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35 Beginner Survival Tips for the Novice Prepper

Surviving during a disaster takes a lot of preparation and determination. Here are X number of tips to keep in mind that will help you to be ready for anything that comes your way.

Tip #1: Get out of debt. If there is an economic crisis, being in debt is one of the worst positions you can be in. Instead of using your resources to take care of your family you'll be worried about holding on to your assets. Create a plan to get out of debt and work your plan until you're free.

Tip #2: Create an emergency fund. It's wise to have at least 6 months of your income in savings once you've become debt-free. This money can be used to handle expenses should there be an economic collapse, illness, injury, or job loss.

Tip #3: Make sure you have a 72 Hour Emergency Kit. If you're in an emergency that requires you to evacuate, you need to have a bug out bag emergency kit that you can grab and go. This kit will allow you to have food, water, and basic necessities for three days.

Tip #4: Storing water is a top priority. You can only survive for three days without water. Any emergency preparation needs to include water storage. The more you store the better. Begin storing water now and look into options like rain barrels that help you store water for free.

Tip #5: Learn to grow your own food. When you can't run down to the corner store to buy food, knowing how to grow your own food will be a huge asset. Start now by growing your own garden and learning how to preserve your harvest.

Even if you have more than a year's worth of food storage, your disaster situation can outlast your pantry. Having the ability to grow more is valuable.

Tip #6: Keep important documents together. In an emergency you'll need to have copies of important documents such as your driver's license, passport, marriage license, home deed, automobile titles, and insurance policies. Keep copies of this with your emergency kit – both paper copies and electronic copies on a flash drive. You'll know exactly where to look for what you need.

Tip #7: Don't try to do everything all at once. One of the hardest things for new preppers is trying to do everything at once, getting overwhelmed, and giving up. Choose a few things to work on each month. When those are complete, set another set of goals. Baby steps will get you where you want to go.

Tip #8: Learn first aid skills. It's important to have a first aid kit – in fact that's one of the first things that beginners do. But if you don't know how to use the supplies they don't do much good. Take classes to learn basic first aid so you're ready in an emergency.

Tip #9: Build a survival library. The more resources and information that you have the better. There are many valuable videos, eBooks, and guides that can help you to learn more about what you need to do to prepare your family for any disaster.

Tip #10: Prepare based on your area. There are some survival events everyone needs to prepare for such as an economic collapse or a fire. But you should also think about natural disasters that are most likely to happen in your area such as hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, or wildfires.

If you live in an urban area you should be prepared for civil unrest and violence. If you live near a chemical plant you should be prepared for a chemical accident. Knowing your area helps you to target your survival efforts.

Tip #11: Develop an evacuation strategy. Plan ahead for situations that require evacuations. Determine several routes and possible destinations such as the homes of family members or friends. You should also map out appropriate hotels or motels along the way. Keep a paper map with these routes and locations highlighted.

Tip #12: Keep at least a half tank of gas at all times. If you're one who has a tendency to let the gas gauge hit E before you fill up again, change your habits. When you get to a half tank, fill up your vehicle. Always having at least a half tank of gas will help you to get further during an emergency when you can't stop for fuel.

Tip #13: Have regular disaster drills at home. It's important that everyone knows what to do when there's an emergency. You'll want to have fire drills, earthquake drills, tornado drills, evacuation drills, and any other type of survival need you have in your area.

The more you practice, the calmer you'll be when there's a real emergency. This will help everyone to stay safe. Make plans for how you'll leave your home or where you'll go in specific emergencies. Don't forget to plan a common meeting place.

Tip #14: Build your food storage a little at a time. You don't have to have a two year supply of food purchased in a month of prepping. Instead, buy a little at a time. Most people can add a few items each time they go to the grocery store to add to their storage.

Tip #15: Get to know your neighbors. During a disaster, it really helps to know the people who live around you. Those relationships will help others to be more inclined to give you assistance if you need it. In turn, you can give aid where you're needed for neighbors who are worse off than you.

Having a sense of community during a disaster can build synergy. You'll get more done together than you will by completely isolating yourself. Knowing your neighbors will help you to know who to trust and who isn't reliable.

Tip #16: Save money by purchasing used supplies. There are some supplies you can find at thrift store, garage sales, and even on online flea markets. For example, camp stoves, mess kits, and tools are often inexpensive in these places. Just keep digging until you find quality items that fit your budget.

Tip #17: Don't advertise your prepping. People who are known to stockpile survival items will be the first ones targeted by looters. Quietly get your preparations together without being obvious about it.

Tip #18: Increase your exercise. One important part of preparation is being healthy and fit. Exercise regularly so that you can be strong and lower your risk for illness and disease. Being physically fit insures that you can walk long distances if needed and have strength to lift, push, and pull when necessary.

Tip #19: Don't give up. Many people get burned out with prepping. It can be overwhelming to think about how much you need to do. Never give up! Instead, make sure that you don't bite off more than you can chew at a time.

The small steps you're taking may not seem like much, but anything you do is going to be better than the nothing you did before. Have patience with yourself – this is a marathon not a sprint. One of the advantages of not waiting until there's an emergency to prepare is that you have more time.

Tip #20: Make prepping a priority. There are many things in your life that need your attention – don't let prepping fall on the backburner. Set goals every month so that it's always a part of your routine. Make your survival preparation a line item on your monthly budget.

Tip #21: Learn water purification techniques. Even if you store a lot of water, you'll eventually need more. When you can't trust the safety of your local water, you need to know how to purify it. Water purification tablets are one choice. Straining and boiling water is another. Keep the supplies on hand to make your water safe to drink.

Tip #22: Keep a bug out bag in the car. You never know where you'll be when disaster strikes. Keeping a bug out bag in your car can help you to be prepared even when you're not home to grab your 72 hour kit. Make sure that every member of the family will have some preparations at all times.

Tip #23: Don't forget entertainment. It might not seem like a big priority when it comes to disaster preparedness, but having some items for entertainment can be lifesaving. During a disaster you may spend long periods of time in one place without much to do.

A deck of cards, board games, and coloring books for the kids can go a long way toward keeping sanity and peace during trying times. Make sure to have some entertainment items in your 72 hour emergency kit.

Tip #24: Prepare for cold weather. Hot weather can be miserable, but most people will be able to handle it well with proper hydration and shelter. Cold weather can be very deadly if you're not able to stay warm enough.

Your disaster supplies need to contain extra blankets, warm clothing, and some source of heat such as a kerosene heater. You also need to keep emergency blankets in your vehicle to help you stay warm.

Tip #25: Don't forget a can opener. One of the worst things that could happen is to have a stockpile of cans with no can opener. Don't rely on an electric can opener during a disaster. Purchase a high quality manual opener built to last – you may even want to have multiples.

Tip #26: Rotate your food storage. You don't want to waste any of the food you've stored, but it will expire eventually. Keep track of expiration dates and use food before it expires. Replace the used items with new ones and keep going.

This helps keep your food storage good for longer periods of time. It also gives you a chance to make sure you like what you're storing.

Tip #27: Don't store food you don't like. One of the biggest prepper mistakes is to store food based off of a list without considering what you actually like to eat. If you don't like Vienna sausages now, you're not going to like them any more in a disaster.

Sure you might be grateful for them and eat them for the calories. But wouldn't it be better if you actually enjoyed what you have to eat?

Tip #28: Learn survival skills. There are many survival skills that will help you during a disaster. Take the time to not only stock supplies, but to add to your skill set. Some examples include gardening, auto mechanics, building, sewing, livestock care, and cooking.

You may be able to use your survival skills to take care of your own needs as well as to barter for other things that you need.

Tip #29: Go camping. Camping uses a lot of the skills you'll need during a disaster, but without the panic and pressure. Camping is a fun way to practice your survival skills and learn to enjoy a new way of living.

If you've been camping with your family, it will be easier to adjust to having to live in the great outdoors for an extended period of time. You'll have a much more peaceful experience if it isn't all new.

Tip #30: Learn to make a fire without matches. It's easy to make a fire with matches, but when you don't have them and you don't know what to do it can cause big problems. Fire can help you to stay warm and to cook.

There are many techniques for starting a fire without matches. Learn a few different techniques and practice them until you've mastered them. This will mean security during an emergency.

Tip #31: Choose multipurpose tools. When you're on the go you don't want a lot of heavy equipment weighing you down. Look for tools that do more than one thing. For example, a multipurpose knife with many tools is very helpful.

You can also find solar powered weather radios that double as lanterns, flashlights, and electronics chargers. The more uses one item has, the better.

Tip #32: Learn to hunt or fish. Being able to catch your own dinner will be a great advantage when food supplies run short. Learn how to hunt game and/or fish to increase your ability to handle the responsibility when you need to do it to survive.

Don't forget that you also need to know how to clean and butcher the meat that you've caught. You may not be able to find someone else to process it.

Tip #33: Waste not want not. Part of becoming self-reliant is to learn to reduce your waste. Learn to recycle and reuse items. Finding new purposes for household objects will be a good skill during a survival situation.

Tip #34: Learn to cook. Many people rely on fast food and restaurants to get their meals. You may also rely on processed foods to keep you going. But when

food supplies are scarce you'll be better off if you can take flour, oil, salt, yeast, and honey and turn it into bread. Start now by learning to cook and bake from scratch.

Tip #35: Be prepared and be at peace. Sometimes preppers are viewed as paranoid or fearful. In reality, being prepared means you don't have to have fear. As you start gathering supplies and becoming more self-sufficient you'll become more confident.

You won't have to be in fear that when disaster comes you won't know what to do. You may still have difficult situations and have to make hard calls, but you'll be much better off than someone who hasn't been preparing for an emergency.