WROL.

## Tools

By tools, I mean weapons, and in this article we will focus on rifles, shotguns and handguns only. What firearms should you have? What calibers? What do you "need" and what's "good enough"?

The truth is, since no one can see into the future, no one truly knows what you will need in WROL. No one can with 100% certainty tell you what "good enough" is and what's going too far. What I can do, however, is give you my opinion on a good place to start depending on your budget. We won't have time to talk about specific manufacturers, models, calibers, etc, but rather get you thinking about what types of firearms you should have for WROL.

## Handgun, Shotgun, Rifle?

So what type of firearms should you have for WROL security?

The best firearm you can have for self-defense in WROL is by far a rifle, and specifically, a main battle rifle. I hesitate to use the "main battle rifle" terminology as I think it comes with a lot of negative connotations and baggage, but it's an accurate term for this discussion.

There are many definitions of a main battle rifle, but we will define it as a semi-automatic, shoulder fired, detachable magazine fed rifle chambered in a full or intermediate powered cartridge. Caliber examples would be 7.62 NATO and 5.56 NATO, respectively. Another important distinction of a main battle rifle is that it is effective both in close quarters and distances up to 500 yards or more depending on the cartridge, and of course, your training and ability.

The reason a main battle rifle is the best choice should be fairly self-evident. There's a reason why the militaries (and lately the police departments) of the world carry main battle rifles and not something else. They are tools built for a single purpose: to put down bad guys as quickly and effectively as possible.

My second choice for a self-defense weapon in WROL is a shotgun. Generally speaking, shotguns do not have the effective range that main battle rifles have, meaning that you cannot effectively engage targets beyond 1-200 yards. They also do not have the capacity of a main battle rifle, typically holding 6-8 rounds at most. Nevertheless, shotguns are incredibly effective when used in the right context, and can be fairly inexpensive relative to a main battle rifle.

My third and last resort choice for a self-defense weapon in WROL is a handgun. Handguns hold fewer rounds, fire low powered rounds, and have a limited effective range when compared to a main battle rifle or shotgun. The saying “people shot with a rifle die, people shot with a handgun run away” exists for a reason – it’s generally true. Handguns are nowhere near as effective as rifles and shotguns. Because they are small, concealable and lightweight, they are great for ROL, but not for WROL.

### **Self-Defense on a Budget**

If you are on a limited budget and either can’t afford a main battle rifle, then by far that best bang for the buck is a pump action 12 gauge shotgun. With a 12 gauge shotgun, you hunt just about anything from birds to bears, as well as provide a decent level of self-defense inside of 100 yards. If you don’t currently own a firearm, and don’t have a lot of money to prepare, then a pump action shotgun is the way to go. They can be found new for under \$200, and most of the time there’s absolutely nothing wrong with buying a used shotgun to save even more money. If you want to have a tool that will put food on the table and provide some degree of self-defense in ROL or WROL, the pump action shotgun is the hands down winner.

**WITH A 12 GAUGE  
SHOTGUN, YOU HUNT  
JUST ABOUT ANYTHING  
FROM BIRDS TO  
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PROVIDE A DECENT  
LEVEL OF SELF-  
DEFENSE INSIDE OF  
100 YARDS.**

### **Wrapping Up**

If you don’t have a main battle rifle, consider getting one while you still can. While I don’t think this is nearly as important as other preps like food and water, I do think security preparations should be close behind. All the preps in the world won’t matter if you can’t effectively defend them when you need them the most. What we did not cover in this article that is absolutely essential is training – training in safety, handling, marksmanship as well as medical training. Training is absolutely critical, and *should not be overlooked*.

I hope this helps. If you want to learn more about specific recommendations for rifles, shotguns handguns, gear, training and more, check us out on the web at [monderno.com](http://monderno.com), or [connect with us on Facebook](#).

*Brandon is the Editor-in-Chief of [Monderno.com](http://Monderno.com), a website dedicated to guns, gear, knives and survival. At Monderno, we showcase gear that works, as well as discuss a variety of topics including personal preparedness, concealed carry and personal security. You can connect with Monderno on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).*

# The Realistic Approach to Preparedness

Gary Griffin

We should all prepare for a future cataclysmic event, right? At least, this is the current trend in the entertainment industry, and what the big business profiteers would have you believe. Even, the current political cycle has most on the edge; we can't afford another four years of this guy or the other guy wants to go to war with Iran, and so forth and so on. If you take a step back, and look at preparedness as a whole, you would realize that your initial preparedness goals should not be tailored to current economic trends, election results, or even a doomsday scenario. Instead, preparedness is a lifestyle, one that is always changing, improves you as a person, and provides security for your family.

I consider a "doomsday" scenario to be an event, or closely linked series of events, that will potential destroy, or drastically restrict or alter, human civilization. Most cannot prepare for a doomsday event, and even if you could financially, what are the chances of it actually occurring in our lifetime? For the past several thousand years, or longer depending on what you believe, mankind has survived whatever has been thrown at them. The last "true" doomsday event killed the dinosaurs 65 million years ago, and if man were on the earth at this time, they would have likely met the same fate. My point here is we should closely identify what disasters are likely to impact us, and ones that we can somewhat control.

While the perfect storm sets the tone seamlessly during a movie, the reality is even a small storm or large scale natural disaster can wreak havoc, changing the way we live our daily lives. Recent history has proven time and time again, that we need to be prepared. The 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami crippled coastal communities killing over 220,000. In 2005, Hurricane Katrina destroyed communities along the Gulf Coast, killing over 1,800 and causing at least \$81 billion in damage. In 2010, the Haiti earthquake killed over 300,000, and made another 1 million Haitians homeless. And, in 2011, the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami killed over 15,000, and identified several issues that need to be address with our nuclear power plant infrastructure. Even as horrific as these natural disasters were, mankind still survived.

Pending nuclear holocaust, civil war, localized conflict, or a meteor, most of the scenarios that may impact us, can be moderated and even survived. While I would never rule out an extreme scenario, the most common events are what we should first prepare for, and then once achieved plan for your doomsday scenario. When preparing, first think of it as days, then weeks, then months, then years. The basics should be covered before anything else. If you are lucky enough to have an underground bunker, but do not have water and food stored, then your bunker becomes an extension of an above ground structure, leaving you no better off.

If you think of Preparedness as a hierarchy of tasks and responsibilities, that hierarchy can be applied to many different survival scenarios. Since survival basically requires water, food, and a way to regulate your body temperature, these foundations do not change for a given scenario.

When thinking in terms of days and weeks, think of a storm that cripples our electrical infrastructure or make roads impassable. The one thing that you do not want to do is to wait for a handout; we all watched as FEMA took five days to get water to the Superdome. Additionally, most third world countries rely heavily on foreign aid for disaster assistance and recovery. My intent is not to mock FEMA or foreign aid, because we all learn after the fact, and poorer areas will need assistance. Instead, we [Preppers] need to become more self-reliant, which is the foundation for Preparedness. There may come a point where local, state, and federal government may not be in the position to help us out.

If you were to conduct a poll asking Preppers what they are getting ready, you will get various answers. Personally, I prepare for about 16 trillion reasons (and it increased another million in just a few minutes while drafting this paragraph). With this many reasons, it does not matter who is in office if they are unwilling to tackle hard budget issues, how much I have saved in my 401K, or how many stocks or bonds I own. If it is not physical, meaning I can touch or use it, then I do not count it. Sure, these things are nice as long as the status quo continues. But, eventually our debt will catch up with us, as it has recently in other countries. Look to what is happening in Greece as a roadmap. This is what I see as the biggest issue to impact my family; decide what drives your “Prepper Purpose” on your own.

Whether you are new to Preparedness, or a veteran, it never hurts to evaluate your approach. We have all read books, forums, and blogs offering several different checklists, guides, and must know information. This information, if accurate, can be a great resource. But, before you get bogged down with all of these documents, you should first identify your approach to Preparedness.

### **Step 1: Individual and Family Responsibilities**

Whether you are single, a family of four, or a grandparent, you have to determine how many people you are preparing for. This single factor will drive the other major decisions you will face. It will control if your initial plans are to Bug In or Bug Out, and what types and quantities of supplies you will need to store. Things change drastically if you have young children, caring for the elderly, or have physical limitations. During a disaster or collapse, each person in your family becomes another mouth to feed, clothe, and to ensure basic sanitation needs are met. Keep this in mind when purchasing prepping related items.

A good example of the family predicament is when new “Preppers” rush out to purchase firearms. I do not know why, but firearms are usually the first on the list. I guess it is because firearms are masculine or sexy, and give a false sense of security. Instead, look at the total number of people you are responsible for, and start investing in food, water filtration/treatment, and medical supplies. How ironic would it be to die from dysentery, when you are surrounded by a dozen firearms, and thousands of rounds of ammunition. Store up on the basics, before worrying about guns.

### **Step 2: Determine Your Mindset**

Next, you should identify your Prepper Mindset. While your mindset will evolve over time, you still need a starting point. This becomes imperative when determining if you will be a lone wolf or part of a group, how large of a group you decide to be associated with and the group's foundation, and how you will deal with confrontation. Your post disaster plan will also evolve over time, which will impact your family members and others you decide to associate with. Please read more about the [Prepping Mindset](#), and take our survey.

### **Step 3: Set a Budget**

For most, setting a budget is one of the most challenging obstacles you will have to do. With the economic downturn, times have been tough and will likely continue for the foreseeable future. Becoming debt free should be a goal, but depending on your situation this may not be an option for the short-term. Personally, I believe having supplies and a way to defend yourself is just as important as becoming debt free. I say this because you never know when that series of events may happen, and waiting to acquire much needed supplies after you are debt free, may cause you to become vulnerable. Closely analyze your financial situation, and decide how you can free a few dollars each month to invest in Preparedness. A small amount can add up over time. Additionally, by making the right purchases the first time, you can extend your buy power.

After you have set a budget, put a plan into action. There are several ways to acquire items, conduct research to determine what best suits your needs. One area that you should pay close attention to is acquiring food. Please read our [Food Storage](#) article. Next, I would focus on Medical items; please see our [Medical Kits Guide](#).

#### **Step 4: Train**

While you are acquiring goods, start looking for areas that you need to expand your knowledge. One downside of the modern world is we have lost our connection to self-sufficiency. Expanding your knowledge base is key to survival. If we reverted back to the 1800s, most individuals would not understand the basic tasks for daily living and sustenance. How many of us has grown a garden, raised or butchered livestock, or had to repair a garment? These trades are still conducted today, but if you work in a high-rise, well you probably do not have a clue. Great skills to have during a post-disaster world include: Gardening, food storage and preservation, candle making, soap making, first-aid, hunting/fishing, animal husbandry, mechanics, sewing, and basic construction.

#### **Step 5: Network**

If a collapse were to occur, it would take a group of people to ensure survival. Some believe that their small family will be able to defend their home, or survive by eating berries in a National Park. What history has taught us is that it takes a group of people to survive, especially if your family consists of small children. In a collapse situation, defense is only one piece of the puzzle. Acquiring resources, water, food, and gardening are also daily tasks that will require significant effort. To spread this burden, you must have a group of 10-20 individuals, or more.

Networking with other people is the best way to build a support structure. First, start with immediate family members, and then move to extended family, close friends, and strangers that are also interested in preparing. The key is to find individuals truly interested in Preparedness and ones that you are compatible with. This may seem impossible because everywhere you turn you are faced with differing viewpoints, and the claims you are crazy. No worries, networking with like-minded people is the main reason why we created [Prepper Link](#).

#### **Conclusion**

I would like to thank Prepper Website for offering us a chance to contribute to the Preparedness Review. It is because of sites, such as Prepper Website, that Prepper's remain informed and our knowledge base continues to grow. Feel free to stop by Prepper Link to take advantage of our free Peer-to-Peer networking tool, browse our forums, and learn from other members. **Be Prepared. Get Connected.**



## Fan of the Ammo Can – Top 10 Uses

Andrew Jackson

Even as a child I was a big fan of the ammo can. The military issue ammo cans are sturdy metal boxes with latched lids that can be used for a number purposes besides their original. They come in a variety of sizes and shapes but all are designed to be air and water tight thanks to the a rubber gasket and latched lid with friction lock. Additionally, these boxes each have one or more handles so that they are easy to carry. I've been thinking a lot about the various uses of these boxes since a buddy and I recently got a steal of a deal on two pallets full through [Government Liquidation](#). Here are the Top 10 uses for your ammo can:

1. **First Aid Kit for a Rafting Expedition:** It's perfect because it's watertight and floats...just don't forget to paint it a bright color so it's easy to spot along the shore after you flip your raft.
2. **Tackle Box:** One of the most common uses besides that originally intended. Again, it's perfect because it's watertight and floats...but also because it will tend to hold in the stench if you're using stink bait to catch those catfish.
3. **Letterboxing:** Letterboxing is a hobby that uses GPS or maps to 'treasure hunt' with the treasure being a rubber stamp that you use to mark a small book you carry for that purpose. There are many variations and it's a great 'game' to get children and teens outside and teach them how to use GPS and maps. Letterbox Caches are usually stored in a weatherproof box and an ammo can is a perfect choice. Discover more about letterboxing [here](#) or [here](#).
4. **Cache:** Need to store something outside and keep it safe and dry...consider an ammo can. Don't forget to drop in a desiccant package in case of 'sweating.' Wrap the ammunition can in a couple of plastic bags to help protect it from the water...rust is the ammo can's only real enemy.
5. **Storing Nickels:** James Rawles over at [Survivalblog](#) has featured a number of articles about storing nickels in ammo cans. If you're wondering why you might want to store nickels read his article [here](#).
6. **Shelf Brackets:** Suitable only to a bachelor pad or man cave unfortunately. You build the shelves by placing an ammunition box at each end, add your shelf, add two more ammo cans, add shelf, etc. Your shelves will be more stable if you add a spacer to the top of each ammo can so that the shelf rests on the spacer, not on the carrying handle (which is relatively narrow and wobbles a little). Ammo cans are a highly underrated as home decor...live in an apartment with limited storage...use the ammo cans you make your shelves and perhaps store your nickels, ammo or other valuables you don't need quick access to in them...a thief is unlikely to tear apart your bookshelves to look for the goodies.
7. **Tool Box:** Durable storage and has it's own handle. You could use several ammo cans for different categories of tools which could be easily stacked under a workbench.
8. **Strong Box** (with the addition of a padlock capable bracket or gadget): I've seen these used for drug storage in institutional settings (probably against some regulation these days though) as well as for cash boxes or pistol storage. I even had a large (20mm) ammo box welded to a kayak trailer I had built. By welding it to the trailer frame and adding a padlock there was secure storage for life jackets and boat gear. Locking mechanisms can be purchased or [do it yourself](#) but be careful as some options will make your contents vulnerable to water and air.



.30 Cal Ammo Can

9. **Faraday Cage** to protect from electronic equipment from electro magnetic pulse (EMP): See this video I found showing an ammo can Faraday cage.
10. **Storing Ammunition:** There's no better way to store ammunition for the long term...ammo cans were made for this purpose after all. Military surplus ammo stored properly in ammo cans in the 1950's (or earlier) is still available and is almost always still as good as the day it was packaged.
11. **Bonus use...Sand Table Kit:** Military units often represent terrain and military forces (friendly and enemy) through the use of a 'sand table' which is usually just a spot cleared off in the dirt. Some Sand Table Kits get fancy with yarn to represent rivers, streams or phase lines and army men or miniatures to represent friendly and enemy troops or non-combatants. Note: I only saw this used in a mechanized unit...not something you'd carry on your back as ammunition cans are pretty heavy. In the light infantry we usually used sticks, stones and a hunk of 550 parachute cord.



40mm Ammo Can

**Andrew's Note:** If you want a lot of ammo boxes buy them surplus from the government like I did (get together with your buddies because they're sold by the pallet), otherwise pick them up locally there are usually good choices at gun shows. Mail ordering these heavy items tends to double the price due to the shipping cost. Additionally, stay away from plastic copies as they are poorly constructed compared to the originals.

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# What are you, Who are you, and What are you Doing?

Michael Bunker

Just what are you anyway? Are you a “prepper?” Are you a “survivalist?” Maybe you consider yourself a “prudent-planner-aheader”. Are you a an “off-gridder”, a “plain person”, a “homesteader”, “back-to-the-lander”, “agrarian separatist”, a “foil-hatted bean-butter-and bullet buying whack-a-doodle??” Are you planning for the end of the world as we know it? Maybe you are expecting major disruptions in services and utilities? Perhaps you foresee a disastrous and functionally systemic collapse? Could it be that you are just planning for a day or three without access to electricity, water, and ice?

I would have to say that the prepping and survival community is both wide and diverse. Those of us who have been doing this a very long time have learned to identify other types and genres of preppers and survivalists, and we also know the stages that most humans go through as they come to know (at different paces and levels) and recognize the true state of the world and the world’s systems.

In my past I have taught wilderness survival classes, cold weather survival, hot weather survival, and for years now I have been blogging and writing about preparedness and survival topics. In 2011 I released my first book on the topic of *Off Off-Grid Living* (living a plain, simple, and sustainable life separate from not only the industrial power grid, but independent from even the normal “off-grid” alternate grid of solar, wind, and generator power.) I have met, taught, learned from, and argued with people from every conceivable genre of survivalism and preparedness. Prior to 1997 I was more of a traditional survivalist kind of guy. My mindset back then was on preparing for disaster, and training for wilderness survival, escape, evasion, etc. In 1997 I bought my first 3-month supply of survival food, and from there my father and I embarked on a path of basic disaster preparedness (this was before I had ever even heard of Y2K!). In 1997 my small (at that time) family embarked on our first small homesteading experiment, and we began learning how to farm and raise our own food. In 2005 we moved to and started a larger farm in Central Texas, and into a community of like-minded “plain people” with the intention of living off-grid and learning how to survive like our ancestors did not too long ago. Since that time, I have become somewhat of a gadfly to the preparedness and survival community, constantly preaching and reminding folks that real freedom and real survival means that every day, our dependence on unsustainable and unviable world systems of power and services must decrease.

Most people do not have any clue how dependent they are on very sketchy and unreliable systems of life and living. In order to teach myself and my family, and to actually see how dependent we are, I have formulated and utilized quite a few self-tests over the years. In addition to our lifestyle of preparedness, production, and “off-griddedness”, we have constantly pushed ourselves so that we can get an accurate picture of our condition and where our susceptibilities lie. Beginning in 1998 we would turn off the power and water (at that time we still lived on-grid) for days at a time so that we could learn to recognize what were our needs. Whenever we studied and learned a new skill, I would make sure that we learned to first do it the hard way (the old-fashioned, off-grid way) so that we would know that we could accomplish that task if we needed to do it without modern conveniences. I was not satisfied to merely have the skills to butcher animals, grow gardens, and preserve seeds, etc. without knowing that we could do these things without grid power, county water, power tools, etc.

Seven years ago we moved and started our off-grid farm here in Central Texas, and we began to work our way towards a more complete independence from the grid. In my book *Surviving Off-Grid* I discuss the differences between traditional Off-Grid living, and Off Off-Grid living, along with offering advice and suggestions on how to accomplish sustainable and simple living without what most people consider to be necessary modern conveniences. Today we are able to grow and process almost all of our own food (we grow more independent every day), in fact, I took a break from smoking our own sausage in our own large, stone smokehouse so that I could get started on this article.

All of this is to say that – sometimes we need to be able to step back and take a larger view of what are our goals and intentions when it comes to our chosen lifestyle of preparedness, survival, or simple living. Often, because we get our advice from people who make a living selling our marketing gear or information, we start on down a road that will not lead us to where we desire to be. I have often told my family that if you say you are going on a trek to Dallas, Texas, and you start off on the wrong road and heading in the wrong direction, you will likely end up somewhere else altogether. If you rely on commercially manufactured gear, supplies, food, and other preparedness items, then you may be better off than your neighbor, but in the long run you are still dependent on the manufacturers and suppliers of those things. If you work on an assumption that a particular disaster or scenario is going to run its course and that everything will one day return to normal (the normalcy bias), then you are going to find yourself in trouble if your assumptions about the disaster or scenario are

**...SOMETIMES WE NEED TO BE ABLE TO STEP BACK AND TAKE A LARGER VIEW OF WHAT ARE OUR GOALS AND INTENTIONS WHEN IT COMES TO OUR CHOSEN LIFESTYLE OF PREPAREDNESS, SURVIVAL, OR SIMPLE LIVING.**

not accurate. The bullets/beans/butter folks have a lot to offer, and they can certainly help you in situations where this return to “normal” (whatever that means) is expected. But, what happens if “normal” never returns? What happens to you and your family if the new “normal” is actually the old “normal” (the thousands of years of life on this planet prior to the last century+ of industrialism and consumerism)? In a very real sense, the last 150 years of industrialism and urban/suburban dependence has been an anomaly in the history of the world.

We all have biases. Generally when you meet an ex-military survivalist, there is going to be a bias towards guns, defense, and emergency or crisis survival. When you meet a wilderness survival guru, there is going to be a bias towards making it in the wilderness, and making it back home. If you speak to a middle-class urban or suburban prepper, you are generally going to find a bias towards stored consumer products, “survival” gear, food rotation systems, and what I call *event preparedness*. Very few of you (maybe a few) will have actually met or conversed with someone who lives like the Amish, Mennonites, or “plain people”. Every genre of survivalist has an opinion about the other genres, and is likely to see weaknesses in their worldview and philosophy. I have had the rare opportunity to have passed through almost all of these genres of preparedness, so, although I do have my biases based on my current worldview and lifestyle, I think I do have some insight that you might find of value. I share with you, then, an article I wrote for my [A Process Driven Life blog](#). I hope you will find it helpful.

## ***The 5 Steps of Survival and Prepper Maturity***

You may have heard about the 5 Steps of Grief and Mourning. They generally go like this:

1. Denial and Isolation
2. Anger
3. Bargaining
4. Depression
5. Acceptance

In like manner, many (but certainly not all, and probably not even most) intelligent and engaged people will pass through a similar process -- beginning just after they first get an inkling that things are not right in the world; that they are in a perilous situation, and that their loved ones are in danger if something (anything) bad were to happen. The 5 Steps of Survival and Prepper Maturity are easily identifiable, and most people can readily see where they are in the process. Like in the 5 Steps of Grief, you only very rarely will be able to skip steps, and you will almost always deny that you need to move on to the next step. Preparedness psychology is an interesting thing, and I get the benefit of communicating with folks on these topics almost every day. One basic maxim of this truism is that people generally feel comfortable where they are and will think that everyone further down the maturity chart is "extreme" or "unbalanced". This is the nature of vision and perception of reality. Everyone, on whatever level they find themselves, usually thinks that those behind them are deceived and foolish, and that everyone ahead of them on this path is *extreme*.

There is one other very important fact that we need to identify before we go into the list. All of these categories are actually levels on the scale that stretches from FULL-ON CONSUMER to PRODUCER. The first step in beginning the road to prepper maturity, is to admit that you are a probably a consumer. That is what governments and the world calls you. Just like an alcoholic has to admit that he/she is an alcoholic in order to get help, it is important for you to admit to yourself that, at some level, you are a consumer. A consumer is anyone who purchases most of his or her daily needs from someone or somewhere that makes those things. Unless you are in the .001%, then you are a consumer. Admit it now, and let's move on. Consumption as a maxim of life is the bedrock of slavery. "Your consumption percentage" is also your slavery index number. You can read more about this (and take a slavery test) in my book *Surviving Off Off-Grid*, which is available on Amazon.com.

**Stage 1: *Buy it up and Store it up stage.*** Generally this is the stage when you refer to yourself (or consider yourself) a "Prepper". After this stage, you would very rarely ever consider yourself a "Prepper". In this stage, you have become moderately aware of the tenuous nature of the world, culture, society, economy, etc. You have begun to recognize your condition, and you realize it is not good. Since you have been raised a consumer, and have lived your life as a consumer, you automatically will default to consumer solutions. Result? Ack! There are dangers out there! GO BUY STUFF! This is the stage when you read everything you can find, and you make endless trips to the store to buy stuff that you think you will need. Your mind races and you dream of stuff you might need or that you haven't purchased yet. You make lists, inventories, etc. There is a broad spectrum of Stage One-ers from the people who grab some extra beans, batteries, and band-aids and some candles, to people who add storage rooms to their houses, dig bomb shelters, and order in semi loads of wheat and rice. In this stage, you throw money at the problem. It is all you know, and it seems like a good idea. You convince yourself that you are better off than your neighbor, and that is mostly true. But know that you are *X days* better than your neighbor. X stands for the number of real days (not imaginary numbers provided by powdered butter and survival

food suppliers, but a more actual number) you are better off than your neighbor. You are a consumer like him, so you will most likely die like him... only you will die *X days* later. In this stage, your main goal is to increase X. This is also the stage for Go Bags, Get Out Of Dodge plans, etc. In this stage, you are usually deceived into thinking that you can survive because you are special, and you are better prepared than most, and because perhaps you think you can defend the stuff you have.

**Stage 2: *Dipping a toe into Off-Grid stage.*** Usually people in this stage don't really go off-grid, but they start thinking about it, and they make some rudimentary steps towards off-grid thinking, if not living. In this stage an inkling you have turns into a realization. IF THE POWER GOES OUT, AND GOES OUT FOR LONG ENOUGH... I'M SCREWED. So you realize that store bought candles and cans of beans are not the solution. You need some alternative power, alternative light, alternative heating, etc. Perhaps in this stage you get a propane stove, a kerosene heater, some lanterns, etc. Maybe you even go all-in and get solar power, wind power, etc. Those on the extreme end of this phase will look into wood gasifiers for their vehicles, and generators... (HAVE to have generators!). In this stage you look back on your Stage One days and you say... "What a fool I was! Now, I'm better off. I can provide heat and light for my family after a collapse." The overall angst and stress you feel about current events lessens a bit. You read the news without as much fear or excitement. You feel better, because you feel prepared. At this stage, you do not like being called a "Prepper" as much. You say, "Preparedness is a lifestyle I've adopted." In this phase, a light has come on... just a faint one, but it lets you see in to areas that were once in darkness. You think, "If things last long enough, I'll need to grow some food. I'll need to learn some skills." Maybe you take a class. Maybe you plant tomatoes, etc. At this stage, you LOVE talking about this stuff. You make prepper friends, and you spend a lot of time on the Internet reading news, and sharing ideas.

**Stage 3: *Plan for Some Alternate Future stage.*** In this stage, some Get Out Of Dodge scenarios really start to get serious. You have actually started gardening in your back yard, or perhaps you've started taking food production more seriously. You are learning some basic skills. You probably get some chickens, and stock up on animal feed. Then you start looking "out there". Maybe you'll start a survival retreat, or even look into moving into the country. Farming life starts to be attractive to you, and if not attractive, maybe necessary. Your interests now are more into old skills and old tools and you begin to ask yourselves how people did things 200 years ago. You begin to start recognizing that everything that is new is not great, and that people have become cripples to Industrialism, machines, consumerism, and comfort. You actually begin to sit in judgment on who you used to be, and how you used to think. You start to think that even if nothing happens catastrophically, perhaps being unsustainable, unviable, and subject to perilous and idiotic government run systems is not a good idea. Though you may have always hated government, and though you may always have thought that everyone else is an idiot, you finally start to see that it isn't government that is the problem. It's not *something*, it is *everything*. The whole world system built on consumption, where people push buttons and turn wheels at meaningless jobs in order to make money so that they can buy products produced by less than 1% of people, stops making sense to you.

**Stage 4: *The Off-Grid or "Able to Go Off-Grid" stage.*** In this stage you have begun to build and install back-up plans to your earlier consumption solutions. You actually buy hand tools and maybe learn to use them. You are canning food and learning about other ways of food preservation. You realize you cannot rely on the store, and that things may never get back to what you used to consider "normal", so you start growing your own food and preserving it. You like the idea of "living off the land" and you learn techniques and tactics to make the land produce for you. You don't make the big leap, because everyone more off-grid than you is "extreme", but you make sure that you have fall-backs for all of your prepper plans and ideas. Now you've got goats, perhaps some

pigs. You start to think of yourself as a farmer. You don't just have solar panels, but you have actually studied how to provide light and heat without electricity. In this stage is usually when a small portion of maturing survivalists will move out to the country. Leaving the "grid" is no longer crazy. Some of you actually start a farm.

Although you probably still buy all your animal feed and food for your family from a store, you are thinking that producing more if it is a great idea. This stage is expensive. You have a foot in both worlds. You don't have to time to work full-time at your "job" anymore, so maybe your wife/husband works and you work part-time. You have to do everything the expensive way, because your entanglements in the world give you no time to do things the ancient way. You rationalize and start noting how expensive everything is. You still don't want to quit your job or separate more, because everyone more separate than you is "extreme", so you straddle the fence. Many will stay in this stage until they fail, and then they'll go back down the stages...

**I CALL THIS STAGE THE "DREAM-KILLER", SINCE THE LOVE OF MODERN STUFF, AND THE DOUBLE-MINDEDNESS MAKE THIS STAGE UNTENABLE FOR VERY LONG.**

maybe even all the way back. I call this stage the "dream-killer", since the love of modern stuff, and the double-mindedness make this stage untenable for very long. It's just too expensive. You must move on to Stage 5, or quit. Only those who have some extraordinary outside income, or who find a way to make an income from their farming that is sufficient to pay for the consumer stuff can continue in this stage. Also in this stage (and somewhat in Stage 3) you will find your "millionaire survivalists). Millionaire survivalists, though they might not really be millionaires, have some source of adequate income that permits them to live and teach others while still living with a foot in both worlds. Millionaire survivalists, while some of them have a lot of good advice and skills, are difficult for most people to emulate. When you read most survival books or survival fiction books, you will run into millionaire survivalists who just happen to have all the money in the world to trick out old trucks and cars, buy expensive retreats, and own an armory that most third world dictators would envy. A lot of these millionaire survivalist books and materials are interesting and fascinating, but they are fully fiction for most of us. Unhappily, this scenario is just not doable for people who live in the real world.

**Stage 5: Off Off-Grid Living.** In this stage, things have become crystal clear. You must produce to be free. The old system made a slave out of you, and you realize that the only way you can afford to be free, is to produce more than you consume. This takes a lot of work, but the very, very few who try it will say that it is definitely worth it. In this stage you don't worry about power outages, work stoppages, or such things. You produce most of what you consume. You are no longer waiting for things to "come back online" or "get back to normal". *Normal* no longer means "the last 150 years of industrial/consumer living". Normal now means, "all the millennia BEFORE the last 120 years. You certainly are not living perfectly sustainably, but you are definitely on your way. You find joy in the food you eat, and the work of your hands. You pity those that cannot see, but you recognize that you were once them, and without going through the process, they will NEVER see. You don't sweat simple people who rationalize their dependence and charge you with hypocrisy if you don't live in a cave wearing only clothing you knitted from your own wool sheep. You don't blink when someone who is fully dependent on the store and the government tells you "Oh well, people with more guns and stuff will just come kill you and take your stuff, so we're all the same". You smile when people call you extreme, or argue that they are only further down the stages list because they are evangelists, while you are a hermit – useful to no one but yourself and your family. You chuckle when people say that since you have a computer and get on the Internet that you are just as dependent as they are... plus you are a hypocrite! Your children don't understand why anyone would ever eat the

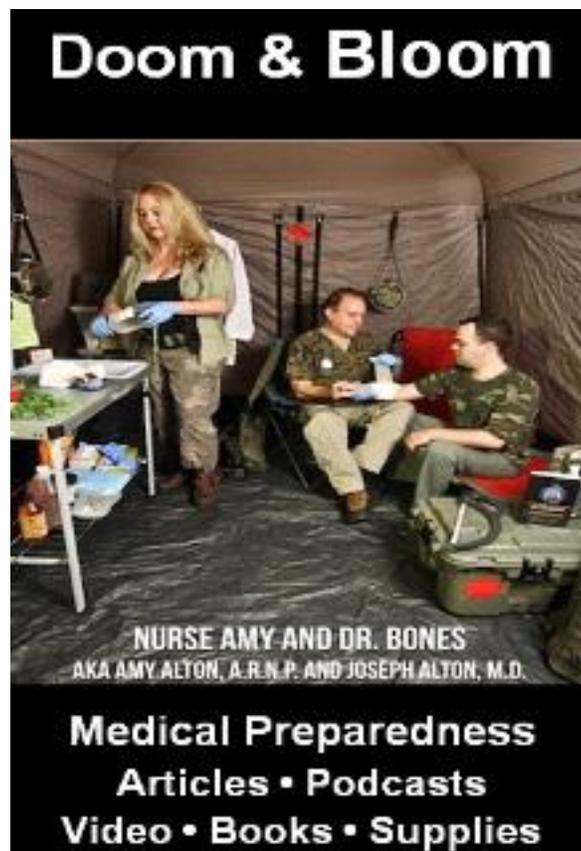
junk that people buy at the store. In this stage, you are amazed at how little it actually costs to live and be free. Your life slogan is SIMPLICITY, SUSTAINABILITY, and SURVIVABILITY.

So, these are the 5 Steps of Prepper and Survival Maturity. They can also be called The Steps that Lead to Freedom.

As you can see, I have my own biases, but I also have the experience of having been biased throughout all of the five stages of maturity, and I have learned that in whatever stage you find yourself, the real key is not what you have, but what you know, and knowing that there is still more to know. Perhaps there is a 6<sup>th</sup> stage out there that I haven't yet discovered, but as for now, life is a continuous and daily education for me and my family.

Read more about Off Off-Grid Living and how it is expressed in a fictional post-collapse scenario in my book [The Last Pilgrims](#), the first in a planned trilogy on living and surviving in a post-collapse world.

*Michael Bunker is an off-grid farmer, author, historian, philosopher, and iconoclast. He lives with his family in a "plain" Christian Community in Central Texas where he reads and writes books... and occasionally tilts at windmills. Michael's national bestseller "[Surviving Off Off-Grid](#)" went to #26 on the Amazon.com Bestseller list, and to #2 on the "Movers and Shakers" list. Michael released his first fiction novel [The Last Pilgrims](#) (the first book in The Last Pilgrims saga) on February 24, 2012 to rave reviews. Michael blogs at [michaelbunker.com](#), and interacts with his readers at [facebook.com/michaelbunker](#), on Twitter as @mbunker, and can be heard twice a week on his radio show at [blogtalkradio.com/michaelbunker](#).*



## 10 Questions You Should Ask Your Doctor

By Joe Alton, M.D. aka Dr. Bones

I often get questions from people that say: "I take this medicine or that medicine for this medical problem. What do I do if there's a collapse and I can't get modern medical care?" I usually say, well, what did your doctor say? "Well, I haven't really asked." OK, how bad is your condition? "Umm, I'm not too sure...I haven't really asked that, either, but the doctor wants me to do this test". What's the test for? "I'm not really sure, but I'm supposed to get it done" Do you see a problem here? I do.

Your health is a team effort, in which you, not the doctor, play the most important role. One of the best ways to communicate with your doctor or alternative health care provider is by asking questions. If you're accumulating all this knowledge as a prepper, learning how to grow food, how to store preps, taking responsibility for your family's survival, why not take responsibility for your own health? Anyone that takes medication for a medical condition should ask their doctor lots of questions. Armed with this knowledge, you will be more likely to handle medical issues and stay healthy in uncertain times.

The main reason for people being unclear about why they're taking this medicine or should undergo this test or that test is that they don't ask the right questions. When I first opened my medical office, I would prescribe a medicine for a patient with a medical condition and I was always surprised when the only response was "yes, doctor".

Answers to medical questions might be simple, but sometimes they're complex. You have the right to have things explained in plain English; the more questions you ask, the more your doctor understands that you want to be an active partner in your care.

The below are what I should have been asked, and that you should ask your doctor if you haven't yet.....

### **1. Doctor, why did you decide to put me on that medicine?**

What will the medicine do for me? The response might be: "You have high Cholesterol, this drug will lower it". Ok, fine, but how does it work to do that? What benefit will I reap from being on it? The answer might be: "It will decreased your chances of dying from coronary artery disease". This is a more logical reason to take the medicine than just lowering some lab value.

### **2. What will the medicine do to me?**

All drugs may have side effects. You should be aware of them; it should be a factor as to whether you decide to take the medication. Sometimes, side effects are unrelated to the medicine's primary purpose. Antibiotics could give you diarrhea, for example. Aspirin could cause bruising due to its blood thinning effect. Sometimes, the side effect is the reason to use the medicine. Ritodrine, an IV asthma medicine, was found to coincidentally relax uterine muscle. As such, it was used for a time to stop premature labor.

### **3. Is there a natural alternative to the medicine I'm prescribing?**

You might have to depend on natural products one day, so why not try it now and see if it really works? Let's take thyroid disease. There are a number of natural desiccated thyroid supplements on the market. If you're interested in trying something that you, as a prepper, could stockpile, ask your doctor if he would be willing to monitor your thyroid levels for a time on the natural supplement. In this way, you can identify whether the supplement will actually work to keep your thyroid levels at normal. So the question would be:

### **4. Would you be willing to monitor me, if I decide to try a natural alternative?**

The doctor might not be for this, but then ask: What's the harm in trying it for a short time and checking its effects?

### **5. Would my condition improve if I changed my diet or lifestyle?**

I go through chubby phases and, well, less chubby phases. When I'm heavier, my blood pressure goes up. Staying at a normal weight keeps my blood pressure within normal limits. Another lifestyle change, such as not smoking, will improve your stamina. You know you'll need more stamina if the you-know-what hits the fan. The same goes for type 2 Diabetics. If you adhere to a good anti-diabetic diet, you might need less diabetic meds.

### **6. Will this new medicine change the way my other medicines work, or their effectiveness?**

A lot of people have more than 1 medical condition and see more than 1 doctor. Don't think that doctors have some kind of mental telepathy with each other. Some are pretty smart guys, but they're not psychic! That doctor may not have noticed that you wrote these medicines down on your medical history sheet. Medicines may affect each other; they may make each other have a stronger or lesser effect, or might cancel each other out altogether.

### **7. This test you want me to take, what are the things you're looking for?**

If a doctor asks you to do a test out of the blue, ask what he is worried that he might find? What does the doctor believe you are at risk for?

### **8. Are there risks to this test?**

Tests might be necessary, but they are not always without risks. CAT scans of the chest and abdomen, for example, give the equivalent radiation exposure of having 100 standard chest x-rays.

Cardiac catheterization is a test where they check for blocked coronary arteries (which is the cause of heart attacks). During this test, they run a line with a camera into your coronaries to look for blockage all the way from an artery in your thigh. This procedure can actually cause a heart attack about 1- 2% of the time. Which leads us to the next question....

**9. Is this test or medicine absolutely necessary, what happens if I don't take this medicine or don't do this test?**

You should be aware how the test's results will impact your treatment. Will anything change as a result of having the test done? If a test does not affect your doctor's treatment, is it really necessary?

**10. Could you explain your plan for my long term care?**

Is this a temporary solution, or will I have to be on this medication the rest of my life? This will help you, prepper, rethink your medical supplies for times for trouble.

Did you ask this list of questions when you were prescribed this medicine or told to do this or that test? My patients rarely did; most just took their prescription and left. For most patients that I prescribed medicine for or recommended a diagnostic test, I asked: "Do you understand exactly why you're being given this?" Do you have any questions or concerns? If they just looked at me and didn't say anything, I would say: "Do you know what I would ask, if a doctor prescribed me this drug?"

So, could you explain your medical condition to a stranger? Could you tell someone what is different about your thyroid that requires you to take medication? Do you know why your doctor wants you to keep an aspirin in your purse or wallet, if you have heart disease (answer: to slow down further blockage in an acute coronary event like a heart attack)?

The more you learn, the more in charge you are of your own life! If I was told I had diabetes, I would ask my doctor for every piece of literature that he or she had on the topic. I'd be at the local bookstore the next day, and by the end of the week, I'd have a small library on the subject.

Lack of interest with regards to your health is tantamount to saying, "ok, you win. Guess I wasn't meant to live that long, after all" That defeatist attitude is just not the Prepper way. If you take charge of your destiny by storing and growing food, learning home defense, getting a ham radio license, all that stuff, it just makes common sense to take charge of your health the same way.

Find out what natural product might have an effect similar to the medicine you take. It's easy to find: just google natural remedies for \_\_\_\_\_. It probably won't have as strong an effect, but it might help some, and something is better than nothing.

You have an obligation to your family and yourself to have a plan of action to deal with medical issues if a disaster occurs. It's not just about having medical supplies as part of your preps, it's an actual plan on what to do if this or that medical issue happens and your doctor is unavailable. It's your health, take charge of it.

*Joe Alton, M.D. and Amy Alton, A.R.N.P., are the authors of the "Doom and Bloom(tm) Survival Medicine Handbook", which has been ranked #1 on Amazon in the categories of Survival Skills and Safety/First Aid. They are also the owners of the highest ranked medical preparedness website on the Internet at <http://www.doomandbloom.net>, and design their own line of unique survival medical kits. You can contact them at drbonespodcast [at] aol.com.*

# Making a Survival Plan

Chris Ray

There isn't just one survival or preparedness plan that fits every situation for every person. There are, however, a few guidelines that can be used by anyone in any situation to improve their chances of survival. From seeing an economy in danger to being stuck in a ditch during a snowstorm in a remote area, or even to being stranded on a desert island, I'll list the tools below that survivors have practiced versions of since walking out of the Garden of Eden. The tools I am going to go over are more geared toward surviving an event of some type. While some could very well be used by someone beating cancer, some just won't apply.

## Normalcy Bias

My Friend Dene Brock from [Country Consultant](#) wrote a great article on [normalcy bias](#), I'll quote her definition:

*"Normalcy bias refers to a mental state people enter when facing a disaster. It causes people to underestimate both the possibility of a disaster occurring and its possible effects. This often results in situations where people fail to adequately prepare for a disaster."*

I think there are two types of normalcy bias: 1.) Not believing bad things will happen (this thinking is foolish), and 2.) Disbelieving something bad is happening even while it is happening (this thinking is dangerous).

I started with number one for a reason; it is extremely important! We can ensure we're not in group one by being informed about possible dangers. Since you're reading an article on a preparedness site, I'm guessing you're not one of the people from group one who thinks bad things won't happen.

I think if you practice [situational awareness](#), it is much easier to notice the proverbial paddle-less boat is heading down the creek for what it is. If you are aware that the boat is slowly leaving the shore and that there is no paddle, it's a lot harder to go on believing there is nothing wrong. There are not always signs that something is wrong, but I think, more often than not, there are. We just have to be "awake" and paying attention.

## Get Your Mind Right

The most important survival tool you have is your mindset, (which normalcy bias is a part of). I'm not talking about what you know in terms of skills. I'm talking about what you allow your perception to be. I'm not talking about "think good thoughts and it will happen". That's part of it, but I'm talking about reaching down to that place inside of you that some of you might think unpleasant; that place where anger and rage dwell, the place where determination is the deciding factor. This is the place that that gives you the determination to say "NO! This is not happening if I have ANYTHING to say about it." I don't mean get angry for the sake of getting angry. You see, anger and even rage can give you the strength and determination to grab five stones and walk in to face the giant.

There have been many documented cases where someone survived a terrible situation and the reason they gave was because they refused to give up, they would not quit. To some extent this might be in our DNA. Some people are just made more resilient; they can take more punishment and keep going. I think there is a lot of personal choice in there as well. Have you ever watched any documentary of SEAL training? It is brutal, absolutely brutal, especially "[Hell week](#)".

From USMilitary.About.com

*“Trainees are constantly in motion; constantly cold, hungry and wet. Mud is everywhere—it covers uniforms, hands and faces. Sand burns eyes and chafes raw skin. Medical personnel stand by for emergencies and then monitor the exhausted trainees. Sleep is fleeting—a mere three to four hours granted near the conclusion of the week. The trainees consume up to 7,000 calories a day and still lose weight.”*

The thing about SEAL training is that you can quit at any time, you just have to take the walk of shame and ring the bell. I have no proof, but I would venture that the only people who make it through “Hell Week” are the people who reach down to that place where anger and determination dwell.

That emotion is a gift from God. It’s what we do with it that might be a sin and using it to fight for the life He gave you isn’t a sin.

### **The Five Basic Human Needs**

There is a lot of talk about “preparing for economic downfall” or “getting ready for an EMP or solar flare” or “societal meltdown”. The problem with preparing for specific events is that the events you’re preparing for might never happen, or if it does, it could happen differently than you expected.

It doesn’t matter what part of the world you live in, how old you are or even how much money you make, there are five basic things that every human needs to live, let alone survive. If you prepare for meeting these five basic needs, you will have a higher level of overall preparedness and the ability to face a variety of situations.

### **Water**

Next to air, water is the most important item to survival. For that reason I think finding access to water and a means to purify it should be near the top of every survival plan. Boiling will kill pathogens, but it will not remove harmful chemicals. I wrote about the different types of water purifiers in an article called [“Types of Water Purifiers and Their Applications”](#). Having a means to make clean water is a must. Find a purifier that works for you, and go with it.

### **Food**

There are many ways to approach food, from using [Copy Canning](#) to build your pantry with the “eat what you store, store what you eat” foods that your family eats most often, to storing staple foods with a 25+ year shelf life or planning long term with gardening or Permaculture and many things in between.

Water might be the most important, but food is the insurance policy that solidifies your self-reliance and independence. In a survival situation the more food you have stored or available on your land, the less of a drain you are on the system and the longer you can go without taking a handout.

### **THE RULE OF 3’S**

**... IS A PROVEN SURVIVAL RULE THAT YOU CAN USE AS A GUIDELINE TO DETERMINE YOUR MOST PRESSING NEED. THE FOLLOWING ARE THE RULE OF THREE’S.**

#### **THE AVERAGE HUMAN CAN LAST:**

**3 SECONDS WITHOUT OXYGEN TO THE BRAIN  
3 MINUTES WITHOUT OXYGEN  
3 HOURS WITHOUT SHELTER IN POOR WEATHER  
3 DAYS WITHOUT WATER  
3 WEEKS WITHOUT FOOD**

**IN A SURVIVAL SITUATION, IF YOU ARE DEALING WITH THE FIRST TWO RULES, FIX THOSE AND THEN DO A FIRST AID CHECK OF YOURSELF AND THOSE AROUND YOU. ONCE YOU’RE TO A POINT WHERE NOT HAVING SHELTER IS YOUR BIGGEST DANGER, YOU CAN WORK ON THE FIVE BASIC HUMAN NEEDS.**

I have covered food storage in depth in the articles linked below:

[Food Storage Part One: Why Store Food And The Rules For It.](#)

[Food Storage Part Two: The Kind Of Foods That You Can Store](#)

[Food Storage Part Three: Shelf Life of Staples.](#)

[Food Storage Part Four: The Process and Enemies of Food Storage.](#)

[Food Storage Part Five: How much food should you store and where should you put it all?](#)

[Food Storage Part Six: Tips On Stocking Up and Affording it all.](#)

[Food Storage Part Seven: Food Boredom to Survival Cooking .](#)

## Shelter

The importance of shelter depends on your situation. Of course, if you're lost in the wilderness and it's raining, it takes on more importance. For most of us however, our shelter is our home. There are things you can do now to protect your home, such as [general fire safety](#), or hardening your home by building a [safe room](#).

When you're in your car, it is effectively your shelter. Having a [car kit](#) and [AAA](#) are ways to make sure your car can be an effective shelter should the need arise.

## Energy

This is an area that doesn't get as much attention as the others. I think that's mostly because we are so used to always having power that we take it for granted. You can ensure you meet your energy needs with a [portable generator](#). A low end unit can cost just a couple hundred bucks. I covered [off grid fuels](#). You can find backup ways to heat and cook for relatively cheap.

If you have no power, it is still possible to [keep food cold](#) without electricity. Make note of it now and have a plan just in case.

Energy and shelter often go hand in hand. If your car becomes your shelter, or you get lost in the woods, do you know how to make fire? Knowing how to make fire can be a lifesaving skill; to make heat and a signal for others to see. Do you have a [car kit](#)? Do you have a [mini kit](#)? Just a few items placed in a mini kit or car kit can greatly increase your chances of survival.

## Security

I want to start by pointing to an article I wrote on whether or not [Christians should practice self-defense](#) for those of you have reservations on the subject. My personal stance is that I pray for my enemy now, but if he attempts to do me or mine harm, I will be a danger to my enemy and will use as much force as is necessary to stop the threat.

The first part of self-defense is [situational awareness](#). Proverbs 27:12 tells us:

*"A prudent person foresees danger and takes precautions. The simpleton goes blindly on and suffers the consequences."*

Because the danger cannot always be avoided, using the [Cooper Color Code](#), we can be ready for a possible threat ahead of time. I suggest that every one of us decides now what we're willing to do to protect ourselves and those we love. You will not have time to make a plan in the midst of violence, when there is only time to act.

Find a means of protection you are comfortable with and get training in it. If that means carrying [pepper spray](#) or training in real world self-defense, fine.

If that means using a current handgun, or [getting a new handgun](#) and getting your conceal and carry permit, or just [being armed at home](#), then get training and go for it.

### **What Takes Priority?**

You can use the “Rule of 3’s” and the five basic needs to determine which item should be a priority. If your oxygen and shelter needs are met, then you can concentrate on water. Energy and security are always on a kind of sliding scale. If you need shelter and warmth, then energy in the form of a fire takes a higher priority, as does security if Mr. Dirtbag is around. It doesn’t have to be a bad guy. Your security could be in danger due to a tree that looks like it might fall on your house after a storm.

Using these two rules can guide you in deciding what your priority should be after an event.

### **Survivors Club**

In the book [The Survivors Club](#) Author Ben Sherwood explores a theory developed by a man named John Leach called “The 10/80/10 rule”. In summary the rule states that the top 10% of people in a crisis excel; they think clearly and take immediate action. The middle group comprises 80% of people; they are “quite simply stunned and bewildered”; “reasoning is significantly impaired and thinking is difficult”. The last 10% of people are the “ones you definitely want to avoid in an emergency”.

A few pages later he explains something called ‘behavioral inaction’; “The current theory of behavioral inaction goes like this: As your frontal lobe processes the site of an airplane wing on fire, it seeks to match the information with memories of similar situations in the past. If you have no stored experience of a plane crash, your brain can’t find a match and gets stuck in a loop trying and failing to come up with the right response. Hence: immobility.” Every once in a while I ask a “what would you do?” question on [Prepared Christian](#). I do this to get people thinking, in hopes that if they do come to a survival situation, they might recognize it and be able to react quickly and avoid ‘behavioral inaction’.

I once asked [“What would you do if you were followed in your car?”](#) I was blessed tremendously by a reader letting me know that she was followed in her car by someone she accidentally cut off. She said that because of some of the things she had read on [Prepared Christian](#) she knew to be aware and kept trying to lose Mr. Dirtbag, which she eventually did. Thank you God!

Going through different “what ifs” is a great way to stave off any normalcy bias that an easy, blessed life might let start to creep in. It could also help you act when you’re put in a survival situation. If you have something for your brain to latch on to, you won’t get stuck in ‘behavioral inaction’ and immobility. One easy way to do this is to ask yourself what you would do in situations you see in movies, TV or from the news.

Friends, I think we’re headed for times that are scattered with turbulence. By avoiding normalcy bias and being aware, we can face the trials with grit and determination. We can use the rule of three’s and five basic needs to make sure our physical needs are met and pray that the Lord see us through to the other side.

*Chris Ray is the owner of <http://preparedchristian.net>, a preparedness blog with a Christian worldview. He explores scripture to show that preparedness is biblical. He also covers a wide range of preparedness topics.*

## Security in the Suburbs

Tess Pennington

If you live in suburbia, security starts from the inside out. Your home should be a fortress, although not so blatantly that it catches the attention of casual passers-by, making them wonder, “What’s in there?” Some simple updates can harden your domicile against intruders.

1. **Doors should be sturdy and steel core.** The frame around the door is equally important. Even the strongest door will not hold up to a determined intruder if it is seated in a flimsy frame. Look for a sturdy steel door-jam. Always use at least 3 inch screws to anchor the components of your door and its frame.
2. **Install hardware for a door bar.** Envision the bars reinforcing doors in medieval castles or on barns. By installing brackets into studs on either side of doors to the exterior of the house, you can have a bar that goes across the door from side to side. The bar can be a very heavy piece of wood, or it can be iron or another metal. Unless you are in a high crime neighbourhood, this barricade would not be necessary under normal situations. However, during a SHTF scenario, it will make your doors virtually impenetrable without the aid of a battering ram with a team of burly men behind it.
3. **Secure your windows.** Particular attention should be paid to windows on the ground floor. Install a sturdy piece of wood cut to fit so that the window cannot be raised from the outside. Consider coating windows with a shatterproof film. Keep valuables out of sight from the windows. If your door has a window in it, or if it has sidelights, a piece of decorative metal grid work can easily be screwed in over the window, making it impossible for an intruder to break the window and reach through to unlock the door.

Once you’ve made the house itself more [difficult to penetrate](#), concentrate on making it less appealing to criminals. They do not want to draw attention to themselves and will pass by homes that look more difficult to access.

1. **Install motion lights around the perimeter of your home.** If they are solar-powered they will also work in a SHTF and grid-down scenario.
2. **Practice defensive landscaping.** Use [thorn-bearing plants](#) around your home to make ground floor windows less vulnerable to access.
3. **Install cameras.** Even fake cameras give criminals the feeling they are “being watched” – just make sure they are the kind with a light on them.
4. **Beware of dog.** People who don’t have a furry friend can still make use of this tactic by posting signs on their property. Criminals are looking for easy targets – fending off a growling canine can be dangerous for them and also draws attention to them. Often, they will choose a different home to rob based on this factor alone.
5. **Fence your yard.** Enclosing your entire property with a fence is a deterrent. Doorbells and cameras can be installed at the gate, giving you a safer distance from those who come to your home. This added layer of distance can make a home invasion-style attack far more difficult to perpetrate. If the top of the fence is “decoratively” spiked, it serves to make it difficult for someone to jump or climb the fence.

Don’t forget the importance of community in a SHTF or disaster scenario. To survive a shtf-situation, it will take a group effort. [The neighborly way](#) can extend itself far more than just helping a neighbor out in the yard. A group of people banded together with the same goal can defend far more effectively than each family for themselves. .

1. **Get to know your neighbors.** If you don't already know your neighbors well, take the time to be more outgoing. Say hello when you see them outside, compliment their landscaping and do little things to be helpful.
2. **Have a party.** Another good way to pull the community together is through social interaction. Organize a block party or host a barbecue as a way to help people become better acquainted. Getting to know your neighbors better is not only a good way to make allies, it's a good way to subtly identify those who might be a problem in an emergency situation.
3. **Organize a neighborhood watch.** If you and your neighbors are already accustomed to looking out for one another, it won't require as much additional organization if disaster strikes.
4. **Make a plan.** If some of your neighbors are like-minded, you might be able to do some advance planning, like choosing the most defensible property as a place to send the children, creating defense strategies for your cul-de-sac or figuring out the best way to patrol your immediate area.
5. **Don't forget the importance of OPSEC.** No matter how much you like your neighbors, never put all your cards on the table. Be sure to keep some things private, like your food stores, back-up weapons, caches and ammo stores. If desperate people have to one day make decisions between their families or their neighbors, you can be certain that family will win every time. They cannot take what they do not know about.

It is possible to survive in suburbia. We can't all afford to retreat to the woods or a bunker. Take steps now to prepare and make the best of your personal situation.

*Tess Pennington, a former Red Cross employee founded [www.ReadyNutrition.com](http://www.ReadyNutrition.com) in 2008 as a way to document her preparedness path and to help others create a preparedness foundation they can rely on. Her website introduces easy to understand concepts and strategies for dealing with man-made or natural disasters and emergencies. Tess is also the author of the successful online preparedness series: [52-Weeks to Preparedness](#) and the book, [The Prepper's Cookbook: 365 Recipes to Turn Your Emergency Food into Nutrition, Delicious Life-Saving Meals](#).*



## 10 Preparedness Reasons to Carry Cash

Andrew Jackson

Our world is so digitized and automated that a lot of folks have stopped carrying cash. Think about it...when you're checking out at the grocery or hardware store...how many people in front of you whip out a piece of plastic to pay for their purchases. Some days it seems like the era of the good old American greenback is over (we'll leave the discussion of real money versus fiat currency for another day). You can now even [make some payments at the checkout counter with your cellphone](#). As attractive as the idea of going cash free is to me...after all my wife knows where I keep my wallet...I refuse to stop carrying cash for the following reasons:

1. **Purchasing Privacy:** I'm just old fashioned enough that I want to keep my business to myself. I know it's becoming an outdated notion in this overly digitized world full of instant electronic over-sharing, but that's how I feel. Read my article [The Top 10 Reasons to Be a Stealth Prepper](#) for more information on why privacy is so important.
2. **Service Interruptions:** There have been a number of credit/debit system service interruptions over the last few years including at least one that lasted several weeks. When traveling I make it a point to carry enough cash to get home without any help from plastic. Make sure that you can get yourself home if a computer glitch or cyber attack shuts down your plastic.
3. **Cash is King!** Cash Discounts... by offering cash you can often strike a better deal when making purchases. I use this technique all the time when dealing with tradesmen and contractors.
4. **Cash Only Establishments:** There are also places where cash is the only option like garage sales (good for purchasing inexpensive preps and may not take checks) and restaurants in smaller towns (I still see the 'no out of town checks' signs as I travel the back roads).
5. **Rise of the Underground Economy:** Increasing taxes and regulations are driving more and more commerce underground (a variation of what Arthur Laffer discussed with his [Laffer Curve](#)...to be discussed in a future article). I can foresee the possibility that in order to purchase certain goods or services in the future you can only do so with cash as whole segments of the economy potentially go underground.
6. **Bank Runs:** The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) and the National Credit Union Association (NCUA) have largely put a stop to individual bank runs, but as I learned the hard way if the regulators take over your bank (happens after hours on a Friday) then you might not have physical or digital access to your money for a couple of days. The whole government insurance of individual deposits is starting to look like the fox guarding the hen house as our elected officials spend us into the poor house...if a bank run happens it'll be big...and you'll need more cash than you are carrying in your wallet. What will a bank run look like in the 21st Century... I think it will look like long lines at the ATM and even longer lines at the stores trying to stock up before the credit/debit system gets shut down.
7. **Reduce Temptation:** If you have issues exercising discipline in your use of credit then transitioning to cash only transactions may help you reduce the temptation to overspend...to make sure that you have money left over for your preps and prep education (preparation).
8. **Change is Good:** Coins that is... some vending machines and the good old fashioned payphone (if you can still find one) might only take change. I remember many times when I was thankful that I had the coins to get a drink from the vending machine at a highway rest area because there was nothing else open that late...the same could hold true if there's a cell phone service interruption following a computer glitch, cyber attack or natural disaster.
9. **You're not getting any interest on it now anyway.** Depending on how much cash you decide to carry this may or may not be an issue...but it's not like you're earning any interest on that money anyway.

10. **I might get robbed!** Bear with me a minute on this one. If I'm robbed I would rather hand over a few hundred dollars in cash than my wallet. If I lose my wallet I must cancel all my debit and credit cards, I must contact the state to report a stolen driver's license and concealed carry license and I must worry about my military identification getting into the hands someone who has demonstrated that he/she doesn't honor the compact that we've made to become a civilized society. Additionally, with my wallet the thief has my address which would make it easier for him to victimize me again. If the thief doesn't have a firearm the money will be flying up into the air so that he can focus on it as I run the other way. Last thing...before the comments start...yes I am armed but if I have the choice between losing a few hundred dollars or spending the next three years of my life in courtrooms defending myself for shooting someone who society would be better off without anyway...I'm glad to lose the money and make a police report.

How much cash to carry is a personal decision based on your financial resources, your spending habits, your responsibilities and your travel habits...just remember to do so and keep that emergency cash in a separate part of your wallet if you're tempted to spend it on everyday items.

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## 14 Mistakes to Avoid When Storing Food for the Long Term

Gaye Levy

One of the cornerstones of prepping is food storage. And as much as it is far more sexy to talk about guns, self-defense, field medicine, and get away vehicles, the bottom line is that for most people, food to eat is their number one concern. For many preppers, this means stocking up on food supplies that will carry them through for six months, a year, a decade and longer. In our journey to save and store food for the future – and whatever the future holds in store for us – it is easy to make some food storage mistakes. I prefer to call these mistakes “goofs” for no other reason than to laugh at myself after the fact then learn and move on, doing it better the next time. Frivolity aside, today I would like to list some common food storage mistakes that are typically made in the quest to implement a long term food storage plan.



### Common Food Storage Mistakes

#### 1. Storing food you don't like.

Number one on the list is storing food you don't like or will not eat no matter what. We have all done it: purchased an item while it is on sale because it was a great deal, price-wise. If you won't eat it now, what makes you think you will eat it later? Spending money and using your precious storage space on food you will not eat is just plain silly.

#### 2. Failure to rotate out of date/expired food products.

This has happened to me more times than I dare admit. Many food items will be edible beyond their expiration date but others will not. Some products will taste bad or lose nutritional value and others may turn rancid. My recommendation? Label everything with the date of purchase. Sharpie pens were created for this purpose. Keep a log, or a notebook, or reminders in your Outlook file. Whatever system you use, rotate your stored food items well in advance of the pull date.

#### 3. Storing everything in the same place.

Think about it. If everything is stored in your basement and the basement is flooded, you may have a problem. All of your food will be destroyed and you will go hungry. I know, you are thinking that everything you store has been properly packaged in moisture proof packaging. If you have 3 feet of water in your basement, that will not matter since you will not be able to get to it. The wise prepper stores food in a multitude of locations.

#### 4. You do not know how to use it.

Many newbie preppers stock up on wheat and other whole grains. That's great since grains are jam-packed nutrition storehouses but – and a big but – do you know how to prepare grains for consumption? A while back I wrote an [article on wheat](#) and lamented the poor prepper who had tons of wheat but nothing to eat. For heaven's sake, do not purchase wheat or anything else if you do not know how to use it. (Of course it would not hurt to learn how to use wheat. If you are interested, check out the excellent book by John Hill, [How to Live on Wheat.](#))

Now I don't mean to pick on wheat and grains – this applies to any food items you purchase for the long term. When you purchase something new and unfamiliar, hold some back and learn how to prepare it before your life depends on it.

**5. Storing a lot of basic foodstuffs but no comfort foods.**

Plan to eat well, and eat healthy but be sure to allow for a splurge once in a while, too. Perhaps the splurge will be popcorn which is easily stored and can be sprinkled with butter powder for that theatre-popped taste. Or how about some hard candies or cocoa (made from powder)? Assess your family's likes and try to put away a few comfort items for the long term. Heck, even boxes of mac and cheese may be just the thing to comfort the soul when times are bad.



**6. Improper storage temperatures.**

Heat is one of the enemies of food storage and not something that a lot of people think about. If you have a basement or cellar, you are in luck since cooler temperatures will prolong the shelf life of food items considerably.

**7. Not storing liquids to reconstitute your dried items.**

Have you ever tried to cook rice without water or broth? How about dried beans or pasta? Make sure you have enough water, canned broth or even juices to prepare your dried and packaged food products.

**8. Not planning for alternate cooking facilities and sources of cooking fuel.**

This should be a no brainer but for many, it is not. When the power goes out, you will need a fire, a grill or a portable stove. And don't forget fuel. In the best of all worlds, a [rocket stove](#) that burns biomass (twigs, pinecones and such) is an easy and inexpensive solution to the cooking dilemma following a disaster or crisis.

**9. No condiments or spices to wake up the taste buds.**

Salt, pepper, some chili powder, mustard, sugar, honey – the list is endless. These items do not need to cost a lot nor do they need to take up an extraordinary amount of space. When push comes to shove, however, your eating experience will be greatly enhanced by having a few things on hand to enliven the taste of your stored food stuffs.

**10. Not enough variety.**

Most people need and want variety. This is especially true for children, the elderly and the infirm who may already be picky eaters. Plus, you need a variety of foods in order to get a full complement of nutritional value for your meals. Sure, if the SHTF you will be thankful to have anything to eat – calories being more important than taste. But in planning your long term food storage, you have the luxury of time so go ahead and plan on some variety.

**11. Purchasing food in inappropriate sizes.**

YMMV but many preppers prefer to package food in small, manageable sizes. Items stored for the long term (beans, rice, lentils, cereals, dog food etc.) can be stored in 1 gallon Mylar bags and not the larger, 5 gallon size. Four or five of these small bags are then put in a closed bucket or bin so that they can be pulled out for use

one at a time. The advantage of doing this is that if there is a short term emergency, you can pull out what you need without having to repackage and reseal the entire 5 gallon package or bucket.

## 12. Improper storage containers.

This applies to a lot of things. Here is an example: do not store rice in a bucket that previously held pickles without pre-packaging the rice in a Mylar bag. Pickle-flavored rice may taste good if you are pregnant but practically no one else will appreciate this exotic dish. Make sure your food storage containers did not hold toxic chemicals in a prior life and make sure your containers are moisture and pest-proof.

## 13. Purchasing a kit of food items without evaluating the contents.

This is another lesson that many learn the hard way. Before purchasing a kit of any type, look at the contents and decide how many of the items will be truly useful. If there are items you don't want, can you give them away to someone else? Also look at the total cost. Is the kit still a good value even though you will not use everything? BTW, this also applies to bulk sized product at Costco, Sam's or other warehouse type stores. In many cases, purchasing a giant sized package knowing that a third will not get used is still okay given the low price to begin with. But do not assume this – sometimes it is better to pay more per ounce for a smaller size.

## 14. Don't worry about a 25 or 30 year shelf life if you are 70 years old!

I am being a tad bit cynical and facetious here but really, if your lifespan is 20 years, don't worry too much about 30 year items. Sure, you can give them away, donate them, or use them in less than 30 years but the point is, don't stress if the items you store away have only a 10 or 20 year shelf life. Go back to mistake #10, "Variety". It is better to have a mix of items with varying shelf lives than to get hung up on extremely long storage life.

## Summing it all up

In this article, I have shared some common mistakes when storing food for the long term. By avoiding these mistakes, you will eliminate waste and will get the most from your food prepping dollar. The best advice I can offer, is that regardless of your reason for storing food, think through your purchases in advance and make the right decisions now to insure that your food supply will there for you when you need it the most.

For more information on food storage for the long term visit the following articles on my website at [Backdoor Survival](#):

[Food Storage Part I – A Primer on Oxygen Absorbers](#)

[Food Storage Part II: Unraveling the Mystique of Mylar Bags](#)

[Food Storage Part III: Food Grade Buckets, Lids and Gamma Seals](#)

*Gaye Levy, the Survival Woman on Backdoor Survival*

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You can also find Gaye on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/thesurvivalwoman> and on Twitter at [https://twitter.com/Survival\\_Woman](https://twitter.com/Survival_Woman).

## How Horrific Will It Be For The Non-Prepper?

Mac Slavo

*Editor's Note: You have no doubt had your own set of issues dealing with friends and family members that simply don't see the writing on the wall. The following article may serve to assist you in convincing those who simply don't know, don't want to know, don't care, or have never even thought to contemplate. Some of the scenarios outlined below may be frightening, as they should be, because when it hits the fan millions of people will be thrown into desperation with no hope of a solution. Be Informed provides a variety of point-by-point details that may (and hopefully will) convince the non-prepared individual to at least insulate themselves with the basic necessities. The consequences for not doing so, as you'll see, are severe and often deadly.*

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I have become personally so disenchanted with the way people fail to prep. People still don't understand how important it is to put away. I have gotten into arguments over this and had cretins call me a fool because I put away food, water, and supplies. I thought about this and the frustration that other preppers have with this laid back idiotic attitude that there is no need for preparation. There are good people that just can't/won't start preparing. They have the money to do so, but just don't want to. Many have only seen what happens to non-preppers on TV, but it still doesn't make an impact.

In this article I detail some hard core realities to show just how awful it will be for those that don't prep. Every one of these scenarios is something that has occurred to the non-prepper throughout history. While strong images come to mind, the purpose is to jar some people out of their inaction and into action before it is too late.

Preppers are good people and care much about those around them, and unless something does jar those around them that choose not to prep, their own survival chances could be reduced. For every bit of food, water, ammunition, or supplies you sacrifice to the non-prepper, the fewer irreplaceable supplies are left for you and your family in a crisis situation. It is hoped that the following can help certain people put into TRUE perspective just how horrific it will be for those that don't prepare.

### **Here are the awful consequences for those refusing to prep.**

As the world continues to decay at multiple facets, the common person has and continues to be lulled into a sense that everything is improving and will continue to for the distant future. After all, to them unemployment has peaked out and will drop until everyone that wants to work will easily be able to find good paying work, North Korea is no threat because all their long range "bottle rockets" fizz out, sanctions will eventually make Iran give up their nuclear program, oil prices will start going down after June or so, Europe will bail out Greece and Spain and everyone else, and U.S. debt will eventually come under control.

After 2012 everyone that has prepared themselves will go back to more "sensible" lives. "Good times are coming", baseball season is here, let's get back to watching some more crackerjack news.

It is amazing how people become good conversationalists with most others discussing all the gossip related news, while becoming mentally tranquilized into a totally deceptive state of denial of truly dangerous issues of the times. It's the blind leading the blind... right off the cliff.

Rather than dealing with harsh reality, people surround themselves with easy to digest material that can be talked about without directly influencing anyone's lives. Meaningless chatter. Even for those unwilling to even think to prepare for a societal catastrophic event, there is also no desire to even face the extreme possibility of a sudden loss of one's employment. A personal SHTF.

Look at some of the terrible personal pain experienced in America right now – and it hasn't even hit the fan on a grand scale. Those people who have lived it up on credit, who failed to put much of anything away for a rainy day, who've lost their job, and who eventually lost their unemployment benefits are experiencing the first level of collapse. This is happening to millions of people in our own country, all around us, as we speak.

These Americans, who once enjoyed the luxuries that modern living had to offer, are now at their wits end, with very little hope for a return to their previous lives. They are no longer able to pay most or any of their bills. Many have to humiliatingly turn to others for help to pay for food, or worse, to obtain old, unhealthy and poor tasting food from locally funded food banks. Their credit cards are totally worthless. Many have been evicted from their homes and have uprooted their families to live either on the street, in tent cities, with relatives, or have been forced to live at homeless shelters. They've had their vehicles repossessed, or simply can't afford the gasoline anymore. Their living conditions often make it difficult, if not impossible, to look presentable for job interviews. For many, the life of stability they knew just a short while ago is gone, replaced with fear and a constant stress to the point of nervous breakdown.

A personal economic meltdown is confined to the individual or family, or at worst a few families. The human civilization remains intact and so do society's safety nets.

With food assistance, rental assistance, homeless shelters, and family to turn to, even the most destitute are almost always able to find some sort of help – however menial.

It is no wonder with these known assistance programs, then, that people have forgotten or never thought to consider what happens IF and WHEN human civilization goes through a strong enough SHTF event. If that happens on a mass scale what happens to everyone that needs help that has not prepared ahead of time? What happens when governments are in such total disarray or destroyed altogether that they can't help even if they wanted to?

The media and others have portrayed the good people that sacrifice much if not all "luxuries" of life to prepare themselves and their family and friends for extreme times, as chicken littles. Those who have made the choice to store up emergency food, water, and other necessities to avoid extreme life threatening risks, including suffering horribly during and after a widespread SHTF event, are laughed at and ridiculed often for "wasting" their lives on delusional paranoia.

But who is delusional? Those who see the signs around them and understand how vulnerable the system is, or those who believe that things never change, that politicians have their best interests at heart, and that if the worst happens the government will be there to provide everything they may need?

How many have considered the dire consequences of their failure to prepare in the event that the infrastructure and everything a country's people depend on totally collapses?

The misery from long term unemployment and lack of money is like a walk in the park compared to the severe anguish and dangerous conditions that await those who have failed to prepare for the aftermath of a large scale cataclysm. The "minor" problems of unemployment that seem extremely major and painful to

most today should serve as a wake up call to what life will be like when something much, much worse happens – when those proverbial safety nets are no longer there to catch us.

Many preppers have become deeply frustrated at those around them, especially those that truly mean something to them, because they simply refuse to put away anything at all for emergencies. The prepper is usually a person that cares a lot and it is often difficult for them to take a tough stance towards the people that they care about. However, unless someone changes the habits of those people that fail to get ready, decisions will need to be made, and they won't be easy.

The choice of what the prepared prepper should do will boil down to either either adding these people to their own circle or survival group and reduce the group's safety, supplies and self sufficiency, OR, they will have to let the non-prepper fend for themselves. This is a very personal choice, and each of us will need to decide based on our own morals, ethics and personal relationships.

As a last ditch effort, discussing the following scenarios with the non-prepper may help them understand what life will be like without what has sustained them so comfortably for so long.

This is the hard reality the non prepper needs to understand:

- Without power the water company cannot get water to their faucets. Without water dehydration occurs within 24 hours. Dehydration causes much suffering before death.
- Toilets in homes, unless they have an incineration toilet that still need power to work, don't flush without water. Where will they go to the bathroom and then where will they dispose of human waste?
- There will be no clean water available anywhere, especially in major cities, and they cannot live more than about three days without it.
- Drinking dirty and polluted water will make them incredibly sick and accelerate the dehydration process.
- Polluted water must be purified and that means having a good filter, bleach or other disinfectant, or fuel and something to boil water with.
- Understand just how fragile the power and the infrastructure is that pumps water to the public. A breakdown in our power infrastructure or a cyber attack against utility systems will render them useless.
- A single event can rapidly lead to a cascade of other events that would certainly collapse almost, if not, everything. This is why major snow storms, hurricanes or solar events in the past have affected millions of people in an entire region all at once.
- A single, seemingly unimportant event may become quite terrible as its repercussions spread; this can include a far and away disaster.
- Understand that the economies of the world are so interwoven that when one major economy falls it affects everyone.
- Not having any food in the house means that if the stores are emptied suddenly in a bad enough situation that there will be no food available for a long period of time afterward. Recent history during disasters around the world has shown that stores can literally be emptied in minutes.
- Think about how totally horrible the feeling of being very hungry is and what circumstances would cause one to be desperate enough to eat anything.

- ALL stores can be closed instantly under martial law.
- Understand that you may not be able to purchase anything after it starts, especially with any credit cards.
- Understand the complexity of food and water distribution; breaks in these chains can stop anything from getting to the people.
- What life will be like if no toilet paper is stored?
- Understand that without light sources, the night will be pitch black, often with zero visibility.
- There will be no communications, other than probably martial law type of instructions over the radio, that is if they have batteries for the radio.
- Other than ham and shortwave radio, any information that is available will be sent out by the government as filtered propaganda that “they” want everyone to hear.
- Without power consider what it will be like to not have any heat to stay warm, or air conditioned air to stay cooler – with no way of alleviating the situation.
- Travelling will likely be by foot or bicycle, as there will be no fuel and roadways may be blocked.
- Realize that ANY travel outside of the home or neighborhood will be extremely dangerous as ANYONE who moves becomes a target
- Non preppers will be pushed way beyond their limit because of lack of supplies.
- The non prepper must realize their government does not really care about them individually, that they are a mere number and help will likely not come from them.
- They have to figure out somewhere to get food. This can mean wild plants which they must know how to identify as safe, or risk poisoning themselves.
- They have to understand that when we refer to “having no food” it doesn’t mean not having the food they are used to enjoying, it means no food to eat at all.
- They have to understand that if they are fortunate enough to have any running water, they will probably have to bathe in cold water for lack of stored fuel to heat water.
- They have to realize that the very strange and totally unexpected is going to be all around them, made that much worse because of lack of any reliable self defense stores or skills.
- They might have to remain on the run constantly because of looking for water and food.
- They must understand that bad will be magnified magnitudes to living misery because of lack of food, water, and other necessary items that they took for granted for so long.

Okay, now comes the “truly ugly and unthinkable” life that most, if not all, people that have failed and refused to prepare themselves will deal with. Clear vivid visualization is key here for anyone that holds the idea of prepping.

What **horrors they will likely face** after a cave-in of their nation’s economy, war, geophysical upheaval, or whatever crisis is bad enough to disturb or stop their nation from working and functioning? There are plenty of very potential SHTF events that are simply awaiting a catalyst to trigger them.

- The Non-Prepper (NP) has to realize right off the bat that 911 and other emergency calls in will be met with silence or some recording telling the caller not to panic.

- The (NP) that has no reliable self defense that can stop an attacker, will not get help from public services, and will become a victim of rape, assault, torture, or murder.
- The (NP) that has no reliable self defense and will not only be at the mercy of criminal elements, but also have to contend with many desperate animals, some with rabies.
- The (NP) that has no food will either have to find food or be ready to beg for food or worse, like sacrificing their bodies or other horrible acts or things to get a bite of food.
- The (NP) will have to go through the worst, most rancid conditions of garbage to just maybe find what they should have stored up.
- The (NP) will go through panic and near if not total psychosis looking for any water source right before their bodies begin shutting down during advanced stages of dehydration.
- The (NP) will go through unbearable trauma when their children and other people around them are crying, screaming, and suffering with intense hunger pains in their stomachs.
- The (NP) will have to deal with the awful stench of rotting wastes from many sources because they have not taken the effort to even store up waste disposal plastic bags.
- The (NP) will have disease and pathogens everywhere, not only because they have no trash disposal means, but because they haven't prepared how to deal with trash and waste.
- The (NP) will have to live in very primitive conditions after things around them deteriorate rapidly, because they have neglected putting away anything to make life more bearable.
- The (NP) and those around them will likely develop all sorts of infective skin rashes from the lack of insight of storing up toilet paper. **Imagine the smell for a moment.**
- The (NP) will have to handle biting insects and other vermin that will collect amongst the filth that will pile up. No pest control stored up along with no other supplies.
- The (NP) will have no way of treating sickness certain to follow a SHTF event, no first aid and likely no training or knowledge about how to treat the ill on top of this.
- The (NP) will have sick and dying people around them because of not being able to treat minor injuries. Didn't even stock up on disinfectives. Unsanitary conditions lead to infection.
- The (NP) and others around them will experience much grief as they watch helplessly as their family members literally die of starvation right in front of their eyes.
- The (NP) won't believe how desperate hunger drives them and those that mean everything to them to "trying" to eat food that taste so bad it gags them and comes back up.
- The (NP) will likely have family and friends around them that have also not prepared committing suicide because they can't take it any longer.
- The (NP) will witness some of those people around them lose any sense of civilized humanity in them and behave like wild animals after some time from lack of necessities.
- The (NP) and family members, maybe friends also, will at some point end up barbecuing or eating raw the family dog, cat, bird, any pet dear to everyone for food.
- The (NP) will likely get into physical fights with other family members over any scrap of food available as rational thoughts are lost to wanton hunger.
- The (NP) as many other (NP's) will eventually go out of any safety of their home looking for food and or water, become disorientated and lost, and die a hard death somewhere.

- The (NP) that is “lucky” enough to find some government help will likely have to almost sell their soul, probably all their freedom, to get tiny rations – just enough to keep them alive.
- The (NP) will see widespread violence and barbarism that will shock them to the core and will wish that they had purchased some form of firearm and stocked up on ammunition.
- The (NP) better get used to attempting to explain the children and other adults why they wasted all that money on junk, and didn’t buy any emergency food and other supplies.
- The (NP), no matter how positive they are will drop quickly into depression and lose willpower as having nothing to hold on to does this, along with lack of any nutrition.
- The (NP) will feel the worst guilt imaginable as they hear their family moaning in anguish from lack of anything to eat, knowing they could have done something to prepare.
- The (NP) will most likely not see the rebuilding and recovery after A SHTF event. They will, like almost all NP’s, be statistics. Some will die hours or a day before help arrives.
- The (NP) from lack of food, drinking bad water, no light at night, the horrid smells, no good self defense, the overall horror, will often be paralyzed with fear and despair, blank stare.
- The (NP) is totally helpless after SHTF, will have to rely totally on charity of those prepared to live. They will take all sorts of desperate measures likely to get them shot. They’ll attempt to eat hazardous foods like an animal trapped in a house will do, and get sick and suffer much before dying. The (NP) will likely die (ugly and hard) as they lived, unprepared for anything.

If we were to use one single word to describe the torments that someone who “chooses” not to prepare will go through after a true you know what hits the fan it would be “PREVENTABLE”.

Almost every single person, even a very poor person, has the capacity to put away emergency food and supplies. Even homeless people have stashes of something just in case things become so bad that the normal hand outs and thrown-away items dry up. Many people with good sources of income don’t even have an extra can of food or any water put away at all. This is stupidity beyond words.

Every day lightweight disasters happen in all parts of the world that disturb services enough that people are confined to their homes for a certain amount of time. While recovery is short, people are still uncomfortable during these times. Look what happens after a power outage at night and you will be mystified at how many homes are completely dark for hours. People have not even bought an extra couple of candles or any battery operated light sources. Even in well-to-do neighborhoods you may hear only a lone generator going after a blackout. This lack of preparedness is truly frightening and plays itself out again, again, and again every time services are disrupted for minor to major reasons. It’s as if there is something wrong with storing extra food, water, and supplies.

Even after “lessons” played out to what happens to those non-prepared, most people still feel that it just cannot happen to them, or won’t ever happen to them again. It should be proof enough to people what happens to those unprepared after disasters simply by looking at those that have gone through it firsthand. The difference, though, comes in that these disasters have had recovery periods and help from others. Even Haiti received some help and conditions remain putrid over there.

After a TRUE SHTF, it is presumable that government help and others coming to the aid of those in need WON’T happen for long periods of time. During that time those that have chosen to not put food, water, and necessities away are going to be in life threatening positions. Most people just don’t get that when the supermarket shelves are empty they will stay that way for an extended period. When the utilities go

down, especially water, it may be weeks, months, or longer before they come back, if ever. Without what someone needs to survive each day, it is not going to magically appear, and depending on the goodwill of others to feed them and sacrifice their own family's survival chances is a terrible choice.

People **MUST** know what life will be like after SHTF in mega fashion if they refuse to prepare. This is **NOT** new. Terrible events have plunged people into the deepest levels of desperation and hopelessness, and they will happen again and again.

While the above consequences to the non-prepper are extremely abysmal for anyone to read, the simple fact of the matter is they have already happened time and time again to those that have nothing put away. People have resorted to cannibalism and gone to levels of primitive savage behavior out of sheer desperation and out of literally losing their minds to the physical depletion of food and water that keeps the physical body operating. Sometimes showing the extreme severity and results of a person's lack of action, such as failure of the simple act of putting away extra food, water, and supplies, can be the kick in the complacency that they need.

It's really easy to put away food and supplies. All one has to do is add a little bit of extra food to the grocery cart for long-term storage. Over time this adds up to a well stocked pantry of supplies.

There is something that is in a can of food that everyone can eat and enjoy the taste of, so talk to family members about their nutritional preferences and start stocking up. Toilet paper and other supplies that really don't have any expiration date can be put away and forgotten about 'til needed.

There **MUST** be common sense and intelligence to see what happens **IF** they don't stock up for the future. There has to be the **DESIRE** to get started, and this is the real problem with so many.

Once started, however, prepping becomes a type of life saving routine or positive lifestyle habit. It is easy and can and will save one from misery. It may save their life and the lives of their family from ruin when SHTF, which is almost inevitably going to happen someday. Every month and year that goes by without a true SHTF event, makes it more likely that it will happen. Basic statistical chance shows this to be the case, but people continue the same pattern of behavior that has led them to the same devastation countless time before.

For those preppers that have people around them that refuse to prepare, you can at least have some degree of solace knowing that you tried to show the non-prepping person(s) what not having anything will mean to them and their families.

All we can do is try. Once we've given it our best shot, all we can do is let those who have been warned about the direness of the possibilities live their lives the way that want to. They will, unfortunately, live in a world of regret and suffering if the nation and the world falls apart around them.

To every action there is an opposite equal reaction. Preppers will see their efforts have been more than worth it. Objects that are motionless tend to remain motionless and non-preppers will find there are horrific consequences for their lack of effort and motion to put away "life insurance" preps for themselves and their families.