



## SURVIVAL PAPER #SP96-3

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# SURVIVAL KITS AND SURVIVAL PACKS.

By James C. Jones

*“Which is heavier, a soldier’s pack or a slave’s chains?”  
- Napoleon*

## STEP ONE

Mao TseTung said that “A march of a thousand miles starts with a single step” Your march towards preparedness and self-reliance is one that in fact will never end, but it must begin with a first step. Where your personal march will take you is only limited by your own determination, but most certainly it will begin with a basic survival kit, pack or cache. Such kits are designed to get you through a variety of short-term (1-10 day) emergencies. Since any long-term survival and recovery plan depends on your surviving the first few days of the situation, the survival kit is the cornerstone of your program. Whether your kit is kept in the closet, in the trunk of your car, or in a box buried in the woods, most or all of it should be in a good quality backpack. Even though your plan may be to stay put where you keep your kit, the ability to “grab and go” if your location becomes untenable could save your life.

## COMPACT SURVIVAL KITS

Compact kits are no substitute for a full survival kit, but have the advantage of always being with you. They can be formally organized “kits” or just some well-chosen items you always have with you. They are designed to facilitate very short-term survival, signaling and escape situations. The priorities for these items would be:

1. DEFENSE: Giving the ability to survive and escape attacks.
2. LIGHT: Giving the ability to see and be seen.
3. TOOLS: Giving the ability to cut and make repairs.
4. FIRST AID: Giving the ability to treat injuries.

So carrying a small pepper spray, a penlight or lighter, a Swiss Army knife and some Band-Aids gives you a real advantage over those who are unprepared in an emergency. You should carry such items in your pockets, lunch box, briefcase, purse, or even in the pockets of a notebook. You can buy all sorts of prepackaged mini-survival kits, but if you buy one be sure to go over each item and consider what it can be used for.

One of the cheapest and most complete small survival kits was developed by Live Free in the 60s and is known as the "Micro Kit". The complete kit costs almost nothing and fits into a wallet or pocket. Here is how to make one.

## MAKING THE MICROKIT

### ITEM

### USES

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Aluminum Foil 12"x8" (heavy duty)                                    | Wrap kit, reflect fire heat, signal for help, boil water, etc. |
| Wax Paper 4"x 6"   | Fire starter.  |
| Matches (1 sheet from a book of matches), with the striker glued on. | Start fires, light, heat, signal                               |
| Snare or picture wire<br>3 ft. coiled to 2" dia.                     | Fix clothing, snare food, fishing line, etc.                   |
| 2 medium sized Band-Aids   | First Aid, clothing repair                                     |
| Razor blade (single edge)  | Weapon, snakebite, skinning fish and game, make tinder, etc.   |
| 2 straight pins  | Fish hooks, fix clothing, etc.                                 |
| 1 water purification tablet  | Self explanatory   |
| 1 salt pill  | Hot weather, salt food   |
| 1 vitamin pill   | Food supplement  |
| 1 or 2 pcs of hard candy   | Quick energy   |

There are some more effective substitutions for some items above, especially for the pill items, but this based on the cheapest most available.

## PACKAGING YOUR MICROKIT

Be sure to cover the razor blade with cardboard so it won't cut its way out and tape the pins next to it. Pills and candy should be carefully wrapped in plastic to protect them from moisture. It is also a good idea to protect the matches with plastic or to use waterproof matches cut short. Finally, wrap everything in the wax paper and then in the aluminum foil too for a flat package about 2-1/2 x 3-1/2 inches. You can go one step further by placing the whole kit in a plastic (zip-lock) sandwich bag which then adds a handy water container to your kit.

## THE MINI-KIT

This kit is not nearly as good as having a full "Survival Pack", but is much more complete than the "Micro-kit". But in the hands of someone with basic survival training, it will go a long way in assuring survival in a variety of situations. Of course if the person also has a good knife and a firearm to go with the kit, the survival potential is greatly increased. These kits are great to carry on your belt for short trips away

from camp (hunting, fishing, etc.) or to keep in a locker or desk. You may want to stash one outside (wrapped in plastic) as a last resort kit if you can't get to your main pack.

The following lifesaving items can be packed into a container approximately 3"x4"x1-1/2". An army surplus first aid kit pack with its belt fastener is ideal as are some of the common (tourist type) belt pouches.

#### NAVIGATION

A small survival compass (less than 1" diameter)

#### FIRE

1. Waterproof matches or "metal match"
2. Small magnifying glass or plastic lens (test to be sure it will ignite tinder)
3. Short candle
4. Small ball of fine steel wool
5. Lint

#### FOOD

1. Powdered instant coffee and/or bouillon cubes (in plastic)
2. Vitamin pills (in plastic)
3. Hard candy or "Survival Tabs" in plastic
4. 20 ft. of 15# fishing line
5. 5-6 feet of snare wire
6. Miscellaneous fishhooks, sinkers, flies, etc.

You may elect to substitute items 1, 2 and 3 with any higher energy, high protein food bar.

#### WATER

A small package of water purification tablets or a water filtration straw.

#### FIRST AID

1. 6 Band-Aids (assorted sizes)
2. Soap and/or "wash-n-dry" type towelets
3. 3 Single-edge razor blade (wrap safely)
4. Small tube of antiseptic ointment
5. 4-6 aspirin (or substitute)

Add any prescription medications you may need.

#### SHELTER

Plastic sheet 6x8 ft or "Rescue Blanket". This may need to be attached to the outside of the kit if too bulky to go inside.

#### MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

1. Small pencil and some paper or cards
2. Steel signal mirror 3x4 inches, sharpen one edge \*
3. Heavy duty aluminum foil 12"x14" folded to 3"x4" (make cooking pot, etc)
4. Flexible wire saw (rolled up)
5. Sewing needles and about 5 feet of strong thread

These items should handle most short-term emergency situations if you take the time to acquire the skill you need to use them and use your imagination.

*\*There are several versions of a credit card size survival tool made out of a flat piece of stainless steel that work as a mirror, knife, compass, file, etc., that you may want to include.*

## THE SURVIVAL PACK

The Survival Pack goes one step beyond being prepared and is the hallmark of the true survivalist. The Survival Pack is the ultimate statement of self-reliance and determination to remain free. The Survival Pack can be used at home for basic emergencies, carried in the family car in evacuations, or carried on the back deep into the wilderness. The list below is generic in nature and of course has to be modified to meet the climate, terrain, sources and sources of hazards anticipated by the owner. Quality, quantity and weight of items will be affected by the individual's financial situation and physical capacities.

1. THE PACK, recommended LC-1 "ALICE" military field pack 20x19x11 with a capacity of about 50# or equivalent commercial design in dark green or camouflage. A pack frame is helpful but optional.
2. WATER in addition to a good plastic canteen with canteen cup and cover to wear on your belt. You should have a plastic 1 qt. water bottle or bag with a good water filter capable of filtering at least 30 gallons.
3. FIRE starting items including 50 waterproof matches, a magnesium fire starter and some tinder.
4. FOOD should be enough to last 5 to 7 days of hard marching. Military MREs, campers freeze dried and ordinary items such as rice, nuts, oatmeal and beef jerky can be used. Be sure that you have some foods that do not require cooking in case you are forced to eat on the run or cannot build a fire.
5. A STOVE is essential since you can't always depend on dry wood being around and may not have time to cut wood. The noise of cutting wood and the glow and smoke of a fire may also be undesirable. Select a lightweight propane or white gas stove and carry enough fuel for 4 to 6 days (about 5 hours). If you're short of funds, sterno will work fine.
6. SLEEPING BAGS will be essential if below freezing conditions are anticipated. Get a lightweight "mummy" style bag rated to at least -20 °F. In milder climates you can get by with an Army rain poncho and insulated liner which is a bit cheaper, lighter and more versatile. In swamp and jungle areas, a net hammock is a must and adds very little weight.
7. SHELTER can consist of just the aforementioned Army poncho, a shelter tarp or a compact trail tent. Here weight and cost versus comfort are major factors.
8. COOKING KIT can range from the Boy Scout (light and versatile) to Army surplus heavier and tougher. Don't forget utensils.
9. A FIRST AID KIT can be assembled at home or purchased off the shelf. The kit should contain bandages, tweezers, scissors, a needle, a razor blade, aspirin, ointments, disinfectant, tape 3x3 gauze pads and any medication you take normally. Changes in diet can cause problems, so you may want to include something for diarrhea and constipation.
10. LIGHT should be available from a good flashlight such as the military angle head type or the smaller high intensity lights for campers. One with a red lens adapter is highly desirable.
11. CANDLES AND COMPACT LANTERNS can be included as a good backup and general light source. The wax and lantern fuel can help get fires started also.

12. TOOLS will include a combination saw, ax, shovel (campers tool) or a small folding saw, hand shovel and a hatchet. In addition you will carry a top quality hunting or "Survival Knife" and the indispensable, multi-functional "Swiss Army Knife" or "Leatherman Tool".
13. EXTRA CLOTHING including 2 pairs of socks, underwear and camouflage coveralls will fit into the bottom of the pack.
14. PERSONAL HYGIENE ITEMS will include toothpaste, soap, toothbrush, razor, nail cutter, small mirror and a small towel.
15. A FISHING KIT is a good source of extra food as your pack supplies run out. The kit should include some line, lures, sinkers, corks and hooks. Consider the popular automatic fish catchers that set the hook when a fish bites so you don't have to sit and watch your line. These items take up very little room.
16. SNARE WIRE is any for shelter construction, making repairs and of course, making snares to catch food.
17. NYLON LINE (parachute cord) is handy for shelter construction, snare construction, etc. About 50 ft. should do.
18. NBC\* PROTECTION is optional depending on the anticipated environment. You can fit some light rubber gloves and a laboratory (impregnated paper) chemical suit inside a gas mask or carry some plastic bags and an industrial type respirator from which to improvise protection. Don't forget bags or plastic boots to cover feet and tape or rubber bands to seal sleeves and cuffs, etc.
19. PLASTIC BAGS can be used for rain suits, chemical protection, waste disposal, flotation, ground clothes and more. Line your pack with one to keep things dry. Add a few more where you can find room.
20. SMALL BINOCULARS OR MONOCULARS will give you a big advantage in hunting, navigation, rescue and escape and evasion.
21. A RADIO for picking up news and weather, etc., is important if you can spare the room and weight. There are some very compact models on the market that run off their own generator or solar cells. If you are working with a group, a small walkie-talkie or communication headset will be a real advantage.
22. A SEWING KIT is essential for repairs of clothing and camp items. You can buy one or just gather your own needles, thread, pins, buttons, etc.
23. THE COMPASS should be a high quality military phosphorescent or tritium lensatic type. You will also want to have a good up-to-date topographical map of your area of operation.
24. ODDS AND ENDS will include a pen and notebook some electrical tape, camouflage face paint or face net and gloves, insect repellent, gun cleaning items, sharpening stone or device, whistle, survival manual of choice, signal flares, sunglasses, magnifying glass, etc.
25. WEAPONS will depend on your anticipated situation. The minimum advisable for the pack would be a good 22 caliber revolver with a few hundred rounds of ammunition. This should be enough to bag some small game and fend off close quarter threats. Even better would be one of the purpose built "survival guns" such as the 22 caliber long rifle AR-7 that takes down to a small size and floats or the 22 magnum over 410 gauge shotgun folding survival weapon made for the military. Both are available in sports stores. Of course if you anticipate combat

and/or big game hunting in your survival situation, a heavy caliber semi-automatic rifle (M-16, AK-47, Ruger Mini 14, etc.) and a bigger hand gun (Colt 45 auto, 9mm Browning, etc may suit your needs. In some situations a shotgun may be the right choice but keep in mind that ammunition is bulky and heavy to carry.

\* Nuclear, Biological and Chemical

*If you can find room, consider some type of camp security device. These range from the common Fourth of July “poppers” at just pennies to military type trip flares and electronic intrusion detectors. These can alert you if you are being followed and protect your camp when you must sleep.*

## PACKING

If well selected, all of the items (except the sleeping bag, belt items and long arms) can fit into the pack. If you opt to include the sleeping bag, it will need to be strapped to the outside of the bag in its own “stuff bag”. The shovel and hatchet can also be carried outside the pack. Be sure items that you may need quickly such as weapons, rain gear (poncho) and first aid kit are easy to reach. Many items such as knives, pistols, canteens, compass, etc. will be transferred to pockets and belts once in the field but should be in or attached to the pack so one grab gets it all.

## CLOTHING

You should tie your field boots to the pack and have a full set of rugged field clothing (preferably camouflage or dark colored) along side. Be sure to have a web belt, preferably with load bearing suspenders for your extra gear and ammunition. A hat such as the soft Vietnam “Boony” hat or a stocking cap for colder weather is recommended.

## WEB BELTS

You should have a military web belt ready to go with your pack. It will include pouches for your small knife, your compass, flashlight, canteen and ammunition along with a sheath for your large knife and perhaps a holster for a hand gun.

## CAMOUFLAGE AND STEALTH

You may want to put your whole pack in a more innocent looking box or bag so as not to attract attention. There is no reason to go clanking and rattling down the trail. You should be able to jump up and down with your gear and pack without making any clanks, rattles or squeak. Some tape, rubber bands and padding should eliminate these sounds. Shiny knives, buttons, zippers, etc., will attract attention from miles away, so cover them with paint or electrical tape. Appropriate (for the season) camouflage clothing is usually recommended but it may actually attract attention in some cases, in which case go with basic jeans and dark (tan, brown, black) camping cloths to help you blend in anywhere. In winter the white camouflage suits are great but even a bed sheet can be used effectively. Camouflage paint or camouflage gloves and face nets are very handy. Use local weeds and branches stuck into your hat, clothing and pack to break up the human shape.

## VEHICLE EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT

Next to your home, you probably spend most of your time in or near your vehicle. You should carry your Survival Pack with you when possible, but that is not always practical. You may have to survive an emergency situation on what you have in your vehicle which in some cases may have to function as a means of escape, a rescue ambulance and a shelter. Here are some items you should have.

1. Small ax or hatchet
2. Shovel or folding shovel
3. Fire extinguisher (ABC dry chemical)
4. A good flashlight (test batteries every few months)
5. A small first aid kit
6. Some candles (heat and light)
7. Matches or a lighter
8. One gallon of water (for engine coolant or drinking)
9. A warm blanket or "Space Blanket"
10. A cheap rain suit or rain poncho
11. A small camp stove or Sterno cooker with a pot or canteen cup
12. 50 to 100 feet of heavy rope (towing, etc.)
13. Some storable compact (freeze dry, MREs, etc.) food
14. A multi-bladed pocket knife
15. Pliers or small auto tool kit
16. Several road flares
17. Weapon, preferably a firearm, but if that is illegal or a personal prohibition, carry at least a large pepper gas spray unit (keep from freezing)

### EXTRA ITEMS

If you have adequate room in your vehicle, consider the following additions: A pruning saw, bolt cutters, a come-along or block and tackle, sand or old rugs (for traction), a large plastic sheet (for shelter), sleeping bags (in place of blankets), a pry bar, a gas mask (if you see the need), fuel siphon and fuel can, a water filtration unit. These items will help you get places others can't go and keep you going when others can't. Be sure not to forget the very obvious map of your area. Get in the habit of keeping your tank as full as possible. Preparedness is the road to success.