



# GOING OUTDOORS?



This is a compilation of articles I put together with some of my own to make all of your outdoor adventures safe, memorable and enjoyable. Of particular interest to me is the article on the Kids Kit & How To Equip Kids for a Wilderness Trip.

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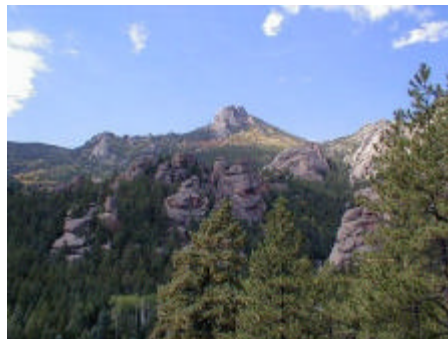
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## Survival Basics - "Your Mind is Your Greatest Survival Tool"

When an outdoor accident occurs no matter how slight, or when you realize you are lost, panic is the first reaction we all must encounter and defeat before it brings on more harm. How you handle the effects brought on by panic can determine your rate of success or failure in any outdoor emergency situation. Anyone can become lost, separated or stray too far from camp as night sets in. Just remember that you have within you the ability to protect yourself. Survival is a common element in all human beings, we do it everyday in the concrete and asphalt jungles of civilization...now you have to do it in the wilderness. The premise is the same, keep your wits, use your brain. **DO NOT PANIC**...let your positive self rule your decisions.

To emphasize the effect that panic has on an individual, let me familiarize you with the "RULES OF 3". Experience has shown that you can only expect to survive a panic induced emergency situation for 3 seconds, you can only survive without oxygen or from severe bleeding for up to 3 minutes, you can survive exposure to excess heat or frigid cold for up to 3 hours and you can survive without food and water for up to 3 days. Panic is your major enemy, panic is the one thing you must overcome at once because panic can and will harm you.

To help you deal with panic lets look at a simple method of handling an emergency situation. Remember the acronym **S.T.O.P.**

**STOP means Sit, Think, Observe, and Plan.** It is the most intelligent thing you can do when you realize you are lost or stranded. The most important element is to keep your brain functioning rationally, this is basic first aid for survival. Analyze your needs before every trip, create a medical checklist and carry a small personal kit with you at all times. Never keep your survival equipment with the rest of your stuff, like in your backpack. Keep it separate and close. Most survival situations require only dressing for small cuts, bruises and personal medication needs, make sure you know what you have with you and how to use it. Do not over pack, pack what you feel you will need to carry with you at all times. Concentrate on being found, pack a picture of your family in with your gear to remind you of the reasons to remain calm and to survive. Prevent hypothermia by insulating yourself in a Space Blanket. Make a simple shelter if it looks like you will have to stay the night, and have a wood stacked so you can quickly start a fire if you need to stay warm or to use for a signal. To break it down:

**SIT:** When you realize that you are lost take the time to sit down and collect your thoughts. You are not lost, you are right where you are, your camp, vehicle and everyone else is lost.

**THINK:** What do I have at my disposal both physical and mental that can help me in this situation. Take an inventory of your survival kit items and how you will use them. Take an inventory of your mind, remember what you always thought you would do if you got lost. Most of all remain positive, you will survive.

**OBSERVE:** Look around, is there shelter, water, high ground, an open area so the searchers can see you. It will be easier for those searching to find you if you can stay in one selected location



that will allow you to build a fire, provide shelter, set out signals and be in an area that can be seen at a distance or from aircraft .

PLAN: Now create your plan of action. Be positive and take care of yourself. If it is late in the day, build a fire for heat and signaling, find or make a shelter against the weather, and most of all remain positive, you do have the ability to survive. You have conquered the major danger of not allowing panic to cast your fate, you can now conquer anything else that confronts you.

### SUGGESTED SURVIVAL KIT

*This is only a suggested outline for a personal outdoor survival kit, customize your kit to meet your specific needs.*

#### **\*Leave a detailed trip itinerary with someone you trust\***

Wilderness survival requires:

- Will to survive and a proper mental attitude
- Physical fitness
- Knowledge and skills (first aid, survival skills, wild plant identification, land navigation, knotmaking, etc.)
- Tools (broadly defined, this would also include survival manuals).

Anyone who focuses solely on tools without developing the other elements may come to regret it. Moreover, the greater your knowledge and skills, the fewer tools you need. Never forget that your brain and your ability to remain calm and not to panic are your most important survival tools.

The obvious question is, what should you have in your survival kit? This is a question that must be considered carefully since you may be betting your life and possibly the lives of your companions on it during an emergency situation. Make sure your personal survival kit is waterproof, compact and fairly lightweight, so you will carry it always. Your first step should be to stop and THINK. Think about how you would cook breakfast, make a fire, or heed a call of nature. Imagine all the items you would use in each activity. What if you are out hiking after making camp, and a sudden storm catches you away from it? Do you have a map and compass? How will you stay warm once night falls? Do you have any food or water? What if you lose your backpack? What if you fall and break your arm? For what am I preparing? How long am I likely to be on my own? How much space do I have and how much weight can I carry? How much am I willing to spend? Do you need prescription medicines or eye-glasses? What if you lose them? How well can you see without glasses? Should an extra pair be in your kit? How far can you walk without shoes? Through the woods, water, or snow? What if you're not alone? Do your companions have first aid or survival supplies of their own? Think through all the steps involved in surviving one of the above situations and any others you can think of. Getting food, shelter, firewood. How will you make the fire? How will you sleep? By imagining things step by step, you will know what you need for each activity. You will know if it's in your kit and if it isn't.

This brings us back to the question of contents. I have been in several survival courses and told that the bottom line necessities for survival were the ability to cut things and the ability to make fire. This is as good a place to start as any. This is also as small as it can realistically get. Look at the suggestions for survival kit contents in camping and wilderness survival books from your local library. You could look at the contents of survival kits, both commercial and military. Compare and contrast all of them. Each will have some items in common, but each will also have some differences. Think about each one carefully. Know how to use each and every item in your kit. Don't wait till you need it. Make your kit fit the appropriate outdoor environment that you are venturing into. No one kit meets every need—customize your kit to your needs. (cold climate, heat, wet conditions, mountains, desert, one day or longer). Consider how big the final kit will be. I've seen survival kits that, although quite good, were too big and usually got left in the tent, car, or at home. Find a pouch that you are willing to carry everywhere.

#### Some Suggested Survival kit components:

The main elements required for survival are Food, Fire, Shelter and Water (Order of importance depends on where you are). Here are some suggestions of what you may want in a survival kit.

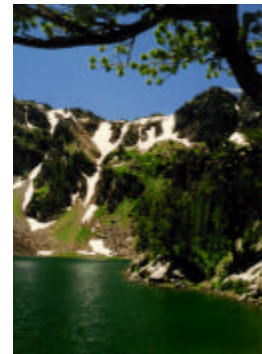
- \* At least 2 different ways to start a fire (Matches, Lighter, Flint, Magnifying Glass)
- \* Candle and small flashlight (with extra batteries)
- \* Lightstick(s)
- \* First Aid Kit (Items in it depend on your skill in using them, the terrain, area and personal needs. Make sure to include any needed personal medication)
- \* Compass and map of area (Navigation. Be familiar with an area before you go!)
- \* Small multiple function knife  
(Optional: A second stronger knife used to cut trees and build shelter)
- \* Snake/Insect bite kit (optional)
- \* Insect repellent (personal comfort/protection)
- \* Water in at least 1 qt container (with drinking/cooking cup)
- \* Water filter or purification kit
- \* Heavy Duty Aluminum foil (cooking, signaling)
- \* Heavy Duty plastic bag, large garbage bags, zip lock (water, food storage, shelter, rain gear)
- \* Space Blanket (shelter, signaling, personal protection) may want to have 2 or 3
- \* Whistle and Signal mirror
- \* Sewing kit including some Duct tape (repairing clothes and equipment)
- \* Flares, bright colored bandanna or flag or an Emergency Strobe (visual means of signaling)
- \* Bouillon cubes, one small pack of instant soup, salt, tea (cooking, flavor)
- \* Hard Candy, high energy bar and/or Jello with sugar, jerky (survival food)
- \* Multivitamins/Protein tablets
- \* Fishing kit (line, hooks, lures, snares, repairs)
- \* Flexible wire saw (shelter building, tinder making)
- \* Rope, string, mousetrap (shelters, snares, repairs)
- \* Jacket/poncho
- \* Stocking cap and Spare socks (double as mittens)

- \* Money (coins) for a pay phone
- \* Paper and pencil stub
- \* Tissues, damp toweletts
- \* Identification
- \* Book: Survival
- \* A picture of your loved ones (will to survive)
- \* Marker Panel (surveyor's tape?)

Never keep your survival equipment with the rest of your stuff, like in your backpack. Keep it separate and close.

## 5 Basic Survival Skills

There are 5 Basic Outdoor Survival Skills that everyone who ventures into the Outdoors should understand and be fully aware of their potential need and use. This is a just brief outline, not a full explanation of all the requirements and items required in each category. One of the most important elements to survival is between your ears, your brain. **DO NOT PANIC**, use your wits and practice all elements of the 5 Basics before you may need to rely on them.



**FIRE** can purify water, cook food, signal rescuers, provide warmth, light and comfort, help keep predators at a distance, and can be a most welcome friend and companion. Each and every person who ventures into the Outdoors should have a minimum of two ways to start a fire with them, one on their person at all times and the other with their gear. A few small fires provides more heat than one large fire. Collect firewood you think you will need for the night and then collect the same amount again, experience shows you will need it. Conserve fuel by making a "star fire" where the ends of large logs meet in the fire only, push inward as more fuel is needed. Make a reflector from your **SPACE BLANKET** on the back wall of a shelter to reflect heat of your survival fire to your back, sit between fire and back shelter wall.

**SHELTER** is the means by which you protect your body from excess exposure from the sun, cold, wind, rain or snow. Anything that takes away or adds to your overall body temperature can be your enemy. Clothing is the first line of shelter protection, have the right clothes for the right environment. Always have a hat. Try and keep the layer closest to your body dry. Layers trap air and are warmer than one thick garment. Do not expend energy making a shelter if nature provides one. Practice building a quick lean-to shelter in case you can not find your campsite, do not wait until you need to make one. Use a **SPACE BLANKET** to prevent dampness or to insulate your shelter or to wrap yourself up in a sitting or squat position to concentrate your body core heat.

**SIGNALING** is having available the means and ability to alert any and all potential rescuers that you are in need of **HELP**. Fire, flashing light, bright color markers, flags, mirrors, whistles all will help you be found. Three fires in a triangular form are a recognized distress signal. Carefully bank your signal fires to prevent igniting surrounding area. Use regular signal mirrors only when you

can see a plane, or people in the distance. Use an Emergency Strobe light at night to help attract attention from those that may be in the area. Make smoky fire with organic material over the fire during the day to attract attention. Lay out ground to air signal in open field, S.O.S. from rocks, logs or colored clothing, whatever will be seen against the background. Most search and rescue parties use aircraft as a primary method of sighting.

FOOD/WATER are vital towards your survival. Ration your sweat not your water intake. Try to drink only in the cool of the evening. You can live up to three days without water. **DO NOT** eat plants you do not know. Never drink urine. Always assume that you will need extra food and water when you plan your trip. Pack energy bars and candy in your pockets at all time, just in case. If possible boil all water 10 minutes plus one minute for every 1000 feet above sea level. Strain water through your handkerchief to remove large particles. Try to drink only in the cool of the evening. Never wait until you are without water to collect it. Have some poly zip bags to collect and store water. Never eat any wild berries that you are not sure of what they are. You can catch rain water in your **SPACE BLANKET** by laying it out in a trench.



FIRST AID is not just the basic medical needs, it is the primary way in which you act to survive. **DO NOT PANIC**, remain calm and do what you have to do to take care of **YOU**. **STOP** means *Sit, Think, Observe, and Plan*. It is the most intelligent thing you can do when you realize you are lost or stranded. The most important element is to keep your brain functioning rationally, this is basic first aid for survival. Analyze your needs before every trip, create a medical checklist and carry a small personal kit with you at all times. Most survival situations require only dressing for small cuts, bruises and personal medication needs, make sure you know what you have with you and how to use it. Do not over pack, pack what you feel you will need to carry with you at all times. Concentrate on being found, pack a picture of your family in with your gear to remind you of the reasons to remain calm and to survive. Prevent hypothermia by insulating yourself in a **SPACE BLANKET**.

## **Fire Basics For Outdoor Adventures**

Almost since the dawn of time, fire has been a key element in man's ability to survive. Fire provides needed warmth for comfort, heat for cooking or purifying water, light for security and flame and/or smoke for sight visibility. Fire also acts as a companion and helps to provide a positive psychological advantage in the quest for survival. You must have the ability to make a fire in any weather, terrain or physical condition. No matter where you are, or what your situation, you must be able to start a fast and efficient fire. Practice your skills before you need to rely on them, experiment with different methods of fire starting, and become comfortable with your ability to do it in a panic situation.



The area that you choose to build your fire should be cleaned down to a hard mineral surface, away from overhanging branches, constructed to take advantage of the wind direction, and if possible, in a somewhat open area for better sight visibility. Where and when possible, you should attempt to build a "fire-pit" outlining the edges with rocks. Choose your rocks carefully, making sure none of them have a high moisture content. Rocks do absorb water and in the intense heat of a fire they may explode, sending shards flying like shrapnel. When constructing a "fire-pit", elevate the back rocks to the point where they are higher than the front. This allows heat to be radiated into your shelter or toward you rather than being lost into the air. At night, bank your fire inward towards your shelter, place your SPACE BLANKET on the back wall of the shelter to reflect back the heat towards you. Sit between the fire and the SPACE BLANKET to capture heat on both sides of your body.

Wooden matches burn longer than paper matches, are less susceptible to moisture and are easier to use. You should waterproof your matches by dipping both ends of the match in melted paraffin, making sure the match is completely covered. Make sure that before you strike the match that you scrape away the wax from the head. If you don't, the wax may pull away the white striking tip. You should have plenty of matches with you at all times stored in a waterproof match safe. Practice various ways to start a fire - before you really need to rely on it for survival.

### BACK UP FIRE STARTING

You should always have with you a minimum of one back up fire starting system as a safety valve to your matches. Butane lighters do not always function well in wet or cold temperatures, and you can not readily see the fuel supply. If you have a butane lighter make sure it is one you can see the fuel level. If you have to use it in cold temperatures warm it up first by placing it under your arm. Be extremely careful as I know of one person who was leaning over his fire and the butane lighter fell from his pocket into the fire and exploded, causing severe burns. Do not rely totally on a disposable lighter for your back up system of fire starting. Here is a few tested back up systems you may wish to assemble for yourself and for other members of your family and friends:

Place 6 wooden strike anywhere or waterproof matches, a piece of emery cloth or sandpaper (for striking in wet weather), some shavings of dry lumber or some cotton wool or lint from your home dryer, for tinder. Wrap this flat in plastic wrap to keep out moisture. Then take your SPACE BLANKET out of the poly package, unfold only a few wraps halfway down the blanket, place your "back up fire" pack inside the blanket and re-fold the blanket. Place the blanket pack into its bag, and place in a zip poly bag or wrap it tightly with plastic wrap or aluminum foil (cooking pot) to keep out moisture. When you need to use your SPACE BLANKET, you will also have the ability to start a fire. You get two types of personal survival protection in one lightweight and compact package.

There are also many other products available on the market, some are easy to use, others require some mastery. Some of the easy to use systems to start a fire are the SPARK LITE, an ingenious little device made by Four Seasons Survival in State College, PA. I recommend this flint wheel stick and starter tab product highly, it is compact, easy to use and very reliable. Others are the MAGNESIUM MATCH, and the METAL MATCH, just be sure you practice with these before



you need to use them, they take some mastering to use efficiently. There are also various commercial products consisting of sawdust, wood shavings and wax mixtures that allow easy use as quick ignitable tinder.

One thing you can do is take a 35mm film canister, pack it tightly with lint or sawdust and add a little kerosene or lighter fluid then seal the cover on tightly with duct tape. When you need it place the contents under your small gathered wood tinder and carefully light it. Be careful it will flash and will burn quickly so have your tinder in place.

My favorite is still two small zip lock poly bags. In one of the bags I place six or eight weatherproof or wax coated strike anywhere wooden matches, dryer lint and small wood shavings. I invert the one bag into the second bag to get two positive seals and keep this in my jacket pocket at all times, strictly as emergency back up.

No matter what you decide to use as a "back up system", practice makes perfect - try them out at home before you really need to rely on them in the Outdoors.

One other "safety tip" is to always carry a small candle in your survival kit - light the candle with your match and use the candle to light your fire - One Match - One Fire. Place the candle in a cup or shield it from the wind after lighting.

Also, making two or three smaller spaced fires creates more area heat than one large fire and three fires in a triangular layout is a recognized distress signal.

## **PERSONAL EQUIPMENT CHECK LIST**

### **PACK**

Frame Pack, Internal Pack, Day Pack, Fanny Pack

### **SHELTER**

Tent/Poles, Mosquito Netting, Space Blanket, Tarp

### **SLEEPING BAG**

Sleeping Bag, Stuff Sack, Ground Pad, Space Blanket

### **ESSENTIALS**

Water and/or Water Purification, Waterproof Matches, Fire Starting Gear, Maps, Compass, Whistle, Signal Mirror, Nylon Cord, Pocket Knife, Space Blanket, Extra Food, Extra Clothing, Sunglasses, Boots

### **COOKING EQUIPMENT**

Stove, Fuel, Bottles, Matches/Lighter, Stove Funnel, Pots/Pans, Fry Pan, Utensils, Ziploc Bags, Can Opener, Knife/Fork/Spoon, Pot Grips/Gloves, Cup, Cutting Board, Scrub Pads, Biodegradable Soap, Aluminum Foil, Spice Kit, Ice Chest, Knife, Storage Containers, Paper



Towels, Freeze Dried Foods, Towel/Washcloths, Large Stuff Sack and 50 ft of Utility Cord for Bear Bagging, etc.

#### CLOTHING - INNER LAYER

Wicking Layer, Liner Socks, Outer Socks, T-shirt/Shorts

#### CLOTHING - OUTER LAYER

Wool/Synthetic, Shirt, Sweater, Jacket, Gloves, Hat

#### CLOTHING - PROTECTIVE

Windbreaker, Raingear, Pancho, Extra Gloves, Extra Socks, Gaiters

#### TRAVEL

Passport, Tickets, Telephone Numbers, Reservations, Medical Records

#### FIRST AID

Sunscreen, Tweezers, Sterile Gauze Pads, Bandage Assortment, Ace Bandage, Pain Reliever, Moleskin, Insect Repellent, Antibacterial, Cleaning Pads, Adhesive Tape, Sunburn Cream, Lip Balm, Anti-Itch Cream, Burn Cream, Antacids, Prescriptions

#### MISCELLANEOUS

Bandanna, Flashlight/Candles, Camera/film/lens, Binoculars, Repair kit, Sewing Kit, Fishing Gear, Paper/Pencil/Pen, Trash Bags, Towels/Soap, Toilet Paper, Reading Material, Personal Toiletries, Moist Towelettes, Coins or Card for Phone, Watch or Clock, Safe Signal Day/Night Mirror, Money, Small Shovel, Playing Cards for Rainy Days, Field Books, Hiking Guides

#### IMPORTANT THINGS TO DO

1. LEAVE A FULL ITINERARY WITH SOMEONE YOU CAN RELY ON. INCLUDE ALL KNOWN DATES AND TIMES.
2. CALL AHEAD FOR AN ACCURATE WEATHER REPORT.
3. DOUBLE CHECK ALL GEAR FOR SAFETY AND RELIABILITY

### **Signal Mirrors - Casting a New Light on the Subject...**

Of all the signaling devices that are used in this age of air assisted rescue, possibly the most useful one is the smallest, simplest, and the one that is least used and understood by most of us who venture into the Outdoors...THE SIGNAL MIRROR. Everyone talks about it, knows about it, but more often than not, nobody really carries one with them or really understands its practical use or potential life saving benefit.

You should have one in your pack or on your person anytime that you venture into the deep woods, mountains or unfamiliar terrain. This is not a shaving mirror or a cheap toy, but a tool for survival that you must appreciate and understand how to use effectively. You do not just flash at

will with a signal mirror, you must create a visible and consistent reflection of light towards the direction of your potential rescuer.

The first step in using a signal mirror is to properly sight it. Hold your mirror surface towards the target that you are trying to signal in one hand close to your face, or off your forehead. Put your other hand in front of you in an outstretched fashion, focus the reflection of the sun onto your hand, adjust your hand and mirror upward and out so that the reflection off the mirror surface coincides with the direction of your intended target area. Using your free hand as a sight line, adjust the reflection to fulfill your needs.

You must determine where your signal is going in order for it to be effective and readjust as you or the sun move around the sky.



As with any **OUTDOOR SAFETY SKILL**, this one also requires some practice to master long before you may find yourself in a position where you really have to rely on it. Take the time to try it in your back yard, or in camp trying to signal a friend in the distance. Practice, Practice, Practice are the basic fundamentals of acquiring any new skill that you wish to add to your personal safety arsenal. **YOU MUST BE AWARE TO BE PREPARED, IT'S YOUR PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY.**

Few people realize how far mirror flashes will carry. For best results, the air should be clear and the sun high in the sky, **BUT** surprisingly strong reflections can be achieved even on hazy or overcast days. The flashes can and may be seen even when you can not see the airplane, just sweep the horizon as there may be someone out there who will see your signal. Consistent bright reflections are a readily recognized distress signal by all who venture into the outdoors... remember to investigate any that you might see on your treks into the Outdoors. If you are not really lost but are having some other difficulty such as a minor injury, look at your map for fire towers or Forest Service lookouts, take a compass fix on it and aim your mirror in that direction. In all cases, **PERSEVERE**, keep at it and don't give up, most rescue sightings are from the air or from distant high vantages.

At night, use fire as a signal by arranging three small fires in a triangular form, use your flashing **EMERGENCY STROBE** (or there is a new product marketed under the name **SAFE SIGNAL**) It is a highly reflective signal mirror for use during the day and also has special properties so it can function to signal at night. During the daylight hours the highly bright mirror surface on one side is utilized as you would any signal mirror, but at night the reverse side of the mirror has a special red surface that you use in conjunction with your flashlight to create a brilliant red flashing beacon of light to help attract attention for up to a distance of 3 miles from the air and as far on the ground depending on the surrounding terrain and the prevailing weather conditions.

If you find yourself without a signal mirror in a survival situation, improvise with a can lid that you can shine up, use your polished knife blade, or your **SPACE EMERGENCY BLANKET**

wrapped over a circular frame created by lashing off a green branch, this makes an excellent large mirror surface from which to create a reflection. **BE PREPARED TO HELP MAKE OTHERS AWARE OF YOUR LOCATION.**

## **Pre-Trip Planning for the Outdoors**

Know your own strengths and limitations. Do not take on more of a trip than you are physically and emotionally trained to handle. Don't become a fool looking for trouble, be honest with yourself about your capabilities. Prepare yourself mentally and physically. The following is a suggested Plan, you must modify it for your specific needs and the terrain that you will be traversing. **THINK SAFETY FIRST.**



### (A.) Make a check list of the items to carry in your pack.

Make two sets of check boxes, check the first box when you choose the item and then when you pack it, check off the second box. Go over each item carefully before you pack it to insure its reliability, quality and the quantity. Think through your trip with the checklist.

Pack things in logistical order of need. Practice packing and unpacking. Make sure your load is evenly distributed. Time spent before you go will make the trip more enjoyable and make you more aware of your pack and its contents.

### (B.) Check all your equipment carefully, at least twice:

1. Bring a good survival kit and first aid kit. Know what is in each kit, where it is packed and how to use all the items.
2. Bring good rain gear and wind protection. Do not forget a hat. It is much easier to keep yourself dry and warm than it is to get dry and warm after a sudden change in the weather.
3. Make sure your choice of footwear is broken in and appropriate. Walk a mile in your boots around town before you have to walk a mile or more in the wilderness. Choose good socks with moisture wicking capabilities to keep you feet dry and warm.
4. Consider the weight and durability to all equipment. A pound in your pack translates to ten pounds of pressure on your back and on your feet. Don't under pack or over pack, take what you really feel that you will need. , **THINK** this through.

### (C.) Take the time to research your destination/activity:

1. Review guidebooks, maps, etc.. Know the area, as you may have to rely on this information for your survival.
2. Discuss your plans with people knowledgeable in the area that you are venturing into. Know the area well, before it knows you.
3. Write down your itinerary in as much detail as possible.

4. Check probable weather conditions by calling ahead and by watching or reading national weather forecasts.

(D.) Practice packing, whether going for a day or a week:

1. Move all your heavy items toward your center of gravity; for men, this is high and forward and for women, it tends to be lower towards the small of the back.
2. Put your maps, trail guide, water, camera, rain gear, fuel bottle and personal safety items and SPACE BLANKET in the outside compartments of your pack where you can easily get to them and where the wet items will not leak.
3. Place your change of clothes on the bottom of the pack, under your food supply, stove, cooking utensils. Usually you will only need these when you stop and can make the time to unpack.
4. Lash your tent, sleeping bag and pads on the outside of the pack in a position where they are out of the way for your outside compartments and do not restrict your movement.

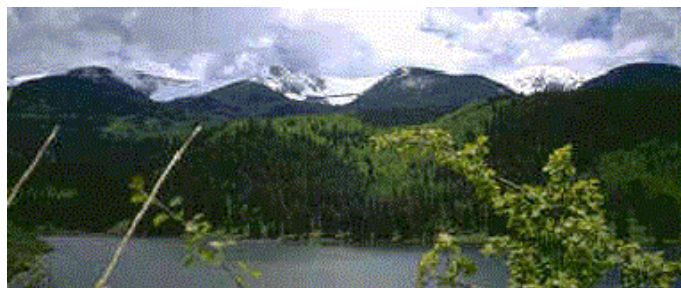


(E.) Do not overlook special items you may need:

1. Winter Items: Extra dark sunglasses, snow shovel, high energy drink, extra pot for melting snow, overmitts, gaiters, etc.
2. Hunting: Extra ammo, knife sharpener, SPACE BLANKET on which to clean your game, wet naps for personal clean up.
3. THE 10 ESSENTIALS: Place in a poly zip bag or other suitable lightweight container in an outside compartment of your pack: (1) an extra supply of water (2) waterproof matches and tinder (3) topographic map of area (4) compass (5) basic first aid kit (6) whistle and/or signal mirror (7) 50 feet of nylon cord (8) pocket knife (9) SPACE BLANKET (10) a couple of high energy food bars.

(F.) Let a responsible person know your itinerary:

1. Leave a full written itinerary with a friend that you can trust to follow up. Set time deadlines that you will be back or when you will call. It is better to be safe than dangerously sorry.
2. Explain how you are traveling, who with and when you will return. Stick to your planned itinerary as much as possible.
3. Leave information concerning your special medical needs.
4. Check into and out of any wilderness area with the park rangers or other authorities.





## S.O.S. - "Safety Outdoor Signaling"

There are some situations that could occur in the Outdoors that may require you to signal for medical assistance or rescue by using Morse Code. Everyone who ventures into the Outdoors should be at the least familiar with S.O.S. (••• - - - •••). This can be constructed as a ground to air signal with rocks (•) and logs ( - ), by stamping out the symbols in the snow, by using backpacks (•) and sleeping bags ( - ), by using brightly colored extra clothing you have or SPACE BLANKETS or ALL WEATHER BLANKETS folded to shape, or by covering up parts with dirt, brush or snow to simulate the (••• - - - •••). The most direct method if you can visually see an airplane or vehicle in the distance would be to carefully flash the message out on a signal mirror or flashlight (3 short flashes •••, 3 long flashes - - - and 3 short flashes •••). Be sure to pause between signal flashes to allow for recognition and understanding. S.O.S. is internationally recognized by all pilots, park rangers, and rescue personnel. This vital signal should be deeply ingrained in the memory of all Outdoors enthusiasts. Someday you may have to use it for your own survival needs, or so that you can quickly recognize the distress signal of someone who may need your immediate assistance. As with all Outdoor Safety Skills remember the "7 P's", Proper Preparation, Planning and Practice Prevents Potential Problems.

MORSE CODE - something you may someday need

A: • -	N: - •	Z: - - ••
B: - •••	O: - - -	1: • - - - -
C: - • - •	P: • - - •	2: •• - - -
D: - ••	Q: - - • -	3: ••• - -
E: •	R: • - •	4: •••• -
F: •• - •	S: •••	5: •••••
G: - - •	T: -	6: - ••••
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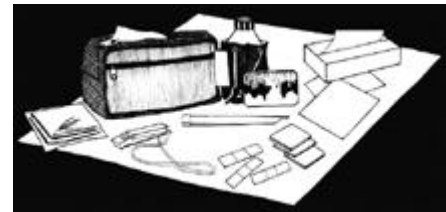
# Kids Kit & How To Equip Kids for a Wilderness Trip

## INTRODUCTION TO PARENTS

Take a child with you into the outdoors and what will transpire will be a winning and enjoyable lifetime experience, for you and for the child.

No one wants to think about their child being lost and alone in the outdoors, but the fact is that anyone can get lost. You can make a very positive and caring step in providing an added measure of protection for your child by taking the time to assemble a KIDS KIT. This kit alone is only part of the solution towards providing a level of outdoor protection for your child should the need arise. You must now take the time and have the patience to teach, not preach, to your child the proper uses of the items in this kit. You must also reinforce the need for them to understand how important this new knowledge and skills will become someday as it may have to be used by them.

A KIDS KIT should be designed to provide some of the critical products needed in an outdoor survival situation as well as the means to help educate the child should they become separated from their parents in the outdoors. An informed and educated child is a safer child, and the knowledge of what and how to be more comfortable, safe and more easily found is a powerful gift to give to yourself and to your child.



The following guidelines, and they are only that, should help you explain to your child what they should do if they become separated from you or a friend in the outdoors. In easily understood language and with a caring but serious attitude you must demonstrate how a child can attract help or let you know where they are. You, as a parent, must help each child develop the ability and skills to make their situation more comfortable. Conversely, you as the parent will also be aware of what to look for and listen for, should the need arise.

The KIDS KIT should be constructed to fit into a small compact "belt pack" or "day pack" that the child can wear at all times and not encumber their movement or enjoyment of the outdoors. There are many available packs that will fit this criteria. You may want to look for ones with a water bottle attached as part of the overall design.

The following is a suggested list of contents and ideas on how to instruct your child in their use and need, should the situation of being lost ever occur.

**WATER BOTTLE:** The easily accessible bottle should always be kept filled with your choice of water, juice drinks or other liquid nourishment. It is important to educate your child to drink only when they are thirsty. Liquid intake is important in all outdoor adventures and helps provide a sense of security and well being.

**LIGHTSTICK:** This bright light source is both a sense of personal security for the child as well as a way to help locate them after dark. Darkness can be an uncomfortable situation, and a light source that can be held close or hung from a tree will provide a sense of assurance to a child who is waiting for you to come and find them. The Lightstick should be the 12 hour type, found in most outdoor stores as it will last throughout the night and can be easily used by the child. Because it does not require batteries it is lightweight and easily packed within the kit.



**RESCUE WHISTLE:** Blowing a whistle requires little energy and is highly audible in the outdoors. A whistle can be heard over long distances and is an easy signaling device for children to use. Remembering to blow in blasts of three in a row every few minutes, or every time they see or hear something can also help a child focus on a positive task. This is not a toy, but a very valuable signaling device. You may want to attach it to the pack with a clip or carabiner.

**EMERGENCY BLANKET:** The SPACE BLANKET is universally available and very reliable. It is about the size of a package of cigarettes and only weighs about 4 oz., but opens to a 56" by 84" tough and durable blanket. This unique safety product has provided personal safety, shelter, warmth and protection to all those who venture into the outdoors for more than 30 years. This unique product will help prevent hypothermia by reflecting and retaining up to 80% of radiated body heat to keep a person warm and comfortable. It is also very effective in preventing trauma shock, using the same reflective qualities. It is waterproof and windproof and the feeling of being wrapped up and protected is important to the psychological well being of anyone who is lost or stranded. It is also very visible from great distances. Because of its small size, you may want to include a second one to use a roof and/or signal.



**HIGH VISIBILITY SCARF:** The use of a bright yellow or orange scarf, or a large scrap of cloth material will help make your child's location more visible, either by waving it at the end of a long stick, staking it out near their location as a marking flag or hanging it in a nearby tree. If the child is asleep this signal scarf will help alert rescuers that they are nearby, if hung on a tree branch, etc.. This is another way to focus the child's time into a positive task. The bright color is intended to attract attention and is an unmistakable signal to any parent who has reviewed the KIDS KIT components with their child.

**SIGNAL MIRROR:** A small and lightweight plastic highly reflective mirror can be used to attract attention during the day. Reflected light can be seen at great distances in the outdoors, a plus for rescuers, search planes, etc. It like all the other special components of the KIDS KIT help to focus the attention of the child into a positive task.

**PERSONAL CARE ITEMS:** The KIDS KIT should contain a small packet of tissues for personal hygiene use. Also include some small bandages to help provide a means to cover minor cuts and abrasions. Consider including some damp towelettes to allow the child to clean up and

refresh themselves. These items should be purposely included to help add a sense of preparedness in the child's mind, they will feel better about themselves knowing that these items are available.

The KIDS KIT pack that you choose should have zippered compartments to hold all these items mentioned above. They should be inspected each time you venture into the outdoors to be sure they are there "if and when needed".

You may wish to include high energy food bars, snack items, a personal ID card or any other personal item or items for your child's use.

Constant review is a proven and powerful reinforcing tool when coupled with practice sessions and your personal creativity. These review times will help to make the value of the KIDS KIT a very beneficial and special product for you and your child.

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The following is only an outline of what you may wish to discuss with your child:

**From: Parent To: Child**

Now that you are old enough to begin going on some bigger outdoor adventures, there are some things we need to discuss.

No matter where we go, what we do or how careful we are, there is always the possibility that you or I could get lost or look around and not be able to locate each other.

I want to talk about what you should do if that ever happens, so you will be able to help me find you faster and make yourself comfortable until I get there.

First of all, if you ever get separated from me or a group you are with, the most important thing to do is to stay in one place. I will bring some friends and start looking for you where I last knew you were, so don't leave that place. Find a rock, a log or a tree and make it your "house" or "fort" until I find you. Make sure that your "house" is somewhere out in the open where I will be able to see you (This is where you may want to use the second SPACE BLANKET). You must know that I will not stop hunting for you until I find you, so just stay in one place and wait for me.

It is important to me that you know that I will not be angry or upset if you get lost--anyone can get lost-- and, when I find you, I will be really happy and want to hear all about what you did while we were separated.

This KIDS KIT has a lot of really neat things in it that will help me find you and help make you more comfortable while you are waiting. I want us to look at all these things together and then pack them back up so they will be there for you to use when we go outdoors together.

The KIDS KIT fastens around your waist easily (or on your back if a day pack) and then stays out of your way for hiking, climbing, biking or other activities we will be doing in the outdoors.

One of these zippered compartments is empty, waiting for you to fill it with things like snacks, your magnifying glass, a small flashlight, or some neat things that you've collected while you and I are exploring.

The other compartment is full of things that will help me find you and will help make you more comfortable while you are waiting for me.

Let's take a look at all these things now and we can practice together how to use them.

*PARENTS:*

- Open KIDS KIT and take out components. Find a comfortable setting to discuss these items.

WATER BOTTLE: Outdoor adventures make you thirsty and your body needs water. We'll make sure this is filled before we go anywhere. Do not drink all your water at once, so you can drink when you are thirsty. Do not drink water from any creek or pond that you may find when we are not together, it may not be clean and could make you sick.



*PARENTS:*

- Make sure the bottle is always filled.
- Water is more important than food.
- While it might be tempting to put juice in that bottle, please be aware that sweet liquids will attract both ants and bees.
- Have your child practice putting the bottle in the compartment and tightening the cap.
- Let your child know how to conserve the water and to drink only when thirsty. This is important.

EMERGENCY BLANKET: This blanket can be your shelter while you are waiting for us to find you. It will keep you warm and keep rain or snow off of you. Wrap it all around you, tuck it in around you and hug yourself. You can wrap up in it like a sleeping bag if you get tired or sleepy. Do not put it over your face. We can't take it out and try it now, because we could NEVER get it folded up so small again, BUT it will be in your pack, be sure to use it when you need it. (You may want to use the second SPACE BLANKET to make your "house" or "fort" and to help me find you.)

*PARENTS:*



- The EMERGENCY BLANKET reflects up to 80% of your child's radiated body heat. This special version of this unique product has been made especially to maximize its effective use by children.
- It is a great source of warmth, shelter and comfort and has provided protection to millions of outdoor enthusiasts for over 30 years..
- Practice using a blanket from your home to show your child how to wrap up and sit holding the blanket close to them to concentrate their body heat.
- Tell your child not to sit directly on the ground, but to put down some branches, leaves or pine needles to insulate them from the cold ground.
- Make sure that if they are tired that they wrap up in the blanket to keep them warm. Again insulate the ground under them before laying down.
- Children that are lost in the outdoors are usually found sleeping, and the silvery reflective nature of the blanket will help make them be better seen at night by searchers flashlights.

**RESCUE WHISTLE:** You know how to use a whistle because you've used them as toys before. This one is in your KIDS KIT for a special reason. If you get lost or separated, you should blow three times in a row on this whistle. Wait a few minutes and blow three times in a row again. Repeating this signal lets anyone who can hear it know that you are near and would like some help. You should continue doing this every so often or if you hear or see something. I can hear a whistle better than I can hear your voice and blowing a whistle won't tire you out.



**PARENTS:**

- Emphasize the use of the whistle for emergency purposes, not to cry "wolf".
- Anything your child can do to alert others to their presence will help.
- Make sure the lanyard is securely tied to the whistle.
- Have your child practice the three short blasts.

**HIGH VISIBILITY SCARF:** This scarf is a super bright color that will help us find you. If you see someone, you can wave it by hand or attach it to the end of a long stick and wave it like a flag. You could also tie (or loop) it to a tree, this will help us find you as we can see it from far away. Put it out near you, up high if you get tired and are going to rest. I will be looking for this scarf because I know that you have it with you, so put it somewhere where we can see it. It will be a great signal for us to look for.

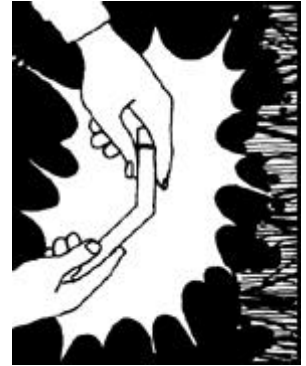


**PARENTS:**

- The scarf will only be visible if it is used.

- Emphasize that you will be looking for the scarf, so they need to remember to use it.
- Practice by playing Hide & Seek in the yard or playground. See how quickly you can find your child when they hang the scarf out in a visible area.
- Show them exactly how to use it by placing on a stick or broom handle, etc. and waving it to attract attention.
- Visibility is vital in finding lost children, let the searchers know about this signal scarf.

LIGHTSTICK: This is another neat thing to be only used in an emergency because it can only be used once. Believe it or not, if you snap this stick (you kind of have to act like you are trying to break it) and then shake it a little, it lights up brightly for a long time. You can use it like a flashlight or a lantern while you're waiting for us. Make sure you use it at night. If you hang it up someplace it would be a great way for us to find you after dark. It will lose its light little by little, but it stays bright for a long time. Only use this when it starts to get dark.



*PARENTS:*

- Reassure your child that most people are found in the daytime, but if it takes a little longer than usual, they can use the Lightstick.
- The Lightstick is a great visible signal at night, and your child should know you will be looking for it.
- Make sure your child knows it can only be used once...you may want to keep a couple of extra Lightsticks on hand to replace any that are used.
- Tying some string onto the Lightstick will enable you child to hang it onto a tree or to wear around their neck for added personal security.

SIGNAL MIRROR: This looks like an ordinary mirror, but watch what it can do. If you learn how to reflect sunlight with this, we will be able to see the light signal from really far away. You can hold the mirror above you, signal toward high places or in a circle all the way around you, or in the direction of people if you see anyone. You can signal without using a lot of energy.



*PARENTS:*

- Practice directing the light beam with your child. Place paper plates on trees or stakes around your yard and practice "hitting the targets". The light beam can be seen for great distances.
- Hold the mirror in one hand, stretch your other arm out in front of you and shine the light beam on one finger. This will help both you and your child to direct the beam in any direction.
- Practice "finding" your child by locating the source of the signal, let you child find you the same way.
- Your child needs to be aware that shining the beam directly into someone's eyes will hurt.

PERSONAL CARE ITEMS: Tissues, small bandages and wipes are included in your KIDS KIT just in case you get a cut or scrape while you are on an adventure.

You can clean up a little and feel refreshed with the wet wipes and bandage a cut or scrape with the bandages while you wait for me.

If you need to go to the bathroom, you can use the tissues just like toilet paper.

*PARENTS*:

- Replenish these items as they are used.
- Check them occasionally to insure they are in the kit.
- All right! Let's put these things back in the KIDS KIT so that they are there for our next outdoor adventure.

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Help me remember how to use these things as we put them away.

- 1.WATER BOTTLE
- 2.SPACELANKET
- 3.WHISTLE
- 4.FLAG/SCARF
- 5.LIGHTSTICK
- 6.SIGNAL MIRROR
- 7.BANDAGES
- 8.TISSUES/ WIPES

Don't forget to pack some snacks and other items that will personalize the KIDS KIT for your child. Tucking a small family photo into the KIDS KIT will provide an extra touch of comfort for your child. Practice and role-playing every so often will reinforce the proper use of the items included in the KIDS KIT. Have the KIDS KIT packed and available and ready to go when you begin your outdoor adventure. Dress your child in bright colors. Perhaps have them wear a brightly colored hat. Visibility is a key element.

Teach your child to always look around them when they are hiking or taking part in activities in the outdoors. Have them note landmarks or unusual areas. Have them look backwards from time to time to note how the trail will look upon their return. Have them practice re-tracing their steps from time to time.

In the event your child does get separated, make sure they know it is all right to be worried and afraid, but that you will find them as soon as possible.