



How to Survive an Apocalypse

Two Methods: [If You Have Time To Prepare](#) [With No Time to Spare \(Apart from Reading this Page\)](#)

What will happen if society collapses? What would you do if there's no one to help you or your family? Disaster preparedness is more than worries—it's also about being practical, preparing for realistic scenarios and being ready for the unpredictable.

Method
1

If You Have Time To Prepare

1 Gather sufficient supplies to survive for 90 days. Surviving after a major apocalyptic event is not going to be short term, since the entire country or the world is likely to be falling apart—there are no two ways around that reality. However, hopefully having three months of supplies will get you settled and going with your new self-sufficient habits. The more time you have dedicated to form a plan when disaster *does* strike, the better. When preparing the supplies, think in two categories: basic survival and getting by, as outlined in the following two steps.

2 Obtain and stockpile basic survival (the most important) items. Consider storing the following:

- Jugs of water
- Canned goods
- Vacuum-sealed goods
- Blanket and pillow
- Medications
- A weapon that you actually know how to use properly
- A knife (in addition to a weapon)
- Warm, long sleeved clothing (if your climate requires it)
- Carrying bag (for moving and/or fleeing).

3 Store supplies for just getting by. Think about having these items at your disposal:

- Batteries
- Flashlights
- Matches
- Pot (for cooking or boiling water)
- Plastic eating-ware (plate, mug, spoon, fork)
- Rope or twine
- Map
- Permanent markers (something to write with)
- Change of clothes
- Can opener
- Lighters
- Camp stove and propane
- Hatchet or axe
- First aid book
- Sunglasses
- Duct tape
- Glow sticks
- Boots
- Extra pants
- Smartphone
- Water filters
- Other comfort items.

4 Prepare an emergency kit. Whether you're on the lookout from cannibals, flesh-eating super-bacteria, zombies, or a meteor, you'll need to think about your health. Here's a list for what you need to put in your emergency kit:^[1]

- Adhesive bandages, such as Band-Aids
- Gauze
- Medical tape
- Ibuprofen (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID))
- Acetaminophen/paracetamol (over-the-counter pain relief)
- Antihistamine
- Aspirin (over-the-counter pain relief)
- Laxative
- Iodine
- Hand sanitizing liquid
- Candles
- A multi-use tool (aka a "hobo tool")
- Phone charger (preferably solar)
- Wood for burning
- Towels
- Life jackets, if your area is prone to flooding
- Extra warm clothes
- Paper towels
- Solar charger (see below)
- Pet food (enough for 30-90 days)
- Tweezers
- Plasters
- Safety pins
- Thermometer
- Superglue
- Toothpicks/needles.

5 Keep yourself healthy against everything. You'll be dealing with everything from cuts to dysentery. Hospitals will cease existing and simple problems will seem a lot more daunting. If you or a family member has a specific ailment, stockpile medications for that, too.

6 Plan how to prepare for the messier sides of the long-term. That's a nice way of saying, "Everybody poops." To keep hygiene from being an issue on top of everything else, pack the following:

- Toilet paper (a couple rolls will suffice)
- Menstrual products
- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Plastic garbage bags and ties
- Shovel or trowel
- Bleach
- Soap and shampoo

7 Set up a communication system. Everyone in the household and close family and friends should have a communication system to communicate with family and friends. Communicate secret locations with your family members and friends using the radio.

- Keep batteries with your radio. The last thing you want is to presume you're prepared when you're really not. And if you have a loved one you're taking care of, make sure *they* have a radio and you're not keeping both of them for the two of you.
- When all else fails, work out how you will contact each other. This is when your permanent markers will come in handy. If the apocalypse strikes and you have left the house, write down where you are going, when you left, and if/when you'll be back on the wall, on a rock, on a nearby car, wherever you can find.

8 Use diesel-powered vehicles. Hoarding gasoline won't work; the chemicals that once kept it fresh will degrade it in time. After a year or so, it goes bad. Chances are gas stations will run out of gasoline but there *could be* some

diesel left. In addition, all military diesels can run on other fuels as well, from rotten kerosene to fermented leaves. So invest in something that can handle the harder fuels.

- In said vehicle, it's equally as likely that you'll be in it when all breaks loose, so pack a survival kit to keep in your car as well. Is there such a thing as being too prepared?
- If this isn't an option, make sure you have a bicycle laying around somewhere that's fully functioning. There will be a point when you need to cover large distances in a short amount of time.

9 Become a good shot. Knowing how to work a gun is going to keep you from either dying or being voted off the island.^{[[citation needed](#)]}. And while you're at it, buy a couple (if you haven't already).^{[[citation needed](#)]}

- Regardless of who or what you'll be facing, this is probably a good idea. Anything menacing needs to be kept far, far away. Whatever or whoever your enemy, shooting them will probably increase your chances of not being attacked or eaten.
 - Unless the apocalypse is due to some bacteria that's floating around in the air. In that case, get a gas mask. The people/zombies/menacing forces will probably still see you as an enemy.

10 Learn how to hunt.

- Master the art of the [snare trap](#). If you're really scrappy with it, you need nothing but what nature provides you.
- If you're on the ocean or near a body of water, get to [fishing](#) or [fly fishing](#). Your stock of baked beans and Spaghetti O's certainly isn't going to start spawning miraculously.
- Take a hint from Katniss and [start honing your archery skills](#). Once you've got a reason, learn how to [make your own bow](#).

11 Read up on disaster preparedness. Take the time to read through wikiHow's [disaster preparedness](#) section.

Read every novel on every version of apocalypse you can. Even though such novels are "fiction", reading about how the characters [scavenge for food](#), [retain water](#), and [find shelter](#) might just be the thing to save your life.^{[[citation needed](#)]} However, do not rely on these as your only preparation.

- Examples of books to read include: *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy, *Lucifer's Hammer* by Larry Niven, *Alas, Babylon* by Pat Frank, *Earth Abides* by George R. Stewart, Stephen King's *The Stand*, and *The Day of the Triffids* by John Wyndham are all great places to start (even if the apocalypse doesn't end up coming anytime soon). You've already read *The Hunger Games*, right?

12 Become less dependent. If we're all honest with ourselves, what kind of world could we recreate without others?

- For most of us, not much. Can you make a [battery from a lemon](#)? Or a [potato clock](#)? Lowering the bar... how are you at [tying knots](#)?

13 Find a way to generate your own electricity. Taking car batteries and daisy chaining them will act as an energy storage device, but you're going to need to generate power. A generator running on wood, gas or a diesel engine where you can make your own fuel is good, but the real payoff is using renewable energy by making your own wind turbine out of PVC pipes and a car alternator or scavenging some solar panels near a highway. When the events do take a turn for the worst, at least you'll be able to be productive at night and have some of the luxuries of your former life.

- Having electricity in your safe house will keep the lights on and keep electronics running. Electricity is important to run power tools, welders, [water/fuel pumps](#), radio equipment as well as charge any portable item or comfort item you may wish to use. It'll be a surprising source for morale, too.

Method
2

With No Time to Spare (Apart from Reading this Page)

1 Grab a long-sleeved shirt and some pants. If you were out lounging on your pool deck with nothing but earbuds

on and iPhone in hand (how else would you be reading this?), you're going to want to put on some layers. Even if the meteor looming on the horizon will send a blast of heat from here to Fargo, you'll be glad you did.

- Pretty much any cause for an apocalypse requires long, comfortable clothing.^[2] You want a long-sleeved shirt and pants to protect your skin from predators, yes, but also from the sun and treacherous terrain. The apocalypse is no time to work on your tan.
- If you have time, grab a pair of boots. If you don't have boots nearby, go for tennis shoes. You may have to break into a dead sprint at anytime. If you have the luxury, make sure you're comfortable enough in your clothes and shoes to flee.

2 Come up with an escape plan. If for some odd reason your house isn't safe to stay in, you'll need to get out as soon as possible. With your map in hand, get out and get out now. Would you do best in the forest? Near water? Are you concerned with privacy and hiding from others or is there not another soul in sight? Your specific situation will determine where you should go.

- Again, if you can stay in your house, do so. Shelter is best and friends and family will know how to find you. Make an assessment of your situation. Be as logical and rational as possible. You may want to stay, but is it best for you and your family?

3 Seek shelter. Even if it's not nuclear, you'll be better off escaping the perils of weather and being exposed to predators by getting and staying inside. But if it's a blast that is putting down the human race, it's doubly imperative that you shield yourself from the radiation as quickly as you can.

- Basements are a good place to start. 16 inches (40.6 cm) of solid brick can keep radiation away from you, so you should fairly set there -- not to mention among your own things. One inch (2.5cm) of steel will do it too, but you probably don't live on the Enterprise.^[2]

4 Find a food source. You'll probably want this to be from a remnant of your soon-to-be past and not a raspberry bush or particularly lively pond. A grocery store or even recently-deserted houses are your best bet. As you're scrounging, get a candy bar and chow it down. The last thing you want to think about right now is hunger.

- And stock up. Don't think in terms of days; think in weeks. Grab a few bags and start scrumpling. What can you carry that'll last the longest? Think in volume and weight in addition to preservation. Cans are good, but they're heavy. But if everything is already picked over, don't get fussy; take what you can get.
- Water. Get loads and loads and loads of water. Or else you'll be drinking your pee in no time.

5 Go on the defensive. It's safe to assume at this juncture that whatever is out there is not your friend. Find a weapon that you can actually use and start watching your six. When it comes to humans, there is no place for intelligence and culture now -- you do what you need to do.

- Don't flash your gun like you do your BMW. Conceal your weapons.^[3] You know that scene in Die Hard where Bruce had those guns taped to his back (despite the fact that tape doesn't adhere easily to pools of sweat) and pulled a one-over on that German villain either played by Jeremy Irons or Alan Rickman? That's going to be you. No one's going to pull the wool over your eyes. You're a weapon yourself.

6 Find other survivors. You've got your food, you've got your weapons, and you've staked out a place to stay. Now it's time to assemble a team a la The Walking Dead. Except that you want a team that is actually useful. When you consider taking on others (they're mouths to feed, after all), assess what they can do for you. Do they know plants? Are they a wizard with a javelin? Are they carrying their own stockpile of food?

- Okay, you'll probably want friends so you shouldn't be too picky. If you're not going to assess them for their goods, at least consider their character. Does your gut tell you they're trustworthy?
- If you're all alone, keep a look out for lights and fires at nighttime. If you see one or more, consider venturing out yourself to make new best friends, but only if you think the end would justify the means. How far away is the light? How quickly could you get there? What would you be risking by leaving? Are there predators or obstacles in your path? You may be better off being alone, for now.

7 Stay positive. This will arguably be the hardest thing, especially if you're alone or wounded. But ultimately this hardship will be easier to handle if you remain optimistic about it. And if there are children with you, all the more reason.

- Do not let your ethics stand in the way of your identity. The rules are different now. Just because you decided someone isn't pulling their slack and the team should therefore cut their losses doesn't mean you've turned into an animal. Assess your moralities as you see fit, but understand that the world is a much different place now and you must adapt to it to stay alive and fruitful.

Community Q&A

Would I need sunglasses in an apocalypse?

wikiHow Contributor

Sunglasses will keep harsh light and glare out of your eyes, prevent sunburn around your eyes, can serve as a useful quick disguise and can help you to avoid eye contact with people begging for help or trying to suss you out. If you end up in harshly lit environments, they will help you to see with ease (snow, desert, etc.). It just makes sense to have sunglasses as one of your must-haves, especially as you may need to spend a lot of time outdoors.

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How do I protect my family and I during the apocalypse? Will this actually happen?

wikiHow Contributor

Treat them as part of your "team". If they can contribute, then great! If not, you will have to provide for them and keep them out of harm's way.

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If I find a survivor I know, should I still trust them?

wikiHow Contributor

Maybe, but maybe not. It depends on your relationship with them. If it's your long lost mother, it wouldn't hurt. If it's a guy you talked to once at a party, then you probably shouldn't.

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How can I make weapons with everyday items?

wikiHow Contributor

You could make a spear with any stick, string and knife, just tie them together and you have it. There are lots of ways to make weapons, such as above. Even slingshots could do. Any knives or sharp objects could help. Under some circumstances, use bug spray to irritate.

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Should I save celebrities?

wikiHow Contributor

No. Their stock in trade is making it appear as if they know what they're doing when in actual fact they haven't a clue. Reading a script, writing lyrics, singing and dancing and updating Instagram are not useful survival skills. This lack of resourcefulness and inexperience will make most of them a burden.

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If I find people, how would I know if they're nice and won't backstab me?

wikiHow Contributor

You don't know. As such, never let down your guard. Be friendly but stay wary, be helpful but ever watchful. Assume nothing is certain than that anyone could turn when you least expect it.

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How could I possibly stay positive during an apocalyptic attack?

wikiHow Contributor

By preparing beforehand and building shelter, plus stocking up on supplies doesn't hurt. Stick with the people you care about and who have got your back. Realize that everything ends, eventually and possibly, the end to this will be good for you and yours. To think otherwise is to entertain doom and gloom, so try to be realistic but chipper.

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How do you make an escape plan?

wikiHow Contributor

Find the best routes through the front and back doors of your house, then your street. Know the hiding places in the area you live, and if you have family members, create a secret location for you all to meet. Keep in mind how to avoid enemies if there are any nearby. It's best to practice different scenarios before the time comes.

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What are the things people will try to steal? I have a few reserve items hidden in my pack (if they don't take my pack).

For secret items, try to use those things when you spend time away from your tribe, aka family. If found, just breath

deeply in and deeply out and say "Okay, I will share just this once", then hide the items somewhere new for the future.

wikiHow
Contributor

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How should I know when to not trust someone and trust someone?

wikiHow
Contributor

Trust someone if they know you. But don't if they always ask for weapons or don't respect you.

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Tips

- Putting hay straight on top of open containers of water will cool it almost to an ice cold, even at times, making ice.
- Never trust your own species. People are going to be **hungry** and **thirsty** and cannot be trusted. When you first meet them, they are either going to mug you for what you have or, even worse, kill you. Be prepared when meeting other humans, if you run into them - you run into them on your own terms.
- Print out this article. If society were to collapse, try printing out this article for use as a reference. The internet will shut down and the power will be next, so having this article on paper will improve your odds on survival greatly and to inexperienced people as well.
- There is strength in numbers. If you are alone, you may wish to seek out others. Assess the situation at hand.
- **Living on a farm** will give you great advantage; an isolated area will protect you from most looters and raiders. Preparing a Survival Retreat before-hand and having a few extra hands around will help you survive the aftermath of Armageddon for years.
- Never let your guard down until you know you are safe.
- Hide your vehicle (If you are using one) under trees, bridges or overpasses. Try and camouflage your vehicle. You never know what or who can be flying over.
- Even though most of us don't like it, fruit cake will last for over 100 years without refrigeration or even in plastic storage bags.
- **Stay hidden** and **out of sight**. Never reveal your shelter by putting a big SOS sign on it. If possible, keep it looking deserted to avoid attracting attention.
- Do not rely on any other technological product to save your life as:
 - There is no guarantee that you'll fully survive with those, as there might not be any other power source.
 - The "developed" products can cause complications and waste of your vital time!

Warnings

- The criminal element that was once housed in local and federal prisons will be loose all over the countryside. It's best to assume the worst of humans are at this juncture.
- Don't waste bullets. Using guns requires bullets. If you waste them, you'll probably die during an attack.
- People will form gangs in order to retrieve the resources they need to survive, resulting in safety with numbers. Know this and recognize this mob mentality.
- Expect individuals to practice cannibalism due to the lack of food.
- Law enforcement officers either real or fake cannot be trusted in an apocalypse.
- Never advertise your preparedness plans to co-workers, friends, and extended members of your family. They will likely not be prepared and once their survival instincts kick in, they will turn to you or worse, turn on you for your supplies.
- **Rivers** and **lakes** will be polluted with human fecal matter coming from the water treatment plants and overflowing sewers. Diseases like **Typhoid** and **Cholera** will strike with vengeance.

Things You'll Need

- Jugs of water
- Canned goods
- A few packaged, vacuum-sealed goods

- Blanket and pillow
- Medications
- A weapon
- Ammo
- A knife (in addition to a weapon)
- Warm clothing (if your climate requires it)
- Carrying bag (for moving and/or fleeing)
- Batteries
- Flashlights
- Matches
- Pot (for cooking or boiling water)
- Eating ware (plate, mug, spoon, fork)
- Map
- Permanent markers
- Change of clothes (skin covering and comfortable)
- Can opener
- Camp stove and propane
- Hatchet or axe
- First aid book
- Duct tape
- Glow sticks
- Radio and/or walkie-talkies
- Lighters
- Hatchet or Ax
- Water (30 to 90 days)
- Food (30 to 90 days)
- Duct Tape
- First Aid Kit (list above)
- Survival reference books (1 or 2)
- Signal Mirror (CD or camping mirror)
- Rope (20ft/ 7Yds)
- Sunglasses
- Hiking boots
- Bulletproof vest
- Identification documents
- A backpack, duffel bag, Hiking pack, etc.
- "Gift" items to give to unfriendly people you encounter
- Toilet paper (a couple rolls will suffice)
- Menstrual products
- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Plastic garbage bags and ties
- Shovel or trowel

- Bleach
- Soap and shampoo
- Comfort items
- A bow or crossbow (for hunting and fighting)
- Compass and/or GPS

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