

screen, wide brimmed hat, and so on. While in the arctic you'll want gear that will assist you in staying warm, such as hot foods, shelter, and a good sleeping bag. The environment plays a key role in your survival efforts and should always be considered as you assemble or purchase a survival kit. So, keep in mind your knowledge, environment, and gear you think you'll honestly need.

An experienced person outdoors can survive with very little, compared to those without experience. For instance, in most cases, I carry the items listed below and know I can survive for days using the gear.

- A quality penknife or jack knife;
- Good quality first aid kit;
- Plastic whistle - to signal with;
- Two zip-lock freezer bags for water storage;
- Water proof matches;
- Signaling mirror;
- Flint and steel or a metal match;
- Water purification tablets or bleach. I prefer bleach, because it's the best way to purify water;
- A long strip of heavy duty aluminum foil folded up to cook with;
- Fishing kit, i.e., hooks, sinkers, and some line. Nothing fancy;
- Commercial back packing first aid kit (with instructions);
- One small pack of gum and one of hard candy (energy);
- Also, I carry three other things on my

person. I carry a good quality space blanket, dry socks, and about twenty feet of nylon cord.

You may have noticed, I did not say I would be comfortable during my survival situation. You'll notice the lack of a meal or real food and that's not an important issue for most healthy individuals. We can go weeks without food, but only a limited time without water, depending on the temperature. In the desert, for instance, a temperature of over 100 degrees can kill you in just a few hours, but that also depends on a number of variables. In this article I don't have the space to expand on desert survival.

Now, a good minimum survival kit has: A knife, whistle, magnesium match, signal mirror, water treatment tablets, small fishing kit, compass, and water container of some sort. You can order a good minimum survival kit from the Simple Survival Store, and the prices are pretty low, but if you're like most folks, *you'll need a lot more gear than a minimum survival kit.*

At Country Sporting Goods you'll find a complete list of survival kits that are sure to meet the needs of anyone experiencing an emergency. The store carries car survival kits, blackout survival kits, emergency survival kits, food and water, and the list goes on and on. The gear is made in the US and not cheap imports, so you know you're buying quality survival gear. All of your survival gear should be the best you can afford and cut no corners in gear quality. Remember, you're betting your life on the survival gear you have with. When push-comes-to-shove, your survival gear is your *life insurance policy.*

William L. Benton has previously authored two books on Survival. You can visit his site <http://www.simplesurvival.net> to download a free E-book titled, 120 Outdoor Kids Recipes.

PICKING THE PERFECT HUNTING OR SURVIVAL KNIFE FOR THE KNIFE HUNTER: MY TOP 5 TIPS

When you're trying to decide on that perfect survival or hunting knife it's easy to get caught up in the details. I am a knife hunter that means I hunt for the best knives available. Here's my top 5 tips to put you on the right path and find the knife that's right for you.

5. Drop point or Bowie style?

As a knife hunter, I personally love a Bowie style knife, but in reality a drop point blade is actually a better design for survival or hunting applications. It lends itself better for camp chores and for skinning.

4. Black, Stainless Steel, Powder Coated... Choose a blade type.

The black material on a blade will eventually wear off if the knife is used a lot. However, in survival situations you don't necessarily want to advertise your location by light shining on your stainless steel blade. Powder coated blades look nice and will help keep the blade from rusting. A shiny blade can double as a mirror, so it really depends on your specific application.

3. Pick your handle type.

Are you going to be using your knife in the cold or in wet weather? You may want to go with some type of rubberized handle. If you're more into the beauty of the knife you may want to get one made of bone, horn, or some exotic wood. Stacked leather is always a nice option too.

2. Serrated or straight blade?

Many knives come with a small area of serration either on the top of the spine or usually on the blade close to the handle. This is great for quickly cutting rope, or tinder for a fire, or anything else you may need to use a sawing motion for. But this area is hard to sharpen, especially for a novice. It takes special sharpening stones to keep the edge tuned up. A straight blade knife is easier to keep sharp and some knives even come with an integrated sharpener in the sheath.

And the number one tip... SIZE, bigger is not always better.

A knife with a 3-5 inch blade is about all the knife you will ever need in any situation. That will still make the knife around 7-10 inches long.

Marlin Zeller is an avid collector of knives from many different manufacturers. Check out <http://www.squidoo.com/knifehunter> for more information on fixed blade knives.

5 WAYS TO CARE FOR YOUR HUNTING OR SURVIVAL KNIFE HOW IMPORTANT IS A HUNTING SURVIVAL PLAN DURING A DISASTER?

Many times when thinking of a disaster or survival situation, many have a plan to rely on hunting skills to have food available during that time. The idea is that plenty of food will be there for the taking from various animals and game to feed you and your family. Is this really the best way to prepare for a disaster situation?

Cost

If your preparation time and money is going into guns and ammo as opposed to food, then the cost will be too high. Guns and ammunition are not cheap by any means but food that you can actually use is. If you have the money, you can do both but get food first since you can actually have a real supply on hand.

Time

Will you realistically have the time to go hunt and prepare what you may or may not find? Every minute you are out hunting you are away from your family who might be depending on you.

Safety

When there are limited supplies and people who may be a bit panicked, is walking around in the woods with a weapon the best of ideas? This could potentially cause someone to be scared and think that you are an attacker as opposed to just a hunter.

Availability

How many other people in your area are thinking about hunting game for food? If there are too many hunters too fast, many of the available food will not be around for you to depend on. It's a good idea to have food stored in case you can't find the meat you need through hunting.

You have a great knife that you can't leave behind when you hit the great outdoors. Your knife needs to perform to cut branches, skinning or cleaning your catch. At the end of the day or hunt your knife has performed as it should. How long your knife lasts is determined on how you care for it. To help you keep your knife in perfect condition here are a few tips to follow.

1. Specialty knives are just that, for a special purpose. For example: A skinning knife is used for that purpose only. You don't want to use this knife to cut branches or use as a pry bar. You will only dull or ruin your knife altogether.

2. Cleaning your knife after each use is a must. The blade is important to clean, but don't forget the handle and even the shaft. Use running water to clean your knife, remember never to soak your knife. Dry your knife thoroughly, because moisture on your knife can lead to rust, and a inefficient knife. Keeping your knife dry can be tough, especially if you are in a wet environment. Get in the habit of drying your knife off after use, especially if its your favorite knife. Use a leaf in the field to dry off your knife. If your knife is made of carbon steel, you can also use baking soda and water. Use just plain water and dish soap on stainless steel knives. Try to avoid touching your stainless steel knife. Acid left on the blade from your fingerprint can actually stain your knife, and overtime cause corrosion. Never put your knife in a automatic dishwasher, as the detergent contains abrasives and salt that can cause corrosion.

3. Oil your knife on a regular basis, this will prevent friction. Oil can provide a protective coating on the blade that keeps rust from forming. If you have a folding knife, oil is more important for the moving parts and joints. Use the same oil you use for your firearms or just household oil. Some oils can leave a aftertaste in your meat, in that case use a food grade mineral base oil. Be leary of oiling your handle as this will cause it to be slippery. Wood handles can be treated with linseed oil. Remember a little oil

goes a long way. If your handle if made of rubber or artificial materials, nothing is required. But if you feel the need, treat it with armor all. Leather handles can be treated with mink oil. This also works good on sheaths. Bone or stag handles that have crevies should be cleaned with soap and water. Crevices and cracks in your knife can cause dirt buildup, which can draw moisture and can damage your knife.

4. Have your knife serviced when you notice you have a dull blade or your knife is losing its shine. If you don't know how to sharpen your knife, it might be a good idea to take it to a professional and have them do it for you. There are professionals out there, you just have to look for them. There are even a few where you send in you knife through the mail, when they are done they send it back to you. Having a dull knife on your trip will only do more harm than good. If you have experience or think you can sharpen your knife yourself, go for it. Don't be afraid to ask a professional for help.

5. Your knife should be store in a humidity free environment to keep it dry. Your leather sheath is a great place to store you knife in the field, but don't keep it there for a long time. The chemicals they use in the leather sheath can cause damage to the blade of your knife. You need something non acidic to store you knife in. To store you knife for a long time, use paper and wrap your knife with it, then place it in a plastic bag with a desiccant to keep it dry.

A quality knife is designed to last a lifetime. With a little effort and proper maintenance you can enjoy your knife in the great outdoors for a long time.

Tom is passionate about the outdoors and all it has to offer. If you want to know more about the type of Survival Knives out there, please visit:

<http://www.mysurvivalknife.com>