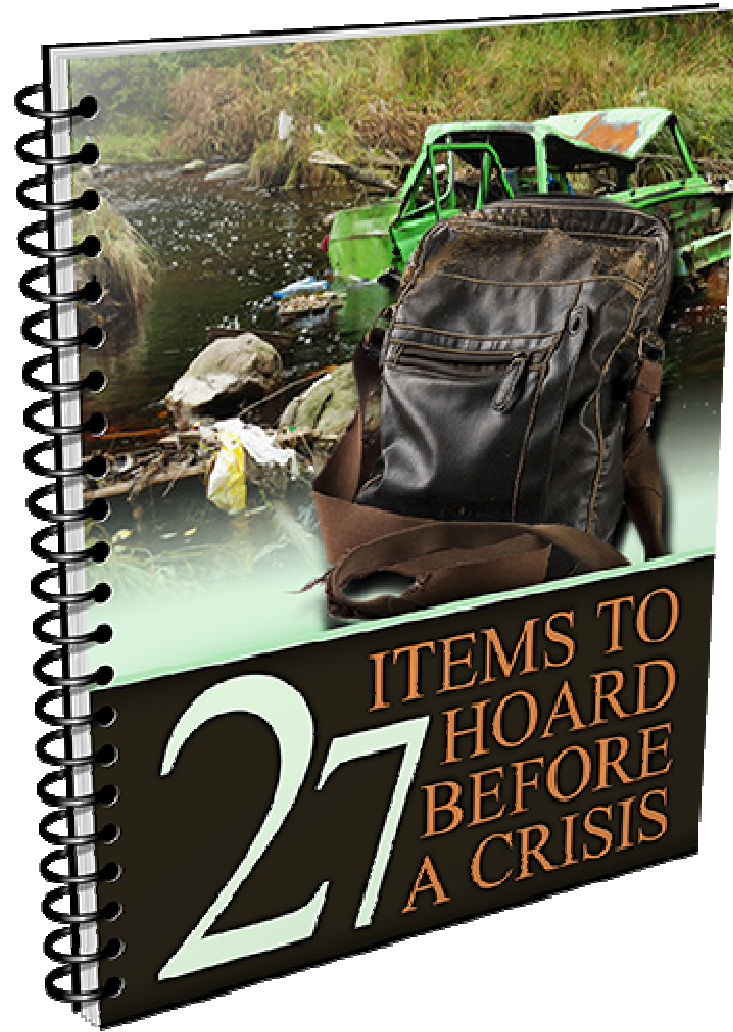


# 27 THINGS YOU NEED TO HOARD



BY ALEC DEACON

V2.0

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# INTRODUCTION

A number of years ago, my home was caught in the edge of a hurricane. I'm not talking about a major storm like Hurricane Katrina or Hurricane Sandy, this was much smaller. We had some high winds and a bunch of rain, causing a foot of water to build up in the street in front of our house; but nothing that caused any major damage. Even so, our power was out for more than a day, while we waited for repair crews to put all the downed power lines back together.

This was shortly after the tsunami that happened in the Indian Ocean in 2004. The next year, there were several hurricanes which blew through Mexico, causing great devastation, which I got to see as I traveled through Mexico. One of those hurricanes caused mudslides that buried whole villages in the southern part of Mexico. Not too long after that, the city of Villahermosa, Mexico, where I have several friends, flooded to the depth of 8 feet.

Maybe I was a little slow getting the message, but all of this served as a wake-up call for me. I realized that the same sorts of problems which these people were facing could come to visit me any day, without any advance warning. I couldn't wait till the problem arrived to get ready; but what did I need to do?

At that time, there wasn't a lot of information around about prepping. I couldn't just go out and buy a book or find some information on the Internet. Anyone who was interested in prepping had to figure it out for themselves. Fortunately for me, I'd been a survivalist (what we used to call people who were prepared to survive disasters) during the Cold War, so I at least had some old memories I could dust off. I started looking at my situation, the likely disasters that I could face, and how I was going to get ready for them.

Since then, nothing has happened to dissuade me. If anything, I've come to realize that the situation is even more precarious than I had imagined. The 2009 housing crisis showed me that the United States is on the brink of financial collapse. Since then, there have been a number of mass shootings, the nation has become more divided, and things just seem to be getting worse and worse. We're not just facing possible problems from natural disasters today; we're facing the potential of problems wherever we look.

I can't say that I'm 100% ready for whatever comes my way, but I'm a whole lot more ready than I was ten years ago. That got me thinking though; what about everyone else? I couldn't see just preparing myself and my family, ignoring all the other people that I know (and don't know). I realized that I had a responsibility; a responsibility to help others prepare, so that together we all might be able to survive whatever happens in the future.

This book is an attempt to do just that. There's a lot of material out there which talks about the need for stockpiling food and water. I definitely agree with that. Everyone needs to have food and water to survive. However, just having food and water isn't enough. How will having 2,000 pounds of food stashed away help you, if you have no way of cooking that food? What will you do when that food runs

out? How will you defend yourself from marauding bands of looters, if the government takes away your guns? What will you do when the electricity and water go out, and don't come back on for days, or even weeks? How are you going to keep your home and family warm if the power is out?

These are the types of questions that I asked myself, and that we all need to ask ourselves. What I'm going to try and do in this book is share the answers I've found to these questions. More than anything, preparing for any disaster is about having what you need on-hand. Unfortunately, most people don't know what they are going to need. Hopefully, by the time you make it through these pages, you're going to have a pretty good idea of what you need to have, in order to take care of your family.

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It doesn't matter if you're preparing for a natural disaster, the end of society as we know it, or the imagined coming zombie apocalypse, many people today are preparing for disasters. The truth is that there are all too many opportunities for disaster to strike our lives, ending life as we've known it and replacing that with insecurity, struggle and the need to survive. Your ability to win your favorite computer game, make witty comments on Facebook, or read a spreadsheet won't help you then. You'll need to be able to confront a new lifestyle and overcome it.

There are no accurate figures on what percentage of our population will be hit by a serious disaster sometime in their lifetime. Searching historically, I can find times that as much as 25 percent of our population has been affected by a single disaster. With the increase of problems in the world, I believe that the percentages are increasingly going against us. I would have to say that the odds of each and every one of us being confronted by a disaster sometime in our life are high enough to warrant taking action.

Surviving a disaster has more to do with mental and physical preparation than anything else. When a disaster strikes, the people who are prepared are the ones who are most likely to survive it. Taking the time and effort to make some basic preparations is the greatest way of ensuring not only your family's survival, but to make it possible for them to survive reasonably comfortably as well.

Expecting the government to take care of you in a disaster is foolish. The aftermath of Hurricane Katrina was devastating. The media blasted President Bush, FEMA (the Federal Emergency Management Agency), the military and the government in general for their failure to effectively help the victims of that disaster. Seven years later, when Hurricane Sandy hit New Jersey, FEMA wasn't much better prepared. Although the media didn't make as big a deal out of the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, two months later, many survivors still had to dig through dumpsters in order to find food to keep their families alive.

The people who survived either of those hurricanes with the least problem were those who had prepared. I don't mean a three day stock of food either, like FEMA recommends, I'm talking about enough food, water and other supplies to get them through the crisis and reconstruction. They were the only ones who didn't suffer needlessly in that disaster.

After any sort of disaster, whether natural or man-made, life returns to a more basic level. It's almost as if somebody turned the calendar back a couple of hundred years. Many of the things which we take for granted, like running water and electricity, are no longer available. People have to learn how to make do with less, returning to the way that our great-great-grandparents did things. Yet the average American has absolutely no idea of how to do that.

Look at the aftermath of World War II. Most of Europe was in shambles. Whole blocks in many cities had been reduced to rubble. People who had been important before the war were digging up potatoes in the field so that they could eat. Some literally spent their fortunes, trading gold, silver and gems to farmer for a suitcase of food.

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Preparing for a disaster doesn't mean running to the store the day before it hits to buy a new flashlight and a couple of gallons of water. Emergency situations don't typically last only one day. Oh, the event may only last one day, but the aftermath can last for months. Five years after hurricane Katrina many New Orleans residents were still struggling to survive. Many have given up and moved away, never to rebuild their homes. This clearly shows that to be properly prepared to confront the disaster, one must be prepared to confront the entire rebuilding process, which can last for months or even years.

Expert opinions vary on how much of a stockpile you need to have, in order to have enough. Some preppers have stockpiles of food which will last their families 10 years. While that may sound a bit extreme to you and me, it doesn't to them. What you decide you need for your family depends upon your personal situation, your family's needs, and how long it will take to recover from the disaster. Unfortunately, there's really no way of knowing how long recovery will take.

A good way to go about stockpiling is to start out small. Build a one month stockpile of everything. Once you have that on hand, work to expand it to three months. Later, you can build upon that to make it enough for six months, and eventually enough to last your family a year.

Within a year, you should be able to recover from most tragedies that can strike. That doesn't necessarily mean that you will have returned to the pre-disaster lifestyle, but that you will have developed a new lifestyle, which may include growing your own food, working a different type of job and filtering your own water from your well.

Looking at the aftermath of some disasters that have happened in the last ten years, I'd have to say that most people never really return to the old normal. Instead, they create a new normal, which can include moving their home, finding a different type of work, and becoming more self-sufficient than they were before. While none of these things are bad in and of themselves, most of us don't like change. Preparing for the disaster can't eliminate change, but it can go a long way towards making the change a whole lot more comfortable and easier to swallow.

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If you're like me, your family is important to you. You want to take care of them, make sure that they will be in good health, and do everything within your power to protect them from unnecessary suffering. That's why you're reading this book. That's why you're thinking of joining the ever-growing ranks of preppers. That's why you're willing to pay the price today, so that your family doesn't have to pay it tomorrow.

That's great! I applaud you for that attitude. There are too many people who are expecting that everything will be okay; or that if it isn't, then Uncle Sam will come to come to bail them out.

Think of this book like the instructions for creating your own insurance policy. The information I've included will provide you with the tools and knowledge to be able to prepare your home and family for pretty much anything that comes down the pike. This isn't your typical list that says, "buy non-perishable groceries." No, I'm not even going to talk about groceries. Nor am I going to talk about filling up water jugs and placing them under your bed. Like I said earlier, there are lots of others who are talking about that. What I'm going to talk about is what they haven't.

Many of the things I'm going to mention will seem obvious once you've read them. The problem with those obvious things is that they are often very elusive. I can tell you from personal experience that it can take years to think of some of them. Well, my plan is to save you those years. I want you to learn from my experience, so that you can do in months, what has cost me years to do.

This information should help you to get ready for any coming crisis. I'm not just telling you how to prepare for a hurricane or a crash on Wall Street. Real prepping is about being ready for any disaster, not just one specific type. If there's one thing we can say about disasters, it's that the one you don't expect is the one that comes to get you. So, as you apply this information to your own life, you will be building that insurance policy for your family. Your insurance policy may look quite different than mine; but that's okay. Your family, your home, your neighborhood and the climate where you live is different than mine as well. I'm not giving you a blueprint; I'm giving you an outline of a plan.

There is no greater way to show your love to your family, than to ensure their security. That's what prepping is really all about. You are embarking upon the project of providing security to your family. If I can help, then that's enough reward for me.



# THE THREE BASIC NECESSITIES FOR SURVIVAL

Let me start by dispelling a little bit of fiction. You've probably heard this all your life, just as I have. What I'm talking about are the three basic needs for survival. You've probably heard that they are:

## FOOD, CLOTHING AND SHELTER

While that sounds pretty good, and those things are necessary for survival, I can't agree with that list. I say that because there are two basic problems with it. First of all, it leaves one of the biggest needs off the list. Secondly, two of the things which are mentioned provide the same survival benefit, so in reality are only one item.

The thing that's missing from that list is water. The human body can only survive for three days without water. We become dehydrated extremely easily. In fact, most people are at least partially dehydrated all the time. For them, it may not take three days. Of course, that three day figure is an approximation, because there are things which can affect how quickly our body loses water, namely activity and temperature. If one is in the desert on a hot day, their life expectancy without water can be as little as 12 hours!

The thing that is duplicated on the list is shelter. Shelter exists for the purpose of protecting our bodies from the elements. Specifically, it is to protect our body's ability to thermoregulate. That's a fancy word which means control the body's temperature. Climate can affect our body's temperature, causing it to expend water and energy to maintain itself at 98.6 degrees F (37 degrees C). If our bodies can't thermoregulate, then as little as six percent change in our core temperature can kill us. As little as two percent change can prevent us from thinking clearly and our bodies from working correctly.

Both clothing and shelter exist to help protect our bodies from the climate, so that they can thermoregulate correctly. While clothing also covers our bodies for modesty's sake, that isn't a necessary for survival (unless you are the type that's likely to die of embarrassment). So, I'd rewrite the three basic needs for survival to be like this:

## SHELTER, WATER AND FOOD

Those are the three main needs for survival, in the order of their importance. Shelter is highest, because there are times when we can only live minutes without proper thermoregulation. Look at the victims of the Titanic. It went down in the North Atlantic Ocean in the winter. Most of the people who died, didn't die from drowning, they died from hypothermia (a lowering of the body's core temperature). The combination of the cold air and cold water caused those people to die in hours or even minutes.

As I've already mentioned, we can survive about three days without water, and the average American can survive for 100 days without food. I said "survive" here, although to remain healthy, we really can only go about 30 days. Longer than that and our body begins to weaken.

Many of the things we are going to discuss in this book are either some way of providing us with those three needs, or in some way help us obtain, use and keep those three needs. Others are secondary necessities, which make it possible for us to obtain the three most basic needs. While some things, like lighting, may not seem like they have anything to do with the three basic needs, lighting is a necessity. Without it, we may not be able to do the work necessary to meet those three basic needs.

There are a few things which don't really have a direct application to meeting those needs, but are still necessary for survival. Protecting yourself doesn't help you with any of those three, but if you can't protect yourself, you may lose those. Even worse, if you can't protect yourself, you may not need those any longer.

## THE 27 THINGS YOU NEED TO HOARD FOR SURVIVAL

I want to reiterate something before getting into the list. This list is based upon years of prepping experience. I didn't come up with this overnight or just to write this book. These are the things that I have collected or created over the years, so that my family can survive any disaster that I can think of. A lot of thought has gone into this list, as I've looked at various different survival scenarios and decided what I needed to have on-hand in order to take care of my family.

I don't get into "bugging out" in this list. For those who aren't familiar with that term, "bugging out" refers to leaving your home to go to a pre-determined safe haven, in the case it becomes impossible to remain in your home. While many of the same items would be needed for bugging out, this list is based upon the assumption that you will be staying in your home, struggling to survive in an urban environment.

### 1. WATER PURIFICATION SYSTEM

Everyone who talks about prepping talks about the need for water. During normal times, adults should consume eight glasses of water per day. That's a half-gallon per person per day. Then again, we're not talking about normal times. In the aftermath of any disaster, you're probably going to be much more

physically active than you're used to, which means your body will be sweating more than normal, using more water than you're accustomed to.

I live in a very hot part of the country. For three-quarters of the year, we can count on almost every day being over 100 degrees. If somebody is working outside in the summer, they need to drink a minimum of a gallon of water per day. Not a half gallon, a full gallon.

If you have 100 gallons of purified water stocked up for a family of four, that's only enough water to last you for 25 days in a hot climate. That 100 gallons of water will take up a lot of space, so you may have trouble in storing enough water. On top of that, we're really only talking about drinking water right now, not water for washing dishes, bathing and washing clothes.

You've heard that you need to have a ready source of water, like a lake, stream or canal. But, you also need some way of purifying that water. No matter how big your water stocks are, you're going to run out. If you can't purify the water you pull from a lake or stream, there's a good chance that everyone in your family is going to get sick. With many sorts of disasters, you'll get more than sick, you'll get poisoned and die.

The first thing you need to think about is how are you going to get that water from the lake or stream to your house? If gasoline is not available, you won't be able to count on your car; you'll need an alternate means of transporting your water; something that doesn't require fuel to operate.

There are many different ways that you can go about purifying water, including boiling your water, building a solar still or a bio-filter, or buying one of the many commercial filters available. Whichever system you decide on, it must have enough capacity to provide your family and anyone else that is with you, with at least one gallon of water per person per day. This can't wait. You must have it ready before disaster strikes.

If your system requires filters or other materials that can become clogged or wear out, you need spares for them as well. For a bio-filter, be sure to have a goodly supply of activated charcoal or activated carbon. For a commercial filter, buy a primary and a spare.

With water being so important, you should really have two means of purifying it, in case something happens to your primary purification method. Everything that can be bought or made can also break, usually at the worst possible time. If your water purification system goes down, you can't just tell your family to stop drinking; you've got to have an alternate system in place.

## 2. MEANS OF COOKING

Stoves can either be powered by electricity or natural gas. In many disasters, there is a high probability of losing one or both of these sources of power. What good does a stockpile of food do you, if you have no way of cooking it?

Never fear, there is good news. People managed to cook their food for thousands of years before the modern stove was invented. In the early part of our country's history, many families prepared their food over an open fire. Later, the cast-iron wood burning stove was invented. It wasn't until the 1800s that the gas stove was invented, and it took till the early 1900s for them to become common.

If the electric or gas stove isn't going to be working, we'll have to go back to the old ways of cooking. There are a number of ways that you can go about this, some of which you may already have:

- Barbecue grill
- Gasoline camp stove
- Fireplace
- Fire pit
- Solar oven

Once again, redundancy is a key. You actually need something that you can use for a stove and something which you can use for an oven. For your oven, a Dutch Oven, used in conjunction with your barbecue grill, fire pit or fireplace can be enough.

Whatever alternate cooking method you decide to use will need an extensive source of fuel. I recommend avoiding camp stoves and barbecue grills that require propane bottles, as you'll probably have trouble refilling the bottles. If you have to use a propane grill or stove, then make sure you put in a good stock of propane.

The small propane bottles which are used for camp stoves can be refilled, even though the manufacturer says they can't, from any propane tank. All that is needed is an adapter to connect the two together. With the adapter in place, the difference in pressure will cause propane to flow from the tank to the smaller bottle.

Propane grills can also be used with either charcoal or wood. This may require removing the lava rock from the bottom of the grill, in order to have enough room for the charcoal or wood. Once removed, there really isn't much difference between a gas grill and a charcoal one.

In addition to propane powered camp stoves, Coleman also still makes the old-fashioned "dual fuel" gas stove. This is designed to run off of Coleman fuel, but it runs just as well off of gasoline. Even though gasoline may be in short supply during a crisis, there's a much greater chance of being able to get gasoline than there is of getting propane. If you can't find it anywhere else, you can drain it out of your car's gas tank.

Cooking over a camp stove, barbecue grill or fire pit is much different than cooking over an electric or gas range. It's not enough to have an alternate means of cooking, if you're not ready to use it. Be sure to practice cooking with your alternate means, before you need to do it to survive.

### 3. RECIPES

If the food you've stockpiled isn't what you're used to eating, then there's a pretty good chance that you don't have any idea how to cook it. One example is flour, which is hard to store for extended periods of time, so most prepping books recommend storing whole grain instead. Of course, that requires having a grain mill on hand, one that can run without electricity.

Beans are another great prepping food. They are inexpensive, store well for a long period of time, and are one of the highest non-meat sources of protein. However, beans take a long time to cook. I can still remember the first time my wife tried to cook beans. She had them on the stove in our motorhome for three hours. Since they were still hard as a rock, she decided to chop them up in the blender, so that they'd cook faster. It didn't help much and the beans ended up in the garbage.

If your family isn't used to eating beans, and you serve them, you might just end up with a riot on your hands. Kids that are used to pizza, hamburgers and French fries aren't going to be thrilled with some home-made frying pan bread and a pile of beans. You're going to have to be creative with those beans, in order to make them palatable to your family.

Don't wait until disaster strikes to try and figure out how to use the unusual foods that you've stockpiled. Cooking new and interesting things is a skill that needs to be learned. Finding recipes that your family will eat takes even more time. You'd better start looking now. When you find recipes that you think will work, try them out. Get your panel of experts (your family) to give you their honest opinion. If you can get them to eat it in a non-crisis situation, you're home free.

To help you in the use of your recipes, you'll need a stock of spices as well. Many things can be doctored up with a little beef bouillon and a few spices to taste much different than we expect them to. While you'll never get a squash casserole to taste like pizza, some tomato sauce and spices can help with getting your kids to eat things like squash, beans and other vegetables that they might not be used to eating.

### 4. HEIRLOOM SEEDS (NON-GENETICALLY MODIFIED)

I mentioned in the introduction that you might need to have some way of producing your own food. In any disaster situation that looks like it will disrupt your life for more than a week, you should start thinking about food production early on. Your food stockpile is only going to last so long, and you'll still want to eat when it runs out.

The easiest thing you can do to produce your own food is to start a vegetable garden. Even if you don't have that famous green thumb, you can still grow a variety of vegetables in your back yard or even on the roof of an apartment building. Coupling this with an aquaponics system, so that you are growing fish as well can create a very efficient, productive system, which has the potential of providing most if not all of your family's food.

In order to start a garden, you're going to need a stock of seeds. Keep in mind that not all seeds are created equal, so you want to be somewhat careful of what types of seeds you buy. Much of the produce you find in the grocery store is genetically modified. So, you can't just take the seeds out of a tomato and plant them, expecting to get more tomatoes. Most seeds from genetically modified vegetables won't grow in the average garden.

What you need are "heirloom seeds." Like any family heirloom, these are seeds which have been passed down through the generations. Farmers plant these seeds and harvest them, keeping many breeds of fruits and vegetables from becoming extinct.

There are literally thousands of varieties of most vegetables. Some of the companies which specialize in heirloom seeds list things like 6,000 different types of tomatoes, 4,000 types of squash, several hundred types of lettuce. The list is endless.

You can't usually find these seeds in your local garden supply store; what they have there is a limited selection, which may be genetically modified. In many cases, the providers of these seeds are non-profit organizations, dedicated to preserving these varieties. These can be found online, simply by searching for "heirloom seeds."

When you start harvesting from your garden, be sure to harvest the seeds as well. Heirloom seeds will germinate and grow in your next growing season. Dry the seeds and store them in plastic bags or envelopes, labeled to tell you what they are. For extremely small seeds, it might be better to dry the entire flower, storing it as if it were a seed, as finding the seed within the flower can be difficult.

## 5. PROTEIN PRODUCTION

Man does not live by bread alone... nor do most of them do real good living off of just vegetables. So, you'll need to augment your vegetable garden with some sort of protein production. While raising animals is harder than raising vegetables, it can still be done by the average person. Once again, the biggest problem is putting everything in place before the disaster strikes, so that you'll be ready to produce at least some meat once the grocery stores run out.

The easiest thing to raise are fish. Fish can be raised in a pond or tank. Chemical tanks which have been thoroughly cleaned out and had the top cut off make great aquariums for a home fish farm. Coupled together with a garden, in an aquaponics system, you can have the better part of your food production coming right out of your own back yard.

The biggest problem with raising fish is cleaning out the water. That's where aquaponics helps. The water from the fish tank gets circulated through the vegetable garden, to provide nutrients to the plants. That also serves to filter the water, making it safe for the fish.

You want to be careful in selecting what type of fish you grow in your fish farm. The fish you select must be compatible with the climate you live in. Some types of fish are carnivorous. These aren't a good choice, as they require raising small feed fish as well. Some types of fish require large amounts of space

to grow, making them impractical for a home fish farm. On the other hand, Tilapia are an excellent fish to grow for food, as they need little space, will eat almost anything, including algae, and are extremely hardy. However, they require a hot climate to grow. Some research online will be necessary, in order to determine the best type of fish for you to grow in your aquaponics system.

Other than fish, the next easiest thing to grow for protein production is chickens. Like Tilapia, chickens will eat literally anything; grass, bugs and leftovers from the table. This can be a problem, especially if you don't keep them penned in. There's no way to train your chickens to stay out of your vegetable garden, you have to make sure they can't get in. On the positive side, they don't need a lot of space and since chickens don't fly well, a roof over their pen is unnecessary.

Chickens can either be raised for meat, or brood hens can be kept for eggs. Without the controls used in commercial farms, a hen will lay an egg three out of every five days. So, a dozen brood hens will provide two eggs per person per day, for a four person family.

Other possibilities for meat production would be rabbits and goats. Both are fairly easy to raise. Rabbits can be fed the greens that you don't eat from your vegetable garden along with any extra vegetables which you don't eat. They breed rapidly, providing a plentiful source of meat. Goats will keep your yard trimmed, require little maintenance, and provide goat milk, which can be drunk or turned into cheese.

Any meat production you decide to use will need to be set up and started before a disaster strikes. All of these animals are fairly easy to find in any rural area. Fingerling fish can be ordered online. Chicks can be purchased from most feed stores and farm supply stores. If you wait until a crisis happens, availability will drop, making it very hard to procure your animals. Along with the animals, be sure to lay in a goodly stock of feed and any other supplies that you will need for them.

## 6. BLEACH

City water systems and swimming pools alike add chlorine to the water supply. The reason for this is that chlorine will kill pretty much all bacteria. This chemical is extremely easy to procure, packaged for household use as bleach.

Be sure to buy regular bleach, preferably without any additives or scent. Non-chlorine bleaches aren't useful for keeping water pure, as they don't contain chlorine. While using bleach alone for purifying drinking water is not advised, it is excellent for purifying water that is used for washing dishes and other household uses.

Already purified water can be kept clean by adding only eight drops of bleach per gallon. If the water is kept in a cool, dark place, this amount of bleach should keep the water purified for over a year. However, ultraviolet light causes a chemical reaction in the chlorine, nullifying it. So, if the water is stored outdoors or in places where it receives a lot of light, the chlorine will need to be replenished from time to time.

Bleach is also an excellent cleaner, especially when dealing with mold and bacteria. Since one possible disaster scenario for almost anyone is flooding, bleach can help to salvage a home, after the water has receded. While drywall and carpeting will probably need to be torn out and replaced, wood trim and especially wood structural members can be salvaged. If mold starts forming on them (very common), bleach can be used to kill the mold and salvage the wood.

This application of bleach may have to be done more than one time, as the wood dries. As long as there is still a considerable amount of moisture in the wood, it is an ideal breeding ground for mold and fungi. Depending upon airflow and temperature, it can take a month for the wood in a flooded home to dry out, even after the carpet and drywall have been removed.

## 7. SOURCES OF ELECTRICAL ENERGY

In any disaster situation, one of the hardest hit necessities of life is electricity. Our modern society depends upon electrical power for everything from heating and cooling to entertainment, with cooking and preserving food in the middle. Yet, in some situations, people can be without electrical power for a long time.

The tsunami which hit the East coast of Japan in March 2011 left about 2.74 million people without electricity. It took over two and a half months to restore electric power to most of these people. How would you live without electricity? For most of us, lack of electricity would return us to a somewhat primitive lifestyle.

To survive any crisis or disaster with the minimal disruption to your life, some method of producing your own electricity has to be part of your plan. There are a number of ways of doing this, of which the most common are:

- Generators
- Wind power
- Solar power

Generators are great for short-term needs, but not for use over a long period of time. An average sized consumer-grade generator (not a whole house generator) uses about a gallon of gasoline per hour. Considering that gasoline will be rare and extremely expensive after a disaster, having to pay for one gallon per hour all day long for days or weeks is virtually impossible for most families.

This doesn't mean that buying a generator is a waste of money. For the short-term, a generator is an excellent source of electrical power. However, don't depend upon the generator for long-term use. A fully prepared plan should include other sources of electrical power, specifically wind and solar power.

Solar power is expensive to put in, literally costing tens of thousands of dollars for the average home. However, a lot of this money can be saved by building your own solar system. Individual solar cells, the heart of the system, can be bought from a number of suppliers, or even on eBay. Each cell produces 0.5 VDC (volts of direct current) at anywhere from 3 to 6 watts, depending upon their size. These individual



cells need to be soldered together, making a panel of cells which produces 18 volts. The final number of watts will depend upon the number of cells in the panel.

The panel needs to be mounted and sealed from moisture. Once built and tested, it is mounted on the roof, at an angle to maximize exposure to the sun. There are other components to a solar power system, including batteries, a charger for the batteries and a voltage inverter to convert the 12 VDC to 120 VAC (house current).

Another excellent electrical power source in many places is a wind generator or windmill. These can be purchased from a variety of places, including most home improvement warehouses. An average home windmill produces about 700 watts of power at 120 VAC.

Even with a windmill and several solar panels, you probably won't be able to produce as much electricity as your family is accustomed to using. You won't be able to run your central air or electric baseboard heaters all day long. However, you will be able to run some critical systems, such as your refrigerator, a radio (to get the news) and some lighting.

## 8. BATTERIES

As I mentioned in the previous point, we are a society which is addicted to electronics. We use electronic devices for everything. While a generator, windmill and some solar panels can provide electricity to run your home, that may not help you with some electrical and electronic devices, especially flashlights.

How many devices does your family use regularly that require batteries? How many would you be using in a survival situation? How long will those devices run off of those batteries, before you can't use them any more?

A good stock of batteries is another essential for us to be able to use many of the things which we are accustomed to using, especially AA and AAA alkaline batteries. Fortunately for us, battery manufacturers have not been idle, but have been working to improve the technology that their batteries are based upon. Today's alkaline batteries have a much longer shelf-life than before. In fact, one major manufacturer is advertising that their alkaline batteries will last 10 years, sitting on the shelf!

For longest life, batteries should be kept cool and dry. The best place is in a frost-free refrigerator. For many, that's impractical, as they need their refrigerators for storing food. However, there are other places in the home which are typically cool. Any of these will work.

Another reason for stocking up on batteries is to use them for bartering. Most people won't have enough batteries (or anything else) on hand to meet their needs. Just think of this, how many times have you grabbed a flashlight, just to find that the batteries are dead? Well, what makes you think that your neighbors are any better at replacing dead flashlight batteries than you are?

## 9. GASOLINE

While there is a high probability that some gasoline stocks would be available after a disaster, there is an equally high probability that the price will skyrocket. We are a transportation bound society. Without gasoline, people can't get to work, the grocery store, the doctor, or even to the FEMA office to deal with all the red tape of a disaster.

Having a stock of gasoline on hand can literally be a lifesaver; if not for a member of your family, then possibly for a neighbor or friend. Medical and emergency services are always overwhelmed after any sort of disaster. Whereas today you can call for an ambulance and expect it to arrive within minutes, in the aftermath of a disaster, you might have to wait for hours. With a stock of gasoline, you don't have to wait for the ambulance; you can take them to the hospital yourself.

After any disaster, gasoline is worth its weight in gold. Not only to get places, but to power the equipment which you will need for survival. As I've already said, if you're planning on using a generator for electrical power, you're going to need about a gallon per hour. But that's not the only thing you might need gasoline for. Lawnmowers, weed eaters, chain saws and roto-tillers all need gasoline to run. Additionally, if you're going to use a camp stove for cooking on, you'll need gasoline to burn in it.

Between trying to rebuild your life and take care of your family, you could conceivably go through quite a bit of gasoline. However, stockpiling gasoline can be tricky. It doesn't store well for long periods of time, without going bad. So, any stocks of gasoline will need to be rotated. A simple way of doing this is to have a drum of gasoline and a five gallon gas can. When you fill up your car with gas, fill up the gas can as well. Take it home and add it to the drum. Then pump out five gallons of gas from the drum for use in your car or lawn mower. This is enough to keep your gasoline supply fresh.

There are also chemical additives which you can buy to add to gasoline, prolonging its shelf life. These are excellent for putting in the gas tank of generators and gas powered tools, to ensure that the gasoline in them doesn't go bad and that they'll start when needed.

## 10. ALTERNATE FUEL SOURCES FOR HEATING

One of the three necessities I mentioned earlier for survival was shelter. The reason for that was to help your body thermoregulate. While shelter does help keep you warm in the winter and cool in the summer, having a nice warm fire helps a lot as well. This is another area where you can't count on the services you're used to. If the power is out, electric heat won't work. Don't think that having gas heat will save you though. Not only does your furnace need electricity to work, but the gas pumping station needs electricity to send you the gas.

When you can't count on the normal means for heating your home, you've got to go back to the basics. Mankind has used fire to warm their cave, tent, hut or home for a whole lot longer than we have used HVAC systems. A goodly supply of fuel for heating and a place to burn it can mean the difference between life and death in many circumstances.

If your home doesn't have a fireplace, you might want to consider installing a cast-iron stove. Cast iron stoves are much more efficient for heating than fireplaces anyway, as they radiate heat from all sides. Even if an antique like this doesn't fit the décor of your home, you might want to consider buying one anyway, along with the necessary chimney pipe and other materials to install it. The chimney can be run out a hole cut in one of your windows, allowing a temporary installation in the case of emergency.

Besides collecting firewood, you can also make fireplace logs out of old newspapers. You don't need to buy a "fireplace log maker" to do this; all you need is some string and a bucket of water. Roll the newspapers and tie them. Then soak them a couple of days in the water. When thoroughly soaked, remove them from the water and allow them to dry thoroughly (which will take several days). If you have leaves from raking the lawn, they can be placed between the layers of newspaper while you are making the logs and burned as well.

Don't forget to have more than one means of starting a fire, including something that can be used with damp wood. Dryer lint makes a great fire starter. It can either be used as is, or mixed with paraffin in cardboard egg cartons. These burn considerably longer than bare dryer lint, increasing their ability to work with damp wood.

Fire is such an important necessity for survival that most survival experts recommend having two primary and two secondary means of fire starting. The primary means should be things that are easy to use, such as the dryer lint fire starters and a box of strike-anywhere matches. The secondary means can be harder to work with, but still effective, such as a metal match or steel wool and a battery.

## 11. ALTERNATIVE MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION

In case you haven't noticed, we're a society that is addicted to the automobile. In a crisis situation, many people depend upon their car, truck or SUV to get them out of Dodge quickly. However, thousands of other people have the same idea, causing immense traffic jams on all major thoroughfares and highways.

If you don't bug out in an emergency and decide to stay at home, your trusty steed won't get you anywhere without a stock of gasoline. While I've already recommended that you stock up on gasoline, unless you have a huge underground storage tank, you're probably going to end up running out of gas.

Even during the crisis situation when you can't go to work or the grocery store, you'll still need transportation. Getting to your water supply, sources of food and medical services all require transportation. You'll even need a way to get to the FEAM office, so that you can stand in line and deal with all the red tape they're going to give you.

Having an alternate means of transportation, which doesn't require gasoline, may not seem like a necessity for survival, but it is. The farther you live from the resources you'll need, the more of a necessity it is. Not only do you need this source of transportation, but you need it to have some cargo

carrying capacity as well. You may have to haul water containers back and forth to the river which is five miles away. The last thing you want to do is to carry them all that distance.

If you can't keep a horse where you live, then a bicycle is the next best thing. Don't go for a racing type bicycle, go for a mountain bike. The roads may be damaged or have debris on them; you might even have to travel by some alternate path, without the use of a road. A mountain bike will negotiate these obstacles much easier than a lightweight racing bike will.

Make or buy baskets or a trailer to go with your bicycle. These need to be big enough to carry five gallon water bottles or five gallon buckets. An easy way to come up with a trailer is to buy a child trailer for a bicycle and modify it for cargo carrying. Keep the weight as light as you can, but make it strong enough to carry two five gallon water containers, which will weigh forty pounds each.

## 12. SOURCES OF LIGHT

We're all used to using electric lights to extend our day and make better use of time in the evening. That's fine, as long as we have the electricity to run the lights; but, what about when the electricity goes out? I've already mentioned having an alternate source of electricity and plenty of batteries for your flashlights, but that isn't enough.

A basic rule of prepping is redundancy. Gasoline and battery stocks can run out all too easy. So, it's a good idea to have another source or sources of light, which don't require using those resources.

There are a number of ways of producing light which have been used through the ages. The most common of these is candles. Once again, it's a finite resource which will only last as long as your stockpile of candles holds out, but you can stock candles rather cheaply and without taking up much space. Fancy decorative candles may be expensive, but plain ones are cheap.

One problem with many candles is that they drip more wax than they burn. Dripped wax is wasted wax. Wide candles are actually much more efficient in this regard, because they don't drip. Then, once the candle has burned down, the leftover wax can be melted and made into a new candle.

You can also make plain candles very easily from blocks of paraffin or old candles. All you need is the paraffin and a wick. A simple mold can be made out of any number of things, such as a tin can, aluminum foil draped in a deep bowl, or a cardboard toilet-paper tube.

Anchor the wick in the bottom of the mold and tie it to something that can span the top of the mold. Melt the wax in a double boiler and pour it into the mold. Allow to cool until hard. Voila, you have a candle. You might want to repeat the process a few dozen more times, to have a good stock of them.

Another good source of light is old-fashioned kerosene lanterns. Believe it, or not, these are still being manufactured and can be purchased very inexpensively for camping lanterns. While they are designed for use with kerosene or lamp oil, they will also work just as well with just about any flammable liquid. Just make sure that you test using the liquid outdoors, before lighting the lantern inside your house.

Coleman still manufactures their old standby gas lantern, even though most of their lanterns now use the propane bottles. The gas one will run off of Coleman fuel or gasoline. It has a little pressure pump on it, which has to be pumped up every once in a while, so it's a good idea to have a rebuild kit for the pump and extra mantles for the lamps on hand as well.

One final light option I want to mention is Crisco. Yep, that vegetable oil stuff we cook with makes a great lantern. All you have to do is take a can of Crisco, poke a hole in the foil seal across the top and insert a wick. Light the wick and it will burn the Crisco.

### 13. BLACKOUT CURTAINS

The only problem with having lights on in your house at night is that they can be seen. Normally, that's not a problem, but during a crisis or the aftermath of a disaster, it can be. When everyone else's house is dark and you have light streaming out of your windows, it's like a beacon to everyone saying, "These people are prepared."

While we all might feel like bragging about our foresight in preparing for a disaster, that's really not a good idea. Desperate people do desperate things. If they are hungry or their children are hungry, they might see the lights in your windows and decide that you probably have the food that they need.

Unfortunately, in today's society, many of the people who don't have think that it's not fair when you and I do. You can see this in the occupy movement and in much of the Democrat campaign rhetoric from the 2012 elections. There was a general theme of how unfair it was that some people had, while others didn't. Coupled with that was a promise to take more from those "bad rich people" to give to the "good poor people."

Guess what? When a crisis hits and you have food, water, light, a warm house and electricity, you'll suddenly become those "bad rich people." All the other ones out there, who spent their money on having a good time, instead of getting ready for a disaster, will think it's not fair that you have the things that you've worked hard to have. They'll be strongly in favor of redistributing your wealth into their hands, either through begging, stealing or outright violence.

With that in mind, it's a good idea to not let those people know that you're in better shape than they are. Blackout curtains on your windows will keep the light you have shining inside from becoming that beacon outside. Your home will look as dark as anyone else's, helping to prevent any undue attention.

Blackout curtains can be made from any dark, heavy fabric. Cheap fabric will work just fine, there's no reason to spend a lot of money on anything fancy. To be effective, they need to be larger than the window, so that they will touch the wall all the way around the window. They also need to be several layers thick, as one layer of fabric won't stop the passage of light. You'll probably need to experiment a little bit with the fabric you choose, in order to make sure it blocks the light effectively.

Remember, your source of light may not be what you are used to using. So, when you test your blackout curtains, use the brightest source of light that you expect to use in a crisis situation. That will probably be much lower than your current level of lighting.

## 14. FIRST AID KIT

In any crisis, emergency services are stretched to their maximum. Ambulances are overworked and unable to reach everyone in a timely fashion. Without fail, doctors, nurses and EMTs are overworked, struggling to meet the needs of a host of suffering people. Due to the great need that exists, they are compelled to prioritize patients, based upon the gravity of their injury.

Getting to medical aid can be a problem in and of itself. But even if one manages to get to the hospital emergency room, that doesn't guarantee the attention of medical personnel, especially for minor injuries. One may have to wait for hours before even seeing the triage nurse, let alone see a doctor.

On top of this, the possibility of injury doesn't end with the passing of the crisis. Many more people are injured in the aftermath, as they struggle to reconstruct their lives and salvage their homes. For most of these people, removing debris and rebuilding their homes is not something that they're trained for, so there is a much greater chance of injuring themselves in the process.

A good first-aid kit can mean the difference between an injury being a minor inconvenience and it causing serious illness. Untreated or improperly treated injuries become a breeding ground for infection. In some situations, such as flooding, contamination in the water increases the risk of infection.

For emergency situations, a first aid kit needs to be big enough and well enough stocked to take care of fairly large injuries. It doesn't help to think in terms of a band-aid to cover a cut finger; you need to think in terms of broken legs, gunshot wounds and six inch gashes in people's arms. A little band-aid won't help that very much.

It is actually fairly easy to build your own first-aid kit. All of the necessary supplies are available at any pharmacy, discount store, office supply store or even online. Think a little outside the box and you can save a lot of money on your medical supplies.

Sanitary napkins make wonderful bandages for large cuts, abrasions and even gunshots. They are essentially the same construction as the field dressings the military uses for gunshot wounds. You'll need something to tie them in place, either an elastic bandage, medical tape, gauze or strips of fabric. In a pinch duct tape makes great medical tape, although it tends to pull off a lot of hair when it is removed.

A splint is the quickest and easiest way to treat a broken bone. Any sticks will work for a splint, but cutting some 1/2 inch dowel rods and putting them in your kit saves you from hunting for them when you need them. An elastic bandage (ace bandage) can be wrapped around the limb, holding the dowel rods in place. Make sure your dowel rods are long enough to immobilize the joints above and below the break in the bone.

Another very important ingredient in your first-aid kit is topical antiseptics. It isn't enough to just cover up a wound, the wound needs to be cleaned and an antiseptic applied to prevent infection. There are a large number of over-the-counter medicines available that can be used as antiseptics. There are also a large number of home remedies which can be used in place of medicines, if the medicines are unavailable. A quick search online will reveal many of these to you.

## 15. MEDICINES

If anyone in your family regularly takes prescription medicines, you'll need a good supply on hand. For some people, loss of their regular prescription medicines can have serious results or even cause premature death. The elderly are particularly susceptible to this problem, but it is not limited to only them. Many people with chronic problems take medications their whole life.

One of the first places that looters hit in any emergency is pharmacies. While these looters are mostly looking for drugs that they can get high on, they end up destroying everything else while they are looting. Restocking of these drugs can take time, as transportation networks may not be operating.

Your stock of prescription medicines should equal your stock of food. So if you have a year's worth of food on hand, you should also have a year's worth of any medicines that family members take regularly.

There has been some writing within the prepping community about stocking up on prescription antibiotics. Since many of these require prescriptions, buying veterinary grades of these medicines has been suggested as an alternative. In many cases, the veterinary grades are as pure as the medical grades, and they don't require a prescription.

It is not the intent of this book to recommend specific medications to buy, and I am not qualified to give that sort of advice. I am merely suggesting that you consider your family's medical needs when you make your preparations.

Don't forget over-the-counter medicines, especially pain relievers. A little known fact is that both acetaminophen and ibuprofen can be taken by the same patient at the same time. The two act upon the body in different ways and don't react with each other, making it safe to take them both. But don't believe me, I'm not a medical professional; check with your doctor on this one.

## 16. VITAMINS

It will be both difficult and important to maintain your health during the aftermath of a crisis. Difficult because of the lack of availability of many things which we are used to. Important, so that you can take care of yourself and your family. To add to the difficulty of maintaining your health, your diet will probably be vastly different than what you are used to, eating from what you have stored and what you can produce.

You will also find yourself doing more physical labor than you are probably accustomed to. The necessities to survive without basic services will make everything harder than what we are used to.

When you have to haul water for your family, instead of just opening the tap, you will find yourself expending much more energy per day than normal.

To help maintain your health, even with a less than ideal diet, you should supplement your diet with vitamins. These need to be high quality vitamins, as the cheap ones typically don't dissolve properly in the digestive system, so are not properly absorbed into the body.

While vitamins can't replace a good diet, they can help make up for anything that is lacking. Even the best of diets often falls short of providing everything our bodies need, especially minerals. Many infirmities that strike the elderly are a direct result of poor diet throughout their lives. In a survival situation, you can't afford poor health, because your family can't afford to be without you.

A good vitamin B complex is an important part of maintaining your energy level. There have been a number of studies done which show how vitamin B helps with energy levels. So, even if you are not accustomed to taking a vitamin B complex, add it to your survival vitamin horde.

## 17. PERSONAL HYGIENE ITEMS

One of the areas that's easily forgotten by preppers is that of personal hygiene. Yet, personal hygiene is just as necessary to maintaining health as a good diet. Worldwide, personal hygiene takes a heavy toll in sickness and even death. This is why armies put such a high emphasis on the personal cleanliness of their soldiers.

The human body is hard enough to keep clean in normal circumstances, let alone in the aftermath of a disaster, when there won't be enough water to bathe with, let alone wash our clothes. Yet cleanliness will still be an important part of maintaining our health, maybe even more important than it is now.

It's amazing what people will do for a roll of toilet paper when the stores don't have it. Yet, with the need for trucking in food, water and medicines, simple things like soap, toilet paper and sanitary napkins may not make it in on the trucks. While there are ways around this, such as making your own soap, they all take materials and time. It's much easier to stock up on basic personal hygiene items, so that when the time comes, you have one less thing to worry about.

Women who are still menstruating will need tampons or sanitary napkins to use. Before the invention of these items, women used cloth rags, which they would wash out and reuse. Having to do that just increases your water requirements. Likewise, not having an adequate supply of toilet paper can increase your water requirements as well. Unless you have a creek or manually operated well on your property, you want to do everything you can to keep your water consumption down.

Since most families don't actually go through a lot of personal hygiene products, it may be hard to determine how much to stock. If you're not sure how much of these items you go through, it's easy to check. Simply write the date on the container when it's opened. When it runs out, compare the dates and you'll know how long it lasted.



Keep in mind that water will be at a premium during these times. As much as possible, you'll want personal hygiene items that don't require using a lot of water. This could be a problem for women who have long hair and are used to using a lot of water to wash it. They may have to forgo washing it as often and also forgo the use of conditioner.

Anti-bacterial hand cleaner that doesn't require the use of water and baby wipes are extremely handy for keeping clean when water is at a premium. While they don't provide the capability of bathing, they do provide the capability of cleaning hands prior to food preparation and eating, an essential for avoiding sickness.

Don't forget things like toothpaste, deodorant and spare toothbrushes either. You might end up with some extra friends or family members in your home, especially if their home floods and yours doesn't. So, you'll want to have enough to go around. If you end up with more than you need, these things can always be used as trade goods, with people who didn't do as good a job of stocking up as you did.

## 18. CLEANING SUPPLIES

We've already talked about bleach, but what about other cleaning supplies? Once again, this is something that may not get on the first trucks bringing relief into your area. If you're trying to recover from any sort of natural disaster, you can count on doing a lot of cleaning.

When floods happen or hurricanes hit, the sanitary sewer system ends up mixing in with the storm water. That creates a very unsanitary situation, ripe for a wide number of diseases. Many of the plagues of the past were a direct result of unsanitary conditions. Those same conditions often come in the aftermath of a natural disaster.

The cleaner you can keep your home, the better your family's health will be. But that requires having the right cleaning supplies on hand. You'll want anti-bacterial cleaning supplies whenever possible. These kill the bacteria that may exist on surfaces, at the same time that they are cleaning off the mess. If you can't find anti-bacterial cleaning supplies, you can make your own by mixing a small amount of bleach into your regular cleaning supplies.

Remember that water will be at a premium; so you want cleaning supplies that you can use with a minimal amount of water. Paper towels may seem like a luxury, but at least they don't have to be washed. Better yet are the blue paper towels, which are sold at auto parts stores. These are much stronger than regular towels, able to be used for heavy cleaning jobs, without tearing. They are more expensive, and there aren't as many on a roll, but for heavy cleaning jobs, they're excellent.

Pump spray cleaners are excellent for a wide variety of tasks, especially cleaning things up after a flood. Everything will need to be cleaned, so have a good stock on hand. You don't need to worry about buying the name brands to have something good, either. The ones available from the dollar store work just about as well.

Another source for cleaning supplies is janitorial supply houses. They sell many types of common cleaners in concentrate, packaged in gallon jugs. This reduces the cost of these cleaners and also reduces the amount of storage space needed for them.

Finally, don't forget about soap for cleaning your clothes. You probably won't be able to use your washing machine, because you won't have enough water available. Instead, you'll need to wash clothes in a bucket or the bath tub. A good quality laundry soap will generally clean better than an inexpensive one, with less effort. So, if you can, stock up on the best laundry soap you can find.

## 19. CLOTHING

You wouldn't think that clothing would be a problem in a disaster situation, would you? After all, everyone has enough clothing, right? But wait a minute, what kind of clothing do you have? If you wear a dress or suit to work every day, you might have lots of clothes, but not enough of the types of clothes you'll need in a disaster recovery situation.

Working in the garden and repairing your home are hard on clothes. If you try and do this type of work in a dress shirt and pair of slacks, you won't have to worry about washing them. You can just throw them away at the end of the day. Of course, you can only go through so many days of doing that, before you run out of clothes.

Rugged clothing is needed for rugged work. If you don't normally use that type of clothing, you'll need to augment your wardrobe. If you're planning on washing clothes once per week, then you'll need enough rugged clothing to last you a week.

Don't forget some rugged work boots either. Tennis shoes will probably not hold up very well in this sort of situation, although they would do much better than dress shoes. Carpenters, farmers and others who work with their hands all day use rugged leather boots.

Another reason for work boots is to provide support and protection for your ankles. If the ground is broken and uneven after a disaster, it can be extremely easy to twist an ankle, or even break it. Good boots can help protect your ankles from injury, keeping you working, instead of sitting around as an invalid.

Don't forget outdoor wear for cold weather either. Once again, what you have may not be suitable for the type of things that you will be doing. A wool overcoat may keep you warm, but it may be extremely difficult to work on your home while wearing it. Good cold weather gear for working will keep you warm, without restricting your movements.

Another important factor for cold weather clothing while doing physical work is the ability to take it off in layers. The last thing you want to do while working outside in the cold is sweat, yet many people do. That sweat can freeze against your skin, causing hypothermia. A number of thinner layers, like sweaters, are much more effective than one super thick layer that you can't take off.

One last point on outdoor clothing; a lot of materials actually take away body heat faster when they are wet, than if you were standing there naked. Down will draw away body heat 300 times faster than if you were naked. The best material for retaining insulation value when wet is wool, which retains half of its insulation value. Some polyester fiber-fills will retain some insulating value, but not much. For the best protection, pick a material that will either resist water well, or will retain some insulating value when wet.

## 20. ALTERNATE WEAPONS

Everyone who talks about prepping talks about the need to have firearms and stock up on ammunition. I can't agree more. However, I don't think it's okay to stop there. Our 2<sup>nd</sup> amendment right to keep and bear arms is under attack by the liberal left. At the time of this writing, the Sandy Hook killing is still fresh in people's minds and both the media and liberal politicians are using it as a means to push for gun control. Already there are places in the United States where it is illegal to own certain types of firearms.

The reason why preppers advocate stocking up on guns and ammo is to protect your family from any sort of attack you might receive. It is widely recognized that in a crisis situation a mob mentality takes over and people aren't respectful of others' property rights. In fact, they see those who have as an enemy, believing that they have a right to take whatever they need.

While firearms are the easiest way to defend your family, your home and your stockpile, they aren't the only way. Prepping is about being ready for any unexpected crisis, so I would have to say that having our guns taken away would constitute an unexpected crisis. Couple that with any other crisis, and you'll be wishing you had your guns back. Unfortunately, there are going to be some people in the mob who don't believe in obeying the law, who will still have weapons.

Of course, firearms aren't the only weapons there are. People killed each other for millennia before the first use of gunpowder. If nothing else is available, there are always rocks and sticks, man's first weapons. Although I'll have to say, they wouldn't be my personal weapons of choice.

The most effective weapon for keeping enemies at a distance (other than firearms) is a bow or crossbow. The crossbow is actually a more effective weapon, able to shoot at a higher velocity, for longer range, with incredible accuracy. However, the crossbow is slow to load, so you won't want to use it when you need a lot of "shots." In those cases, a bow would be better.

Most hunting bows today are compound bows. These provide a high velocity in a compact package. While a compound bow can be difficult to draw, they are much easier to draw than a longbow of the same weight (weight in a bow refers to the amount of draw strength required). Once drawn, it is much easier to hold a compound bow than any other type. They are also much shorter, which can be useful both in the bush and in the home.

For short distance work, a knife or sword is the way to go. Either one provides a way of protecting yourself and your family, but only if you know how to use it properly. If you don't, the only thing you may succeed in doing is giving a weapon to your adversary to use against you.

Herein lies the problem with most weapons; they require training and practice. Granted, firearms require training and practice as well, but not as much as these other weapons do. If you are planning on using any weapon to defend yourself with, you need to plan on taking the time to learn how to use it effectively. If you don't do that, you're better off not having the weapon.

There are lots of other things which can be used as weapons; blowguns, throwing knives and stars, spears, quarterstaves, tomahawks and axes. For the most security, be sure to have a number of different alternate weapons on hand, and take the time to become proficient in their use.

An unusual weapon that you might not have thought of is a flare gun. These are generally made of plastic, and the flares come packaged in a 12 gauge shotgun shell. They are intended for use in situations where one needs to be rescued, such as a floundered boat. However, when pointed at an assailant, they become a fearful weapon. How would you like to have somebody shooting fireballs at you? Just one detail; they are usually bright orange, so you might want to paint it black.

## 21. PET FOOD

You probably already have a stock of food on hand for your family; but, are you sure that you've taken all family members into consideration? What about the four footed family members? If you have pets, they'll need to eat too; and you don't want to take away from your family's food in order to feed them.

This is one of those areas that can be easily overlooked in your family's preparations, causing problems when disaster strikes. Yet, it's an easy area to rectify. A few bags of dog or cat food don't cost all that much and are fairly easy to store. Galvanized trash cans are a great way of storing pet food, as they don't cost a lot, can hold a lot of pet food and do a good job of keeping pests out.

Some pet owners are accustomed to feeding their pets canned food. While this keeps the pets happy, it can be a bit hard on the pocketbook. While canned dog and cat food will last just as well as any other type of canned food, stocking up on it might not be in the family's budget. Don't worry, your pets will survive fine on dry food. They may turn their nose up at it for a day or two, but when they get hungry, they will eat it.

If your pets take any medications, whether preventative (like heartworm medicine) or for a chronic problem, you'll need to stock up on their medications as well. Fortunately, you don't need a prescription for veterinary medications, like you do for human medications, so you don't have to worry about convincing your vet to write you a prescription for a year's worth of Fido's meds.

Don't forget about the other things you need for your pet as well. If you have cats which are used to using a litter box, you'll need a stock of kitty litter on hand. While it can be cleaned out and reused to some extent, eventually it needs to be replaced. An important item for dogs is to have plenty of rawhide

chew bones, especially if you have puppies. They need to chew and will find something to chew on. Better that they chew on rawhide chew bones than on your leather work boots.

## 22. PEST CONTROL

Pest populations increase in the aftermath of many disasters. Rats, mice, cockroaches and insects all thrive off of the decay and waste that goes hand-in-hand with many types of disasters. While they essentially live off of the decaying food that has been damaged and left, these scavengers aren't picky about what they eat. They'll eat anything they can find, and prefer to eat things that don't cost them any extra work.

Your food stocks will look like heaven on earth to these pests, if you're not ready for them. So, an adequate stock of bug spray, mouse traps and other pest control items better be part of your stockpile. You aren't saving that stuff for scavengers; you're saving it for your family.

Don't limit your thinking to indoors either. If you are going to be raising your own food, you need to be prepared to protect it as well. Many of these scavengers will be glad to eat your produce before it's ripe enough to pick. That's on top of the birds, armadillos, gophers and possums are always looking for a free meal that they can pick up.

Another way to control pests is to keep them away from your garden, without the use of chemicals. Protective netting can do a lot to keep birds away from fruit trees and other plants. A circle of aluminum flashing around the trunk of a fruit tree can keep rodents from climbing into it and eating the fruit. Some types of plants, like mint, act as natural bug repellants, keeping the bugs from eating your garden up.

If you are going to do aquaponics or grow fish for food, you also need to find ways of protecting your fish. Most people aren't prepared for a disaster, so when it strikes, they have enough trouble taking care of themselves, let alone their pets. Dogs and cats revert to nature, hunting for food. A pond or tank full of fish can look like the supermarket to these hungry animals.

All it takes is simple precautions to protect fish and poultry. Steel netting, such as chicken wire can be used to make covers for ponds and chicken coops. Keep in mind that animals can be clever, so if there's a way to open your cover, they'll find it. To prevent this, you need to make sure that whatever protective covers you put on your chicken coop or fish pond are latched in place, preferably by more than one latch.

Since many animals hunt at night, that's when the greatest risk is for your fish, chickens or vegetable garden. However, birds and pets will do their hunting in the day. So, unless you are right there, where you can keep an eye on everything, you want to have it protected.

## 23. BARTER GOODS

Money can become almost worthless in a crisis situation. In the aftermath of World War II, people from the cities were going out to the country with suitcases full of jewelry, silver and other valuables, to trade for food. They'd return with those same suitcases full of food, essentially a one-for-one trade.

One of the potential disaster situations that many people are preparing for is the crash of the financial system in the United States. Should that occur, then any amount of U.S. dollars won't be worth having. People will go back to bartering, and the coin of the day will be whatever is needed for survival.

Many of the things that I have mentioned in this list will be useful as barter goods in such a situation. Excess fish and produce from your aquaponics operation can always be traded for other things you need, or simply for labor. If you have the means to purify water, you will be able to trade purified water with people who can't. Ammunition will become a very popular barter item. Medical supplies will be like gold, especially for people who are sick or injured.

However, you don't want to barter away something your family needs, in order to get something that you may not need as much. Granted, helping others is a worthy goal and everyone should think of more than just taking care of their family. But, you don't want to put taking care of others before the needs of your family.

To avoid trading your much needed survival stocks for other items you might need, you should also have things set aside just for the purpose of bartering. These can be common survival supplies, food stocks over and above what your family needs, or personal hygiene items. Anything that people will need and will be hard to get will become valuable barter goods.

One of the most effective barter items you can stockpile is alcohol. I'm not talking about the kind you use to clean out a cut (although you can do that as well), I'm talking about the kind that you drink. Even in the midst of total devastation, people will still want to take a drink. In fact, many will want that drink even more than they will at other times. Having a couple of cases of spirits on hand can be the most valuable barter stock you can own.

## 24. SILVER

Any time an economy becomes unstable, the price of gold and silver skyrockets. It doesn't matter if the instability is caused by high inflation, high debt, loss of production capacity, poor investments or whatever; when the value of the dollar goes down, the value of gold and silver goes up.

If you're looking for a good, long-term investment, gold is always a good choice. However, gold is almost worthless for bartering, unless you're trying to buy something large, like a tractor. The problem is that gold is so valuable, that trading one ounce gold coins is difficult.

If gold were at \$2,000 per ounce, then what could you trade a gold coin for? If you're looking for gasoline, you'd need to find at least 100 gallons of it to barter. Otherwise, you can't make the trade or

you're stuck with giving that gold coin away for much less than its value. The gold may be valuable enough for bartering, but it's not practical to barter with.

On the other hand, silver is a much more practical barter commodity. Like gold, it soars in value whenever there is a drop in the value of the dollar. Silver and gold rise at roughly the same rates, making them comparable investments. However, silver costs much less than gold, holding to about two percent of gold's value. That means that when that gold coin is worth \$2,000 a one ounce silver coin is worth \$40.00. That's something you can do business with.

Silver is a much more practical basis for barter than gold is, while still being a good investment for long-term gain. If you have \$4,000 to use as a reserve emergency fund, you can only buy two gold coins, but you can buy 80 silver coins (using the same imaginary values mentioned above).

With 80 silver coins, you have the possibility of doing 80 different barter transactions, much better than what you can do with the gold coins. Or, if you're making a large transaction, the 80 coins allows you to be more accurate in your negotiations. With just gold coins to work with, the step in price from one coin to two coins is immense.

Keep in mind, the true value of gold and silver in a time of crisis is the perceived value, not the face value or the "book value." Even if silver reaches \$40 per ounce, that one ounce silver coin may not be seen as being worth \$40 to someone who needs food and water. You have to be careful about how you use any precious metals for bartering, only using them with people who will appreciate their value.

## 25. TOOLS

When I was a child, I spent countless hours in the garage with my dad, learning how to make and repair things. That was normal in that time period, but it seems to be something that is going by the wayside. Today, most men don't change their own oil, repair the stopped up toilet or fix the broken screen door, they hire somebody else to do it.

That makes the ability to repair things and the tools to repair them with a valuable commodity. Just look at the aftermath of any disaster and you can see that there is a shortage of tradesmen to repair things and a surfeit of people who need their services. Following the law of supply and demand, prices rise, making it even harder to get the work done that needs to be done.

Even something as simple as a hailstorm can cause months of problems for people. Here where I live we had three hailstorms last year. It took eight months for everyone to get their roofs repaired. There just weren't enough roofing contractors to get everything done. So, the vast majority of houses were covered by big blue tarps for months, while they waited for the contractor to get to them.

If you have the tools and knowhow to repair anything, your services will be at a premium after any disaster. You might not be able to go back to the same type of work in the same office you had before, simply because the company may not be in existence. But, unlike everyone else who is suddenly out of a

job, you will have the capability to start a new job, making a living by helping others get over the aftermath of the disaster.

Labor is a barter good, just like anything else. When people need things done and don't have the money to pay for it, they're just as willing to trade for labor as they are for goods. This can be a way of getting things you need, without having to use any of your stockpile.

In addition to helping others, you can save a bundle and speed up the process on your own repairs. Insurance companies don't care who does the work; just that it gets done for the best possible rate. Okay, so bid on repairing your own home. That's a double win for you; you get the work done and you get to make money at the same time.

## 26. MATERIALS TO USE WITH THE TOOLS

A workshop full of tools won't do any good if you don't have any materials to work with. All my life I've heard about how plywood sold for \$50.00 per sheet or more, after a hurricane struck. It doesn't matter where the hurricane strikes, the same thing happens. People load up trucks with plywood purchased outside of the area struck by the hurricane and drive to the affected area to make a killing on their load of plywood.

The same thing happens with any other repair materials. Scarcity and need drive prices up, following the law of supply and demand. Unfortunately, people's greed gets in there too, jacking up prices much more than what is necessary.

If part of your disaster survival plan is to use your skills in order to make a living, you'd better count on having something to work with. Granted, you could always go find the \$50.00 per sheet plywood, but you'd be better off having something to start with, that you bought at a more reasonable price.

It's virtually impossible to stockpile the necessary materials to deal with any and every sort of disaster. Nobody can foresee things that well. However, there are certain things that are commonly needed in a wide variety of situations. Plumbing fittings and valves, plywood, hardware and electrical wire are some examples of things that are needed after just about any type of calamity. There are many others, things that fit into any category of building trades.

While stockpiling everything is both expensive and space prohibitive, a small stock to get started with isn't impossible. To be the most effective, this stockpile should be the things that you are most likely to need for a wide variety of situations.

Take plumbing for example. If we look at the various types of natural disasters that can strike, one thing that is common is damage to plumbing. Water service usually has to be shut off, just because there are too many broken pipes that are spilling the water into the streets. So, if your skill is plumbing, it would make sense to have a stock of fittings and caps to use in capping pipes in people's homes. That won't solve their problem, but if broken pipes can be capped, water service might be able to be returned to the undamaged portion of their home.



While plumbers typically have things like caps and fittings on hand, the average homeowner doesn't. Nevertheless, if part of your post-disaster plan is to support your family as a plumber, you have to think like a plumber before-hand, getting your stocks together to be ready for the crisis when it hits.

## 27. COMFORT ITEMS FOR YOUR PERSONAL MENTAL HEALTH

This may seem a bit strange, but I firmly believe that everyone needs some form of entertainment; something that can take their mind off their problems for a few minutes, so that they can relax and recharge their batteries. If anything, this is even more critical in a survival situation, because of the higher stress that you and I will be subject to.

Stress can literally be a killer. Everyone needs ways of alleviating their stress, especially in these types of situations. Without a way to alleviate the stress, it will take a toll on their health and their ability to deal with the ongoing problem.

Your mental health survival is an important part of your overall survival. There have been a number of studies done through the years, which show how important a positive mental attitude is for everything from surviving cancer to surviving any other crisis. So, taking a few minutes out for yourself has to be part of your survival plan.

What makes you comfortable? Is it sitting down to read a good book? Maybe you like to play an instrument. Perhaps there is some food that reminds you of your childhood. Could it be some special keepsakes, which you pull out to look at every once in a while? Whatever it is, make sure that it is part of your plan, so that you can keep yourself on an even keel.

Children don't understand when bad things happen; they just understand that something is wrong. They can't rationalize the situation, seeking to understand what happened and why it happened. All they can do is look to mom and dad to make things right. Unfortunately, mom and dad may not be able to make things back to the way that they were, having instead to create a new normal for their lives.

This can be just as disconcerting for children as it is for adults. Adults understand what is going on, which can be scary. Children are just scared, without understanding what is going on. Your preparations need to include things to help maintain your children's mental health as well.

Just because you're going to be busy trying to survive doesn't mean that you can ignore the needs of your children. Yes, you're busy meeting their needs, but don't forget their other needs as well, especially time and love. You have to make spending time with your children part of your survival plan.

Board games are a great way of spending family time together. They don't require electricity, don't depend upon anyone broadcasting a program, and can be played by the light of a candle. Having a collection of board games may be the best thing you can do to ensure the mental health of your whole family. You can make a habit of spending a little time every evening playing something together, just so that you can relax, take your mind off of survival and pay attention to your kids.

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So there you have it; 27 things you should start hording now, so that you'll be ready for just about any disaster that might strike. It really doesn't matter what type of disaster it is, whether an act of nature, a financial crash, or the supposed Mayan end of the world that didn't happen. All disasters bring pretty much the same problems, the same needs and the same difficulties in finding the things you need to survive. Having these 27 things on hand, will make it much easier for you and your family not only to survive, but be relatively comfortable, regardless of whether FEMA gets there in time or not.

Remember, you have to decide what you need to stock up on, based upon your family and the likely threats that you are facing. Each family is unique in this. We all have different needs, we all live in different climates, and we all have different ways of surviving a disaster. While everything on this list will be useful to you, some things may end up being more useful than others, depending upon your particular situation and needs.

You may also find that there are things which are not on this list, but that you need. I haven't mentioned hunting or fishing gear, because producing your own foodstuffs is usually more efficient. However, if you live on the top of a mountain where game is plentiful, you might be better off shooting a few deer to fill your larder. Once again, your specific plan has to meet your specific needs.

## HOW ARE YOU GOING TO STORE ALL THIS STUFF?

One big problem which a lot of preppers face is finding enough room to store their stockpile of food and other necessities. This can be a real challenge for the average family who isn't preparing for disasters, let alone someone who is taking seriously the idea of being prepared for whatever. So, what can you do?

First of all, go through your house and get rid of the stuff that you've been keeping for years, but not using. Most Americans are already hoarders, but are hoarding the wrong things. Instead of hoarding things that will help them through an emergency, they're hoarding things like old baby beds, bowling trophies and high-school mementos that they never look at.

I know it's hard, but take a good look at that stuff and say "good-bye" to it. Okay, maybe it's really important to you. If that's the case, then keep it. But what about the rest of it; what about the stuff that you never look at, never use, and never will? C'mon now, if you haven't used it in the last two years, you probably never will. Maybe it's time to say good-bye.

Once you get rid of the stuff you aren't using, you might find that you have space for the stuff that you need to store for emergencies. This should be separated from your everyday usage items, so that it will not end up being used up in your daily life. This is your emergency stock, save it for that.

There are two basic areas in most homes which are ideal areas to use for stockpiling for emergencies, the attic and the basement. I say that they are ideal mostly because they are storage areas which are mostly left alone. Other than that, they really don't have much going for them.

Of the two, the basement is better (if your home has one) because attics are not insulated. Food and water should be kept in a cool, dry place, and the attic really doesn't qualify for that. However, the attic is a great place to store the items which don't need to be kept in a cool dry place. There are a lot of supplies we've talked about, which will store just as well in your attic, as they will in your basement.

You want your storage well organized, with everything marked clearly on several sides. The last thing you need in an emergency is to have to dig through 50 boxes to find the candles. I like to mark things on every side, so that no matter how the box is sitting, you can still see what it has in it.

People who don't have attics or basements have to be more creative. One good place is under the beds. There are several square feet of space under each bed, which are usually used for nothing more than a place for dirty socks to get lost. A lot can be stored under the bed, which has the additional advantage of being a cool dry place.

Make an inventory list as well, which shows what you have, how much of it you have and where it is stored. The more detailed this list can be, the easier it will be to find your emergency stocks when you need them. Print the list out and keep copies in several different places around your home.

## GET YOUR HEAD TOGETHER

You've probably noticed that I mentioned trying things out, training and practicing on several of the items mentioned in this list. That's an essential part of being prepared. You can have the greatest stock of everything, but not survive, simply because you are not prepared mentally for surviving.

Every police department, fire department, military and government organization in any developed country has countless emergency plans that are already drawn up, typed out, practiced, and filed away, ready for the day that they are needed. That's because when that crisis comes, you don't want to have to be thinking about what you're going to do; you want a plan ready.

These plans that government agencies come up with are called "contingency plans." They are essentially a bunch of "what if" plans. "What do we do if little green men from Mars land in our city?" "What do we do if the Mayan calendar is right, and the earth ends?" "What do we do if Miss America suddenly shows up at City Hall?"

Whether you realize it or not, you are creating a contingency plan. Everything you are doing, from collecting food to learning how to use a bow and arrow is part of that contingency plan. Maybe it's not a written plan, but somewhere in your mind, you're thinking "what will I do if...?"

That's fundamentally very healthy. By doing that, you're getting yourself mentally prepared for whatever happens. That way, when a crisis happens, you don't have to stop and think, you've already done your thinking. All you have to do is take action.

Actually, the human mind is very bad at dealing with a crisis. Most of the time, when you need your brain the most, it just shuts off, leaving you standing there, looking rather foolish. The only solution for this is being prepared. If your brain shuts off, it's because it doesn't know what to do. People who function in those moments are the ones who have already thought about what to do.

Let's look at it a different way, fighting. Have you ever seen two martial arts experts go at it? It's amazing how fast they can move. It's almost like their bodies are moving before they can think about it. Actually, to a large part, that's what's happening. They've trained so much, that when they see their opponent try a blow or kick, they react to it, without actually thinking, "they're doing such-and-such a kick, I need to react this way."

Once again, they've prepared. That's why they can do the things they do. Okay, so you're not a black belt in karate, but what you're trying to do is to become a black belt in being prepared. So, to do that, start running through different scenarios in your mind... "If this happens, what will I do?" "If this disaster strikes, what do I need to take care of first." That way, when the blow comes, you'll react before you think about it.

You can actually train yourself to act and react, strictly through the use of your imagination. A number of years ago, I needed to learn to type faster. I had taken typing in high school, and had gotten to the required 20 words per minute before the end of the semester. But, I needed to be able to type much faster than that. So, I trained myself.

The way I trained myself to type faster is by thinking about it. I would drive down the streets reading the signs, and typing them out in my imagination. By using this technique, I went from a shaky 20 words per minute to a solid 45 words per minute in just two months; and I worked on it only while I was driving.

You can train yourself to react to almost any emergency. First, figure out what the emergency is. Then do some research to find out the best way to react to it. With that information, develop a plan of action that you can use. Finally, practice and practice some more. Whether you practice physically or just do so mentally get lots of practice. Enough that you learn to react to the problem, without having to take the time to think about it.

## CONCLUSION

For most people that start preparing for disasters, it becomes a way of life. They start out thinking that they'll just stock up on a few things, just to be ready for an emergency, and then find that they keep adding to their preparations. There doesn't seem to be any end to it.

The very act of starting to prepare means that you are starting to think about life differently. Your new perspective causes you to spend money differently, live a little differently and even look at the world differently. You start looking at the news from the viewpoint of potential threats to your family's security, rather than just to complain about what is happening in Washington.

Some prepping activities require a change of lifestyle. You don't want to start aquaponics after a disaster strikes, you want to do it well before any problem might head your way. That's not something you can have everything on hand for, and then set it up after the power and water go out.

To a large part, being prepared is going back in time to the day when we were all more self-reliant, rather than relying on the entire infrastructure of society to take care of us. One-hundred years ago people had their own chickens and a vegetable garden. They didn't depend upon electricity to the extent that we do. Many had their own well, so weren't dependent upon city water to drink. They canned their own produce and picked apples off of their own trees.

As you start doing more of this, you'll find that your life will become simpler. Oh, you'll have more work to do, taking care of your fish and your garden, but when you need an onion, you'll go out to the back yard, instead of running down to the grocery store.

There is an enjoyment and a satisfaction to making things with your own hands, growing your own food, and being in control of your own life. Becoming self-reliant gives you that satisfaction, as you learn once again what it means to stand on your own two feet, instead of depending upon society to take care of all your needs.

Happy prepping!