



SURVIVAL STOCKPILE: 27 ITEMS YOU SHOULD HOARD



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	4
The Three Basic Necessities for Survival	8
Food, Clothing, and Shelter	8
Shelter, Water, and Food	8
The 27 Things You Need to Hoard for Survival	10
1. Water Purification System	10
2. Means of cooking	11
3. Recipes	12
4. Heirloom seeds	13
5. Protein Production	14
6. Bleach	15
7. Sources of Electrical Energy	16
8. Batteries	17
9. Gasoline	18
10. Alternate Fuel Sources for Heating	18
11. Alternative Means of Transportation	19
12. Sources of Light	20
13. Blackout Curtains	21
14. First Aid Kit	22
15. Medicines	23

16. Vitamins	24
17. Personal Hygiene Items	25
18. Cleaning Supplies	26
19. Clothing	27
20. Alternate Weapons	28
21. Pet Food	29
22. Pest Control	30
23. Barter Goods	31
24. Silver	32
25. Tools	32
26. Materials to Use with Tools	33
27. Comfort Items for Your Own Personal Mental Health	34
How are You Going to Store all This Stuff?	36
Get Your Head Together	38
Conclusion	40

INTRODUCTION

A few years ago, my home got stuck right on the edge of a hurricane. It wasn't a devastating storm like Katrina or Sandy—it was closer to a tropical storm. There were really high winds and a ton of rain, which caused about a foot of water to accumulate right outside our house. Thankfully, the water didn't cause any sort of major damage. Still, we lost our power, and it took over 24 hours for city workmen to repair the downed power lines.

This happened a little after the Indian Ocean got hit by a tsunami, in 2004. That next year, several hurricanes hit Mexico, and while I was traveling through the area, I saw the huge amounts of devastation that they left. One hurricane created mudslides that ended up burying villages in southern Mexico. Shortly afterwards, a Mexican city called Villahermosa was flooded up to 8 feet.

All of these natural disasters really gave me a huge wake-up call. The same issues that these people faced could come to my door at any time, without warning. Waiting for the problem to arrive would do me no good. How could I prepare myself for this, instead of getting stuck?

During that time, prepping information wasn't readily available. There weren't any books, and online information was minimal. People who wanted to start prepping had to go through the process without guidance. I was lucky enough to have been a survivalist throughout the Cold War, so I had a few tools in my kit. I took a hard look into my situation, the likely disasters that could come my way, and the best ways to be prepared.

I have not regretted my decision since. In fact, I've started to realize that the likelihood of disaster striking has actually increased. Once the housing collapse happened in 2009, it became obvious that the United States is always hovering over financial crisis. Even since then, mass shootings occur often, the country gets more divided every day, and there doesn't seem to be any signs of improvement. Natural disasters aren't the only issue anymore—there are issues coming from all angles.

Of course, I wouldn't be so bold as to claim that I am 100% prepared, but I am certainly much more prepared than I was a decade ago. I started thinking how everyone else would fare in disaster. Prepping for myself and my family was all well and good, but I didn't like the thought of leaving the people I know behind—even those that I didn't know. I came to realize that, with the information and skills that I had, there was a certain responsibility to share that knowledge and help everyone else prepare for a potentially disastrous future.

The content in this book is meant to accomplish this goal. Plenty of survival material discusses stockpiling water and food. While I agree with that sentiment, the basic truth is that you will need much more than that. If you can't cook the food, what good is it to have 1,500 pounds of

food tucked away? How do you survive once your food stores are depleted? When the government takes your guns away and looters start rioting, how can you defend yourself? How will you manage not having electricity or water for extended periods of time? Without power, how can you keep your family and your home safe and warm?

I found myself asking these sorts of questions, and I think that everyone needs to do the same. This book is my attempt to share the answers that I came up with. Preparing for disaster is mainly about keeping everything that you need readily available. Of course, it can be difficult to figure out what you'll need in a crisis. My hope is that, after reading through this book, you will have a solid idea on what items you will need in order to care for your family and for yourself.

There has been a recent influx in disaster prepping, whether it be for a natural disaster, the breakdown of society, or a zombie apocalypse. Unfortunately, there are multiple ways for disaster to occur, ultimately ending our way of life and bringing forth insecurity, strife, and the inherent need to survive. You need to develop new skills, aside from video games, making funny posts on social media, or managing a spreadsheet. You will have to face a new lifestyle head on and master it.

It's impossible to accurately predict what sort of population percentages will find themselves beneath a serious disaster within the span of a lifetime. Historically speaking, as high as 25 percent of the population has felt the effects of just one disaster. With problems steadily increasing across the globe, percentages are working against us more and more. I believe that the odds are high enough that each and every person should take action.

Mental and physical preparation are the keys to surviving any disaster. Those who are prepared are most likely to survive a disaster. The best thing that you can do is take a little time and effort and begin making basic preparations. Not only will this ensure that your family survives, but it will also help ensure that they survive in the most comfort possible.

It makes zero sense to think that the government will take care of everyone during a disaster. Hurricane Katrina was incredibly devastating, especially in the aftermath. The media drew a ton of attention to President Bush, the military, FEMA, and the government as a whole for failing to effectively assist victims of the hurricane. Once Hurricane Sandy blew through New Jersey seven years later, FEMA was no better prepared. Though the media didn't pay quite as much attention to this disaster, many survivors spent up to eight weeks dumpster diving, just to find enough food for themselves and for their families.

Those who survived the hurricanes were prepared, and not just with a store of food for three days. They had enough food, water, and assorted other supplies in order to carry them through both the crisis and recovery period. These people were the ones who didn't have to needlessly suffer through the disaster.

The post-disaster period sees life returning to a more elemental level, as if the calendar were

suddenly rewound a few hundred years. Most of the things that we tend to take for granted, like electricity or running water, are gone. People need to learn how to get by with having less, similar to how our older relatives existed. Unfortunately, the average American has gotten so used to these luxuries that they have no clue how to begin.

The aftermath of World War II is a good example. Europe was a wreck, with whole city blocks laying in bits of rubble. People had to begin digging for potatoes in nearby fields, just to get a little bit of sustenance. Some wealthier individuals spent their entire fortunes of gold, silver, and gems to barter with farmers for food.

Preparing yourself for disaster striking certainly doesn't mean that you can run to the store beforehand to get a couple of flashlights and some water jugs. Emergency situations last for much longer than one day. Even if the event occurs in the span of the day, the aftermath of a disaster can easily last for months. Even five years after Hurricane Katrina, there were plenty of New Orleans residents who found themselves struggling just to survive. A great number of them decided to leave their homes and simply move away. In order to properly prepare for disaster, you need to prepare for the whole recovery process, one which may last for months or possibly even years.

There are a ton of varying opinions on what sort of stockpile you need to have. There are some preppers that have enough food stockpiled to last up to 10 years. Your decisions for yourself and for your family will vary greatly, depending upon personal situations, needs, and the length of recovery time. The unfortunate thing is that we can't predict just how long the recovery process will go on for.

For starters, you can start out with a small stockpile. Keep a one-month supply for everything that you need. After that, you can start working to build up a three-month stockpile. Later on, this stockpile can be built to last six months, and eventually even a year.

Within the span of a year, almost any tragedy should be recovered from. Of course, you might not be able to return to your same lifestyle, but you might find yourself developing a new lifestyle. This can include growing and cultivating your own food, working in a different sort of job, and using your own water source, like a well.

After seeing the aftermath of these disasters from the past decade, I would say that most individuals never fully get back to their previous lifestyle. As a result, they end up creating their own, new sense of normalcy, which could mean moving their home, falling into a different line of work, and becoming much more self-sufficient in comparison. These are all good things, but the truth is that we resist change. Preparing for disaster striking won't eliminate change, but it certainly can go a long way in making the transition into change much more comfortable.

If you have a similar mindset as I do, your family is one of the most important things in your life. You want to ensure that they are taken care of, in good health, and prevent them from any sort

of unnecessary suffering. This is probably why you have picked up this book. It's also why you are joining a growing number of preppers. It's why you choose to pay that price today, just to ensure that your family doesn't pick up that bill tomorrow.

That's fantastic, and you have all of my respect for adopting that attitude! Too many people these days expect that things will work itself out, or that the government will come through in a crisis.

Consider this book as a set of instructions to make your own individual insurance policy. The information that I have presented will give you all the necessary tools and know-how to keep your home and family prepared for nearly every disaster that comes your way. This certainly is not your typical prepping list that tells you to simply buy non-perishable goods. In fact, I won't even talk about groceries at all. I won't even cover filling water jugs and hiding them around your house. As I mentioned earlier, there are too many other preppers who are concentrating on those things. Instead, I'm going to talk about the things they've left out.

A lot of these things might seem pretty obvious. Of course, the most obvious things can also be the most elusive things. From personal experience, it has actually taken me years to realize that I needed some of these things. I want to save you from spending years thinking about it. Learning from my own personal experience can help you accomplish things within months that took me years.

The information that I have gathered will assist you in preparing for any sort of upcoming crisis. It's isn't simply about preparing for a hurricane, or for when Wall Street crashes. It's a more comprehensive approach, being prepared for any sort of disaster. If there's one thing that disasters have shown us, it's that disasters you least expect are what hit hardest. Applying this information as it applies to your own life means building your family's insurance policy. Yours might look a lot different than mine, but that's completely fine. Your family structure, home, neighborhood, and even your climate is probably different, too. Instead of a specific blueprint, this book functions much more like a plan outline.

The greatest way to put the love you have for your family into action is to make sure that they will be safe and secure. This is the basis for all prepping. You are starting a project to provide security for your family. If my information helps accomplish this in any way, then I have already been rewarded ten times over.

THE THREE BASIC NECESSITIES FOR SURVIVAL

First and foremost, I want to separate fact from fiction. For years and years, we have been told that there are three basic survival needs. If you're like me, you've heard that these needs are:

FOOD, CLOTHING AND SHELTER

At first glance, this seems pretty accurate. Although we need these things to survive, I don't agree with this list. There are two essential problems with it: first, the biggest need of all is left completely out. Second, two of these things give the same benefit, so they are actually one and the same.

The big thing that this list doesn't include is water. The human body only survives for three days without having water, because our bodies get dehydrated extremely quickly. As a matter of fact, most people spend their days being partially dehydrated. The three-day figure is only an approximation, because there are many other factors that can accelerate the loss of water, like physical activity and climate. Being in the desert on a hot and humid day means that you could die from dehydration within a 12-hour window of time!

What ends up being duplicated is shelter. The purpose of shelter is to provide protection from the elements. More specifically, it protects thermoregulation, meaning our body's natural temperature regulation processes. Climate affects body temperature, prompting the body to use water and energy in order to maintain at least 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit (37 degrees Celsius). Without thermoregulation, a six percent variation in core temperature could be deadly. Even as little as two percent can alter our ability to think clearly, and bodily functions won't work properly.

Clothing and shelter both serve the purpose of protection from climate and environmental elements, in order to support thermoregulation. Clothing certainly lends some help where modesty is concerned, but modesty doesn't need to be in place for survival (save for those who might die from embarrassment). From my point of view, the three basic needs for survival should be rewritten into:

SHELTER. WATER AND FOOD

In order of importance, these are the three crucial elements to ensure survival. Shelter gets the most weight of the three, since there are occasions where thermoregulation is inhibited so much that death can occur within minutes. Consider the Titanic victims, trying to survive in the dead of winter amidst the North Atlantic Ocean. Many people didn't die from drowning, but instead they died from hypothermia—their core body temperature got too low to continue

functioning. Cold air and cold water brought death in hours, or even within minutes.

We can get by without water for three days, and the average American can actually survive for up to 100 days without having any food. Of course, this is just basic survival. In order to stay healthy, the maximum is around 30 days without food. After that point, the body begins to severely weaken and shut down.

A great majority of what we will discuss in this book are things that can somehow provide these three needs, or help obtain, use, and hold onto these needs. There are others that are secondary necessities, which help us get to these three basic needs. It may seem as if something like lighting doesn't have much correlation with these needs, lighting is still a necessity. Without lighting, it may be impossible to get to these three crucial elements.

Of course, there are still things which may not have a direct correlation to fulfilling these needs, but that does not make them any less crucial for survival. Protecting yourself is a big one. Without protecting yourself, you could lose your access to those elements. If you can't protect yourself, the worst-case scenario is that you may not need those three crucial elements any more.

THE 27 THINGS YOU NEED TO HOARD FOR SURVIVAL

Before diving into the list, there is something that I want to stress. This particular list finds its basis in many years of experience with prepping. It didn't happen overnight. These things are all items that I have either collected or created over long periods of time, in order to support my family through any disaster. As such, there has been quite a bit of thought and research that went into this list, as I've examined many different survival scenarios.

I don't bother discussing "bugging out" throughout this list. If anyone doesn't recognize this term, the quick explanation of "bugging out" means preparing to leave your home to stay at a safe haven. Of course, plenty of these items correlate to bugging out, but this list was put together on the assumption that you plan on staying inside your home, pushing to survive through urban surroundings.

1. WATER PURIFICATION SYSTEM

Anyone who discusses prepping will also talk about water. Normally, adults are recommended to drink about 8 glasses of water each day. That equates into a half-gallon of water. Of course, for this particular purpose, normalcy doesn't apply. During the aftermath of a disaster, you will likely be a lot more physically active than normal. This means that you will be sweating more, and using much more water than you are used to.

As for me, I happen to live amidst a particularly hot section of the country. Nearly the entire year, the temperature is consistently over 100 degrees. Working outside during the summer means that you have to drink at least one gallon of water each day. This is double the recommended water intake.

With 100 gallons of water stocked away for a family of four people, that's actually only enough water to get you through less than 30 days in a hotter climate. 100 gallons of water will certainly take up an overwhelming amount of space, so you might not even be able to put away that much. Additionally, this is only drinking water—you will still need water to wash dishes, clothes, and to bathe.

You've probably been told to find a renewable source of water, like a creek, stream, or lake. The trick is that you will need to purify the water, too. Water will eventually run out, no matter how much you have put away. Without a means to purify naturally occurring water sources, you run the risk of getting sick. Depending upon the disaster, water that hasn't been purified can be poisonous and even deadly.

First and foremost, you need to decide how to transport the water from the lake or stream. If gasoline is not readily available, you can't rely upon a car. You will need an alternate way to transport the water, using a way that avoids fuel.

There are tons of varying methods to purify water, which includes boiling, creating a solar still or bio-filter, or even purchasing a commercial filter. Whatever you choose, make sure you're your system can provide each person with a minimum of one gallon of water. This is something that can't be left to the last minute.

If the system needs filters or similar materials to prevent wear and tear or clogs, you'll need to have a few spares on hand. Bio-filters need a trusty supply of activated charcoal or carbon. If you are using a commercial filter, make sure to have at least two on hand.

Because water is so crucial, the best practice is to have at least two different methods to prepare for something breaking. The things that we rely upon the most have a tendency to break down during the worst possible moments. If the water purification system breaks, you can't instruct people to stop drinking water—you need another system to start using immediately.

2. MEANS OF COOKING

Stoves get their power from electricity or natural gas. When considering a disaster situation, you have a high likelihood of losing either one or both of these power sources. There is no point in stockpiling food if you can't cook it.

Thankfully, there are ways around this. For thousands of years, people found ways to cook food before inventing the modern stove. Early on in our country's history, many people made their food over open fires. Later on, the cast-iron stove came into existence. The gas stove wasn't created until the 1800's, and it wasn't until the early 1900's that they became commonplace.

When electric or gas stoves cease to work, it's time to return to older methods of cooking. There are a few ways to do this, and you might already have a few of them:

- Charcoal grill
- Gasoline camp stove
- Fireplace
- Fire pit

- Solar oven

Don't forget that redundancy is good. You will need to be able to use a stove as well as an oven. Using a Dutch Oven along with a charcoal grill, fire pit, or fire place can certainly fit the bill.

Any cooking method will need a large fuel source. My recommendation would be to avoid camp stoves and grills that need propane, since you will probably come across trouble when trying to refill them. If you absolutely need to use propane grills or stoves, make sure you have a good propane stock on hand.

Although manufacturer warnings say they can't be refilled, small propane bottles for camp stoves actually can. You just need an adapter in order to connect them. Using an adapter will cause pressure fluctuations to let propane flow from a large tank into a small bottle.

Propane grills can also use charcoal or wood. You may need to take out the lava rock from the bottom in order to make room. Once this is removed, there isn't a whole lot of difference between a charcoal grill and a propane grill.

Not only does Coleman make propane camp stoves, but they also make an old-fashioned type of "dual fuel" stove. It was designed to run primarily off Coleman brand fuel, but it works very well by using gasoline, too. Though gasoline might be in short supply, you have a greater chance of finding gasoline as opposed to propane. At the very least, you can siphon it from the gas tank in your car.

Learning how to properly cook over camp stoves, charcoal grills, or fire pits is a lot different than using an electric or gas stove. Not only do you need an alternative cooking method, but you also need to make sure you can use it. Whatever you choose, make sure that you practice now, before you are forced to do it for survival's sake.

3. RECIPES

If you've stockpiled unfamiliar foods, you probably don't know how to cook it. One great example is flour. Since it is difficult to store for longer time periods, most prepping guides talk about storing whole grain as an alternate. The only issue with this is that you will also need to have a grain mill at home, and make sure that it doesn't need electricity to run.

Beans are a wonderful food for prepping. Not only do they provide tons of protein, but they are very inexpensive and can be easily stored over time. The downfall is, however, that beans take longer times to cook. The first time my wife tried to cook beans, she put them on the stove for about three hours. Even after that, they were rock-solid, so she put them into a blender to help them cook faster. That didn't really help, and the beans were tossed into the garbage.

If your family doesn't eat beans often, and you start eating them during a crisis, you could end up with a revolt. Kids that typically eat things like pizza, burgers, and fries certainly won't be happy with home-made pan bread and a big pile of beans. You'll have to imbue a little creativity in order to help your family adjust to a new diet.

Don't leave experimentation with meal preparation to the last minute. You should be able to hone a skill of cooking new and different things, and learning recipes that your family can stomach will take time that you won't have during a disaster. The best practice is to start searching for recipes and trying them out now, before disaster strikes. If you can have your family eating a recipe in a normal situation, you will be good to go.

To assist in recipes, you will need to stock up on spices. There are plenty of things that can be made palatable with a few spices and a cube of beef bouillon. You may never get squash to taste like pizza, but a little tomato sauce and a few spices can help convince your children to eat unfamiliar foods like squash, beans, and assorted other vegetables.

4. HEIRLOOM SEEDS (NON-GENETICALLY MODIFIED)

In the introduction, I briefly mentioned that you may need to look into producing your own food. In fact, food production should be thought about as early as possible. Any stockpile of food has an end date, and you will still need to eat once it finally runs out.

The simplest means of food production is beginning a vegetable garden. Even if you aren't particularly gifted at gardening, there are plenty of vegetables that can be easily grown in a backyard, or even an apartment building roof. You can add an aquaponics system as well, so you can start keeping fish. Put together, these two things could potentially provide most—or all—of the food you need for your family.

Starting a garden begins with seeds. Not all seeds are the same, so you should be wary in purchasing seeds. Produce that comes from the supermarket is often genetically modified in some way. This means that you can't remove tomato seeds and put them in the ground to grow tomatoes. Seeds from genetically modified vegetables typically won't grow in a garden.

The seeds that you need are called "heirloom seeds." These seeds have been passed throughout generations. Farmers use these seeds and then harvest them in order to maintain many fruit and vegetable varieties.

Many vegetables come in thousands of different varieties. Some heirloom seed companies list up to 6,000 tomato types, 4,000 squash types, and a few hundred lettuce types. These lists are practically limitless.

Heirloom seeds aren't typically found in a garden supply store. Those seeds could be genetically modified. Instead, companies that provide heirloom seeds are often non-profit organizations who have dedicated their efforts to keeping these varieties alive. Searching online for "heirloom seeds" will provide plenty of options.

Once you begin harvesting, make sure that you take the seeds, too. Heirloom seeds have the unique ability to germinate and grow again throughout the next season. Dry the seeds out and keep them stored inside plastic bags, and make sure to label them. For very small seeds, you might want to dry the whole flower and store the flower as though it were a seed itself.

5. PROTEIN PRODUCTION

Although your vegetable garden will provide important nutrients, you will need to supplement those nutrients with protein. Raising animals is definitely a lot more complicated than cultivating a garden, but anyone can learn how to do it. Grocery stores will quickly run out of meat, so you will need to be prepared.

Fish are the easiest animal to raise, as they can be put into a pond or a tank. Chemical tanks are wonderfully suited as aquariums for at-home fish farms. Added to a garden, with an aquaponics system, the vast majority of your food can come from your backyard.

Of course, the biggest challenge to raising fish lies in cleaning the water. This is where an aquaponics system comes in handy. Water in the fish tank circulates through the vegetable garden, providing nutrients for plants. This also helps filter the water, keeping fish safe and healthy.

Exercise caution when choosing the fish species for your at-home fish farm. They have to be compatible with your climate. Additionally, some fish species are carnivorous, which could pose as an additional complication. Other species need wide spaces in order to grow properly, which wouldn't work well for an at-home fish farm. A good fish species suggestion is Tilapia: they don't need a lot of space, they will eat nearly everything, and are very hardy. Unfortunately, they do need a hot climate, which may prevent you from choosing Tilapia, depending upon your climate. Make sure to do some online research to find the best species of fish.

Aside from fish, another easy way to keep a source of protein coming is having chickens. Similar to Tilapia, chickens will really eat anything, including grass, bugs, or dinner leftovers. This might become a problem if you don't make a pen for them. You can't train chickens to avoid a vegetable garden, so make sure you protect your garden. An additional benefit to chickens is that they don't require tons of space, and since they can't fly very well, you don't need to worry about a ceiling for the pen.

You can use chickens for meat, or you can choose to have brood hens to produce eggs. Left to their own devices, a chicken can lay an egg three times within five days. Having a dozen brood hens can produce two eggs per person within a four-person family.

Additional possibilities are rabbits and goats, as both are very easy to raise. Rabbits can eat the leftover greens from your vegetable garden, including vegetables that you don't consume. They breed incredibly quickly, which means you will always have a source of meat. Goats maintain a trim yard, require minimal maintenance, and produce milk, which can either be drunk or made into goat cheese.

Whatever form of meat production you want to use needs to be well-established and started long before a disaster. These animals are pretty easy to find amongst rural areas. Fish can be ordered online, and chicks can be bought from farm supply or feed stores. Once crisis strikes, their availability will drop quickly, which will make it difficult to find animals. Make sure that you also have a good feed stock and other assorted supplies that they might need.

6. BLEACH

Both city water systems and pools put chlorine into their supplies. This is because chlorine kills nearly all sorts of bacteria. It is readily available for household use in the form of bleach.

Make sure to purchase regular bleach, ideally without additives or scent. Non-chlorine bleach doesn't ensure water purity, since they don't have chlorine. Using bleach by itself to purify drinking water is not recommended, it certainly is great for household applications, like washing dishes.

Water that has already been purified can easily maintain cleanliness by putting in eight drops of bleach per gallon of water. Given that the water is stored in a cool, dark area, this bleach should maintain water purity for over twelve months. Ultraviolet light, however, creates chemical reactions with chlorine and erases it. If water is stored outdoors or in a sunlight area, chlorine will need to be continuously added.

Bleach is great for cleaning, particularly where mold and bacteria are concerned. Nearly everyone is at risk for flooding, and bleach can assist in salvaging a home after the water recedes. Drywall and carpeting might need to be replaced, but the structural integrity of the wood can be saved. Once mold begins to form, bleach can kill the mold and save the wood.

This may need to be done multiple times throughout the drying process. If moisture is still inside the wood, mold and fungi can easily breed. With factors like airflow and temperature, wood may take up to month in order to properly dry out.

7. SOURCES OF ELECTRICAL ENERGY

No matter what the disaster situation may be, the biggest loss will be electricity. Our society has become quite dependent upon electricity, involving heating and cooling units, entertainment, cooking, and preserving food. Still, you can survive long periods of time without having electricity.

When the tsunami hit Japan during March of 2011, nearly 2.74 million people lost electricity. For some of these people, they didn't see their electric power turned back on for nearly three months. How would you manage to get by without electricity? The vast majority of us would start living a more primitive lifestyle.

In order to have minimal amounts of disruption and frustration in your life, you need to have some sort of method to produce your own electricity. There are a few different ways to do this, and the most common ways are:

- Generators
- Wind power
- Solar power

Generators are ideal to use over the short-term, but not for long-term use. The average generator consumes a gallon of gasoline each hour. Since gasoline will be in high demand—and probably at a high price—following a disaster, it is virtually impossible to afford one gallon for each and every hour for the majority of families.

Purchasing a generator isn't a waste of money, though. For short-term use, a generator is a tried and true source of electricity. The key is to not depend upon a generator over a long period of time. In order to have a thoroughly prepared plan, you need additional power sources, like wind or solar power.

Solar power can be very expensive to install, typically costing up to tens of thousands of dollars. Much of this money can be easily saved if you can build your own mini solar system. Solar cells, the center of the system itself, can be purchased from a handful of suppliers, or even on online retail outlets like eBay. Each solar cell creates 0.5 volts of direct current (VDC) at between 3-6 watts, which will vary with size. Individual cells should be soldered with each other to create a cell panel that produces a total of 18 volts. Wattage total depends upon how many cells are in each panel.

This panel should be mounted and protected from moisture. Once it is built and thoroughly tested, the panel can be mounted on a roof, resting at an angle in order to maximize sun

exposure. Making a solar system will also require batteries, a battery charger, and finally, a voltage converter to change VDC into VAC (house current).

Many others will find that a wind generator or a windmill are excellent sources for electrical power. These appliances can be bought from local home improvement warehouses. The average home windmill will produce around 700 watts at 120 VAC.

Even by using a windmill and a few solar panels, it's likely that you won't be producing the same amount of electricity that you are used to. Central air conditioning or baseboard heaters can't run all day. Still, there are a few critical appliances that you can keep running, like a refrigerator, lighting units, and a radio (so you can get news updates).

8. BATTERIES

Since our society is so accustomed—and maybe even addicted—to electronics, we have begun using electronic devices for nearly everything. There are a few electrical and electronic units that don't require electricity, particularly flashlights.

What devices do you regularly use that need batteries? How many of these devices would you actually use when in a survival type of situation? How long will those batteries last before they need to be replaced?

Keeping a well-maintained battery stock is an essential part of maintaining the use of things that we are accustomed to. The most common batteries are AA and AAA alkaline batteries. Thankfully, the manufacturers of batteries have been steadily working to improve their battery technology. Alkaline batteries now have a much longer shelf life—some companies advertise that they may last up to 10 years!

To prolong their shelf life, batteries should be kept in a cool and dry place. The best spot for them is in a refrigerator that won't frost over. That may be impractical, since it takes up space for food. Luckily, there are plenty of other places in the home that tend to stay cool, and any of those will do the trick.

Stocking up on batteries can also be great since they can be useful when bartering. Many people will find themselves without enough batteries. That even happens now, without a disaster! How many times have you reached for a flashlight and found that the batteries have died?

9. GASOLINE

Though it is very likely that gasoline reserves will become unavailable during and after disaster, it is equally likely that the price will jump through the roof. As much as we depend upon electricity, we also depend upon cars. Without gasoline, there is often no way to get to and from work, the supermarket, the doctor, or even to a government office to obtain help after a disaster.

Keeping gasoline available can not only save your family, but it could also save a neighbor or a close friend. The first things to get overwhelmed in the aftermath of a disaster are medical and emergency services. You can't expect to have an ambulance at your house within a matter of minutes. If you have gasoline stored away, you won't need to wait for an ambulance. Instead, you can bring the injured party straight to the hospital.

Gasoline takes on incredible value after disaster. Not only is it crucial to get to and from places, but it is also used to power important survival equipment. If you plan to use a generator to create electrical power, you'll need at least a gallon each hour. That isn't the only item that you might need gasoline for, of course. Gardening items like lawnmowers, weed whackers, chainsaws, and roto-tillers will all need gasoline. Also, keep in mind that if you plan on using a camp stove, you'll also need gasoline.

While rebuilding a sense of normalcy and caring for your family, you may go through a large amount of gasoline. Unfortunately, it's difficult to stockpile gasoline. It doesn't really keep well over longer periods, as it will start to go bad. As a result, gasoline stocks have to be rotated. An easy method to do this is to keep a drum of gasoline and a 5-gallon can. Every time you fill up your car, bring the gas can and fill that up, too. Add the gas can into the drum, and then use five gallons from the drum to use either in your car or in the lawn mower. Doing this will help keep the gas supply freshly rotated.

Chemical additives can also be purchased to prolong the shelf life of gasoline. Putting these into generators and other gas powered appliances can ensure that they will start up when you need them.

10. ALTERNATE FUEL SOURCES FOR HEATING

One of the three crucial elements that I have mentioned was shelter, in order to promote thermoregulation. Shelter certainly provides warmth during the winter and shade in the summer, but a fire can really help, too. Don't count on the types of services that you have gotten used to. Once the power goes out, so does your electric heat. Gas heat won't work either, since it is also powered off electricity.

When normal methods of providing heat fall through, you need to return to the basics. Before HVAC systems came into being, we used fire to warm our living spaces, making it a perfectly acceptable form of heating to return to. Having a big supply of heating fuel and a good place to burn the fuel can make a huge difference in whether you live or die.

If you don't have a fireplace installed inside your home, you may want to think about purchasing a cast-iron stove. Since they provide radiant heat, they are actually a more efficient means for heating than fireplaces. You'll need a chimney pipe and a few other materials for the installation, but it's worth it. The chimney can even be fit out of a hole in the window during an emergency.

Other than finding firewood, old newspapers can be used to make a few fireplace logs. All you really need is a roll of string and some water. First, roll the newspapers up and tie them together. Soak them for a few days in the bucket of water. Take them out of the water and let them dry off completely (probably a few days of drying). If leaves fall onto your yard, you can put the leaves inside the newspaper layers for additional fuel.

Keep in mind that you need more than just one way to start a fire, which includes something that could be used alongside damp wood. A great fire starter for this purpose is dryer lint. When mixed with paraffin inside cardboard egg cartons, the dryer lint will burn much longer, making it very useful to use with damp wood.

Because fire is crucial to survive, most experts say that you need as much as two primary and even two secondary ways to start a fire. Primary ways should be simple to use, like dryer lint and boxes of matches. The secondary might be harder to work with, but will still create a fire, like metal matches, or the combination of steel wool with a battery.

11. ALTERNATIVE MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION

It goes without saying that we are incredibly reliant on cars. When disaster strikes, many people head straight to their vehicle to get themselves out of town. Of course, everyone else has the same exact idea, which often results in expansive traffic jams.

If you forgo the bugging out option and choose to remain at home, you will still need gasoline. Although I've already talked about stocking up on gasoline, unless you happen to have access to a large, underground gas tank, you'll eventually find yourself running out of gas.

Even if getting to work or the grocery store isn't important, you will still have to have reliable transportation. You'll need access to your water supply, food sources, and even medical or emergency services.

Keeping some sort of alternative transportation—that doesn't utilize gasoline—may not seem crucial for survival purposes, but it actually is. If you live far away from your resources, it becomes even more important. It should also have the ability to carry some sort of cargo as well, like water containers. The very last thing you need to be doing in a survival situation is getting tired—or hurt—by dragging around heavy jugs of water.

If you aren't able to have a horse, a bicycle is your next best option. You don't want a racing bicycle that is built for speed. Instead, look for a mountain bike that is built for tough riding. Roads could be damaged or littered with debris, or you might need to use actual hiking paths to get back and forth, so a mountain bike is the ideal option.

Either make or purchase a few baskets, or even a small trailer to attach to the bicycle. They should be sturdy enough and large enough to carry five-gallon bottles or buckets. A simple way to find a trailer is to sort through child trailers that attach on the back of a bicycle. Make it is lightweight, but still durable enough to keep at least two five-gallon water jugs, which will each weigh 40 pounds.

12. SOURCES OF LIGHT

We've all become very accustomed to having constant lighting to make the days longer and continue being productive during the evening. Once the electricity goes out, that will no longer be an option. Flashlights will not be enough to fill that void.

Again, prepping sticks to a core rule of redundancy. It is too easy to use up gasoline and batteries. Keeping that in mind, you will need to have at least one other light source that stays away from using up these sorts of resources.

One of the most common methods of producing light comes from using candles. Of course, it is still a finite resource. Even so, candles are cost-effective and pretty easy to stockpile without compromising space. Plain ones are the cheapest and most sensible option.

An issue with candles is that they can drip away more wax than they actually burn, and dripping wax is wasted. Wide candles are a better option here, since they don't drip. Once the candle has burned itself down, any leftover wax can be melted and molded into a brand new candle.

Making your own candles is actually quite simple. You can either use paraffin blocks or used candles, but really all you need is a wick and some paraffin. Molds can be constructed out of nearly anything, like a tin can, aluminum foil, or even a cardboard tube.

First, you'll want to keep the wick anchored at the bottom of the mold, and tie it to something that is wide enough to go across the top of the mold. Start melting the wax and then pour the

melted wax into the mold. Let it cool until it becomes hard, and you have your very own candle.

Another great option for a light source is found with old-fashioned kerosene lanterns. Surprisingly enough, these lanterns are still manufactured, and can be easily purchased as camping lanterns. Though they are made to work with kerosene or lamp oil, these lanterns can work equally as well with any other type of flammable liquid. Make sure that you run a few tests with the liquid while outdoors before bringing the lantern inside for use.

Camping manufacturer Coleman continues to make a gas lantern, although most of them use propane bottles now. Gas lanterns will use either Coleman fuel or gasoline. There is a tiny pressure pump on the lantern, which will need a little pumping every now and then, so having a repair kit for the pump is a great idea, along with extra lantern mantles.

Lastly, I do want to mention Crisco as a lighting option. It is entirely possible to use Crisco outside of the kitchen, particularly since it makes for a wonderful lantern. You can take a can of Crisco, puncture a hole into the foil seal, and put a wick inside. Once you light the wick, the Crisco will start burning just like a candle.

13. BLACKOUT CURTAINS

While it's great to have lights during a crisis, that sort of visibility can also be an issue. When everyone else is panicking and worrying about having a dark house, your lighted house will certainly stand out. That sends the message to everyone that you are prepared with lights—what else could you have that might be valuable?

It's tempting to show off how prepared we are for a disaster, but that is generally a bad idea. Desperate times often call for desperate measures, and there will be plenty of opportunities in a crisis. If people are starving, or their children are starving, the lights inside your window might also signal that you have all the food that they are looking for.

Unfortunately, with the way today's society works, the people who don't have tend to hold resentment for those that do. Both the 2012 elections and the Occupy Wall Street movement were fueled by a theme of how it was unfair that a certain segment of people had, while others did not. It created a separation of sorts, drawn between bad and good, rich and poor.

When a crisis hits and you find yourself as one of the few with food, water, lighting, warmth, and electricity, you will find that you may suddenly become the bad, rich people. People who were not prepared might adopt a viewpoint that their situation is not fair (even though it is technically their fault for failing to prepare). Rationale does not always win during a survival situation. You could find yourself confronting people who are looking to beg, steal, or do you harm so that they can survive.

Keeping this in mind, it is wise to hide the resources that you have. Putting blackout curtains on your windows can prevent lights from electricity and lanterns from shining outside. Not attracting attention can be key to survival, and blackout curtains can help you do just that.

These curtains can either be purchased, or constructed out of dark, thick fabric. In order to be as effective as possible, the fabric should be cut so that it is wider and longer than the window. To ensure that no light seeps through, blackout curtains should be constructed of at least a few layers of fabric. This might require a bit of experimentation on your part.

Don't forget that your light source is probably not going to be the same quality as your normal lights. When you begin testing the blackout curtains, make sure to test them with the brightest light source that you might use in a crisis (probably a lot lower than what you currently have).

14. FIRST AID KIT

Emergency and health services are always stretched incredibly thin during any sort of crisis. Ambulances simply cannot reach every single call in the quickest way possible. It goes without saying that doctors, nurses, and EMTs are drastically overworked and struggling to provide the highest quality service to a wide range of people. Patients must be prioritized according to how severe the injury or affliction is.

Simply getting yourself and others to any sort of medical assistance can become its own separate problem. If you are lucky enough to get inside the emergency room, this doesn't necessarily guarantee that there will be medical personnel there to help, particularly if your injury is a minor one.

As an additional consideration, injuries certainly won't end once the crisis does. A great deal of people get injured in the aftermath of the disaster, as they are trying to rebuild their lives and save their homes. Most people aren't trained to take away debris or rebuild a house, so there is a very high chance that they will accidentally injure themselves.

Having a solid first-aid kit can certainly make a huge amount of difference between an injury becoming a small inconvenience, or a serious issue. If left untreated, injuries can quickly produce serious infections. Some situations—like flooding—produce a greater chance for infection through water contamination.

In order to handle an emergency situation, a first-aid kit should have enough supplies to manage some relatively big injuries. Don't think about using Band-Aids for cut fingers. Instead, think about what you would need for broken limbs, or wide gashes.

Making your own first-aid kit is actually pretty easy. Everything you need is readily available through a pharmacy, discount store, or even through online sources. If you try to think a little bit outside of the box, you may end up saving a ton of money when purchasing medical supplies.

Sanitary napkins actually make for great bandages when dealing with bigger cuts, abrasions, or even a gunshot. Their construction is basically the same as military field dressings. You will need to use something to tie the sanitary napkins in place, like medical tape, gauze, or fabric strips. If need be, duct tape can be wonderfully efficient as medical tape, although it might be a bit more painful when removed.

Making a splint is a quick and easy way to provide treatment for a broken bone. Sticks can be used to make a splint, but if you cut a few ½-inch dowel rods, you won't need to waste any time by looking for sticks. An Ace bandage can wrap around the limb and hold the rods in place. Make sure that the rods are long enough to keep the joints immobilized both above and below the fracture or break.

You will also want to include topical antiseptics in your first-aid kit. Covering up a wound is important, but cleaning the wound beforehand is crucial in order to avoid infection. Many medicines are available over-the-counter to provide antiseptic benefits. If you are interested in using home remedies instead, a brief online search will provide you with all the information you need to make your own.

15. MEDICINES

If you have someone in your family who needs to regularly take a form of prescribed medicine, you will want to keep a supply of those, too. Depending upon the medication, losing prescription medication might cause serious side effects, including death. Elderly people are especially susceptible to this, but they are certainly not the only ones. Many chronic illnesses require that medication be taken throughout an entire lifetime.

Looters tend to look for pharmacies first. Most of the time they are trying to find drugs for recreational purposes, but many necessary medications may become destroyed or lost during these raids. You can't depend on drugs being readily restocked.

A good rule to follow is to keep your stockpile of prescription medicines at a similar level as your food stock. If you have enough food to last a year, you should have enough medicine to last a year as well.

Some guides inside the prepping community have discussed the process of stockpiling prescription antibiotics. It can be difficult, or even impossible to really stockpile these without a prescription. As an alternative, these guides suggest using veterinary grades. They tend to be equally as pure, and you don't need a prescription.

I don't intend on recommending any sort of specific medication to stock up on, nor am I even qualified to offer that type of advice. I am only suggesting that considering medical needs is an important part of preparation.

Over-the-counter medicines should not be neglected, particularly pain relievers. Both acetaminophen and ibuprofen are able to be used at the same time, though most people don't realize this. They both use different methods to relieve pain and don't cause reactions with each other. Of course, I'm not a medical professional, so make sure you cover this with your doctor.

16. VITAMINS

Maintaining your health amidst a crisis will be equally as difficult as it is crucial. It's going to be difficult because many things simply will not be available. It will be crucial because you need your health in order to take care of your family, as well as yourself. What adds to the difficulty is that your diet is probably going to change a lot, depending on what you have stored away, or what you have prepared to produce.

In addition, you will likely be doing much more physical exertion. Consider how much more difficult the simple act of getting water will be. Instead of turning on the tap, you will have to travel to a stream or lake and carry water back.

In order to keep your health as high as possible, your diet should be supplemented with vitamins. They should be top-quality vitamins, since cheaper ones tend to dissolve improperly, halting absorption.

Although vitamins certainly aren't a replacement for a healthy diet, they can assist in making up for any nutrients that are lacking. Even individuals with excellent diets may find that vitamins are necessary supplements, especially where minerals are concerned. In a crisis, poor health is not something that you can afford to have, since your family certainly won't be able to afford losing you.

Having a good dose of Vitamin B can really help maintain your energy level. Many studies have been conducted which prove that Vitamin B helps keep energy levels up. Even if you aren't someone who regularly takes Vitamin B, this is an important addition to your survival gear.

17. PERSONAL HYGIENE ITEMS

Preppers tend to quickly forget about how important personal hygiene can be. It can actually be just as important as a diet when considering your health. On a global scale, poor personal hygiene is responsible for many illnesses, and even death in some cases. This is part of the reason why the military strongly emphasizes that soldiers stick to high levels of personal hygiene.

During a disaster, there probably won't be enough water to wash ourselves in, let alone our clothes. Still, cleanliness will remain as a crucial factor in maintaining health—perhaps even more so than it already is.

Food, water, medicine, and supplies will be the first—and potentially—the only items that are prioritized as assistance, if any. Things like soap, toilet paper, and sanitary napkins are probably going to be left to the wayside. There are certainly ways to make these things on your own, but that takes materials and time. The easiest thing to do is to simply start stocking up on these types of personal hygiene items, so that when the crisis happens, you won't need to worry about something basic, like staying clean.

Women will certainly want to have tampons or sanitary napkins to help them get through their menstruation cycles. Before these things were invented, women utilized cloth rags, which could be washed and reused. Of course, doing this means that you will need more water. If you don't have a direct source of water at your house, you will want to consider how each and every method or item could potentially affect your water supply.

The majority of families might not go through a ton of personal hygiene products, so it can be difficult to figure out just how much you should stock. If you don't know how much your family uses, there is an easy way to check. Write the date onto the container as soon as it's opened. Once it runs out, you can compare the two dates and you will know exactly how long the product lasted.

Don't forget that water will be highly sought after, even by you. You want to keep personal hygiene items that don't need a lot of water in order to use. For women with long hair, this can become an issue. It takes a lot of water to wash hair, so these women may need to start washing it less often, and maybe even stop using conditioner.

Baby wipes and anti-bacterial hand cleaner (that can be used without water) are very helpful for keeping yourself clean. You may not be able to bathe with them, but they do help clean hands before eating or making food, which is essential when avoiding illnesses.

Don't leave behind items like toothpaste, deodorant, or spare toothbrushes. You will want to have a few extras of these around, not only for your family, but for others. These things can be great for trading, particularly since most people won't remember to stock up on them.

18. CLEANING SUPPLIES

We've already covered bleach, but there are a few other cleaning supplies that will be useful. As a reminder, this is an item that might not make it on the trucks that will bring aid to your area. When you start recovering from any natural disaster, you are guaranteed to do a lot of cleaning.

When floods or hurricanes come through an area, the sewer system gets mixed in with the storm water. It becomes an extremely unsanitary situation, which can breed a whole host of diseases. These same conditions can happen in the aftermath of any natural disaster.

If your home is as clean as possible, then your family will be as healthy as possible. Of course, that means that you need to have the right kinds of cleaning supplies with you. Anti-bacterial cleaning supplies should always be stocked away. They kill bacteria that lingers on the surfaces in your home, and provide cleaning properties. If you can't locate anti-bacterial cleaners, you can put together your own mixture by adding bleach to any cleaning solution.

Keep in mind that water will be scarce. Your cleaning supplies should be used with the most minimal amounts of water possible. It may seem as though paper towels are a luxury item to stockpile—but the benefit to these is that they don't need to be washed. The blue paper towels are even better, sold inside auto parts stores. Since they are much stronger, they can be used in heavy-duty cleaning jobs. They cost a little extra, but their resistance to tearing makes them excellent choices for heavy-duty cleaning jobs.

Cleaners with a pump spray dispersal are really great for cleaning, particularly after a flood. Absolutely everything has to be cleaned, so you will need to have an adequate stock. The great thing about these is that the cheap, dollar store versions work just as well as the expensive, name brand versions.

You could also look into janitorial supply houses. These places sell tons of common cleaners in bulk concentrate, poured into gallon jugs. This can definitely make buying cleaners a little less expensive, and it can provide easy methods for storage.

Lastly, you will need to have some sort of soap to wash clothes. It's likely that you won't have enough water available to use the washing machine, so you will probably have to start washing clothes inside a bucket or a tub. Look for a high quality laundry soap, instead of trying to pinch pennies. The better (and more expensive) laundry soaps will clean better by using less.

19. CLOTHING

You might not consider that clothing could be an issue when in a disaster situation. After all, it seems as if everyone has more than enough clothing, especially you! But have you ever stopped to think about the types of clothing that you have? If most of your wardrobe consists of dresses and suits for work, you could have tons of clothing, but none of it would be what you really need.

Cultivating the garden, cleaning, and repairing your house will certainly cause lots of wear and tear on clothes. If you do these tasks in nice slacks and a dress shirt, you probably wouldn't stress out over washing them. Instead of keeping your business clothes clean, you would probably just throw them out once they get dirty or ruined. Of course, eventually, you are still going to find yourself without clothes.

For rugged work, you are going to need to have rugged clothing. If that doesn't sound like something you have, then you will have to adjust your wardrobe a little bit. If you are hoping to wash clothes once each week, then you should have enough heavy-duty, rugged clothing to last you seven days.

While we're talking about rugged clothing, it's important to mention rugged boots, too. Sneakers aren't going to last too long through this sort of situation, although they are still a better choice than dress shoes. Think about purchasing the same leather boots that carpenters, farmers, and factory workers use. Not only are they durable, but they often come with a steel toe, which helps protect your toes from any heavy items that might drop.

An additional reason to invest in work boots is to keep your ankles supported and protected. If a disaster causes the ground to break and become uneven, you can twist or break an ankle in the blink of an eye. Solid, well-made boots can protect ankles from injury, which will be a valuable thing once disaster hits. The last thing that you want to do is sit around injured, rather than working to find solutions.

You will also want outdoor gear to get you through any cold weather. Keep in mind that what you currently have might not be the best option. Wool coats can certainly keep you warm, but wearing them will make it difficult for you to work outside, or on your home. The best cold weather gear will provide warmth without limiting movement.

It's also important to consider that you will want layers when you are working hard amidst cold weather. Sweating while working outside in the cold is not only uncomfortable, but it is dangerous. After a period of time, the sweat freezes on skin, resulting in hypothermia. It might be better to use a few thin layers, instead of one huge thick layer that can't be removed.

I have one final point regarding outdoor clothes: many materials could remove body heat quicker once they get wet, when compared to you standing with no clothes on. For example,

down removed body heat up to 300 times faster than if you had no clothes on. The best material for keeping insulation—even when wet—is wool. A few polyester fiber-fills can keep some of their insulation value, but it won't be much. For the highest degree of protection, choose a material that is either water-resistant, or keeps insulation value when it gets wet.

20. ALTERNATE WEAPONS

Every single prepper covers the need to stock up on ammunition and to have firearms. I am in complete agreement: however, I think that the conversation needs to be expanded. Each and every one of us has the right to keep and bear arms under the 2nd amendment, and that right is under constant scrutiny and attack. While I write this, the Sandy Hook shooting is fresh in memory, with the media and liberal politicians utilizing this tragedy as a means for tighter gun control. Some places have made it illegal to have particular firearms.

Preppers suggest having a stock of guns and ammo for protection against any sort of attack. Mob mentality descends in times of crisis, and people don't respect property rights. In fact, these mobs often see the people who have resources as a sort of enemy, thinking that it is their right to take whatever resources they need.

Firearms are certainly the easiest way to provide protection for your family, home, and resources, but there are other ways. Prepping is all about being prepared for any sort of unexpected disaster, and I believe that having the right to bear arms could be an unexpected crisis. Once that is combined with another sort of crisis, and the situation could be dire. Of course, there will be some mob members who forgo the law and will still carry weapons.

There are many weapons other than firearms. Before gunpowder was invented, people were still capable of killing. If there is nothing else, rods and sticks can still be used as weapons, although they certainly aren't my ideal weapons.

Aside from firearms, the most effective weapon to use for keeping someone at a distance is either a bow or a crossbow. Between the two, the crossbow is more effective, since it can shoot at higher velocities and longer ranges while still retaining accuracy. Unfortunately, crossbows take time to load, so it's not useful when you need to quickly reload. In those sorts of situations, a bow is a better option.

A great majority of hunting bows are actually compound bows. These weapons are compact, and have high velocities. A compound bow might be harder to draw, but they are still easier to draw than a longbow. Once they are drawn, holding a compound bow is much easier. They are also a lot shorter, which increases their versatility, making them able to be used out in the woods or at home.

If you need to work with shorter distances, knives and swords are ideal. Both methods allow you to protect your family and yourself, but you need to be able to properly use them. If you can't use them properly, you might end up giving away a weapon for someone to use against you.

This introduces the crucial problem for weapons—they all require a certain amount of practice and training. Firearms require their own sort of training and practice, but certainly to a lesser degree than other weapons. If you want to use another sort of weapon for defense, you need to make time to learn how to properly use it. If you can't do that, then you will be much better off not using it in the first place.

There are many additional items that can be utilized as weapons, including blowguns, throwing knives and stars, spears, quarterstaves, axes, and even tomahawks. The best way to ensure the security of your family, home, and your resources is to keep a few different weapons, as well as making sure that you can efficiently use them.

One non-traditional weapon that not many people consider is a flare gun. They tend to be constructed from plastic, and flares from in 12-gauge shotgun shells. Their intended use is to signal rescue, like when on a sinking boat. When pointed towards an attacker, however, they can become a deadly weapon, shooting out balls of fire. Keep in mind that they are typically painted orange, so you may want to paint over that with black.

21. PET FOOD

It's likely that you already have a good stock of food for your family and for yourself, but what about the four-legged family members? Pets will need to eat too, and the last thing that you want to do is to use your family's stockpiled food for them.

This is an area that is easily overlooked during preparations, and it can cause some big problems as soon as crisis hits. Thankfully, it's an easy problem to solve. Dog and cat food is relatively inexpensive, and are easily stored. Galvanized trash cans can be useful in storing pet food, since they are cheap, hold large quantities, and keep bugs and other pests away.

There will be some pet owners who are used to giving their pets food from a can. This might keep pets happy, but it is certainly more expensive. Stocking up on canned pet food might not fit with your prepping budget. If so, don't worry about switching to dry food. The pets will survive just as well, and even if they resist it at first, once they get hungry enough, they will certainly eat it.

You may need to stock up on preventative medications (like flea and tick, or heartworm medication) or medications for chronic issues, you'll want to stock up on these, too. Luckily

enough, veterinary medications don't require a prescription. You won't need to stress over convincing a vet to give you an entire year's worth of pet meds.

There are other little things that pets require. For cats, you will need to have a good stock of litter. Although it is possible to clean it and reuse it, litter will still need to be replaced at some point. Dogs will need rawhide bones to chew on, particularly if you have a puppy. It's much better for them to chew on rawhides than your heavy-duty work boots.

22. PEST CONTROL

After a disaster, pest populations multiply. Rats, mice, cockroaches, and all sorts of insects flock to the decay and waste that naturally occurs with various disasters. Pest populations increase in the aftermath of many disasters. Even though they primarily live off rotting food that is damaged or left behind, these types of scavengers certainly aren't picky. If you aren't careful, they could find their way into your stockpile.

In fact, for these pests, your stockpile will be the perfect place to eat and breed. Make sure you have a good amount of bug spray, mouse traps, and any other pest control items that you think you might need. Saving these things for your family does you no good if the pests get to it first.

It isn't just indoor pests that you need to worry about. If you have your own garden, you have to be able to protect that, too. Many scavengers will happily tear through your garden, even before vegetables are ripe. There will always be birds, gophers, possums, squirrels, and raccoons who are looking for free meals.

Keeping pests away from a garden can be done without using chemicals. Hanging protective netting will help prevent birds from getting to fruit trees or other sorts of plants. Circling aluminum flashing around tree trunks can prevent rodents from climbing into the branches to get the fruit. A few plant types, like mint, are natural bug repellants, keeping insects from eating the leaves in your garden.

If you want to make an aquaponics system or cultivate a fish farm, you will also have to protect those fish. Plenty of people are ill-prepared for disaster, so taking care of themselves will be difficult enough, leaving pets and other animals to the wayside. Dogs and cats will become predators again, stalking and hunting for their food. Fish in a pond or tank could be an easy meal for these hungry animals.

Fish and poultry can be protected with a few simple precautions. Chicken wire can be made into a cover for a pond or a chicken coop. Some animals are cleverer than others, so make sure that the cover can't be open. You may want to consider finding methods to latch the cover into place.

Nighttime is your greatest time of risk, since there are tons of animals that do their hunting during the night. On the other hand, birds and household pets will hunt during the daytime. Unless you are able to constantly watch over your fish, chickens, or vegetable garden, you need some form of protection for them.

23. BARTER GOODS

Money is nearly worthless during a crisis. After World War II, plenty of people traveled from the city into the country with bags chock full of jewelry, silver, gold, and other valuable items to barter for food. These suitcases of valuables came back filled with food, as a one-for-one sort of trade.

People are actively preparing for a financial crash within the United States. If that does happen, American dollars will be useless. A bartering system will arise, and the people will decide what sort of worth each item carries, with the largest worth going to survival items.

Many things that I have already discussed will hold great value when bartering. Extra fish and produce from an aquaponics system can certainly be traded for goods and services. If you can purify water, that also provides a bartering item. Ammunition will probably become one of the most popular, while medical supplies will be treated as gold, particularly for someone who is already injured or sick.

The key with bartering is to not give away things that your family needs to survive. Of course, providing help for others is certainly a worthy goal, and everyone should adopt a mentality of helping others in a crisis situation. Keep in mind that you can't put the needs of others ahead of your own family's needs.

In order to avoid bartering your precious survival stockpile for other necessary items, you can set a separate pile of things aside to be purely used in bartering. These things could be commonly needed survival supplies, extra food, and personal hygiene goods. Essentially, anything that someone needs—and is in short supply—will become a valuable good for bartering.

A really great barter item to set aside is alcohol. Even when the world is falling apart, people will still want a drink or two, and perhaps even more so in an emergency situation. Having a few cases of hard liquor could become one of the most valuable bartering items to have.

24. SILVER

Once an economy destabilizes, gold and silver prices go through the roof. Even if this destabilization comes from inflation, debt, or investments, as soon as dollar values decrease, gold and silver values increase.

For a solid investment to last over long periods of time, gold is a great choice. Unfortunately, gold becomes worthless when bartering unless you are attempting to buy larger items, like a vehicle. Since gold is so valuable, trading one-ounce coins can often be difficult.

If the value of gold is at \$2,000 each ounce, then what would be a good trade for one gold coin? If you want gasoline, you need at least 100 gallons for an even trade. Otherwise, the barter will leave you getting cheated out of the full value of the gold coin. It might be valuable for bartering, but gold certainly isn't practical.

On the other side of the coin, silver is actually more practical when bartering. Just like gold, silver increases exponentially in value once the dollar value drops. Gold and silver actually have similar value rates, so they are pretty even investments. The benefit is that silver costs a lot less, usually sticking to about 2% of the value of gold. If we imagine that gold is worth \$2,000 each ounce, silver is worth \$40, making it a lot easier to barter.

Silver is a more practical bartering tool when compared to gold, and it is also a good investment to make when considering gains over long periods of time. If your emergency fund is \$4,000, you can only purchase two gold coins. With that same amount of money, however, you could buy up to 80 silver coins.

When you have 80 silver coins, you can potentially create 80 separate bartering transactions, which is a much better deal when compared with gold. Even if you wanted to purchase something larger, 80 coins make it easier to be precise and accurate. If you only have a few gold coins, there is an immense difference in price from one coin to another, making them incredibly restricting bartering tools.

Don't forget that the real value for gold and silver amidst a crisis is really the perceived value, instead of the face value. Even if silver is officially listed at \$40 per ounce, that coin might not actually be perceived as worth \$40 for someone who is looking for food and water. You will need to be cautious when using precious metals when bartering, and only use them with the people who understand their value.

25. TOOLS

As a child, I remember spending numerous hours in the garage with my father, as he was teaching me how to repair and make different things. During that time, that was a pretty

normal activity, but it isn't quite as common now. Most men today haven't learned how to change the oil in their car, repair plumbing, or fix broken doors. Instead, they hire specialists to take care of these things.

This means that if you have the skillset to do these things, your skills are a valuable commodity. There are always massive shortages of tradesmen to repair things during a disaster, and there is a huge influx of those who need their services. With the laws of supply and demand taken into consideration, prices rise exponentially, making it even more difficult to use these services.

Even hailstorms can cause many months of issues. Where I live, we actually had three separate hailstorms over the last year. The roof repair for many people took as long as eight months, as there weren't enough contractors to go around. In the meantime, most houses got covered by oversized blue tarps while people waited for contractors.

Having the tools and the knowledge to fix things means that your services will be incredibly valuable following a disaster. The company you work for now might no longer be in place after a crisis strikes. But, if you have the right skills to fix things, you can start a whole new career by helping other people with the repair process in the aftermath of a disaster.

Just like any other thing, labor can be a barter good. If someone needs work done and they don't have the means to pay for it, they will trade for your labor. As such, this can become a great way to obtain things that you need without dipping into your stockpile.

Aside from helping others out, you can save a ton by doing your own repairs, and you will probably be able to do it much quicker. Insurance companies are only looking for lowest rates, so you could bid with the insurance company on doing your own repairs. Not only can you get the work done quickly and efficiently, but you could also make a little money while doing it.

26. MATERIALS TO USE WITH THE TOOLS

A room full of tools is no good if you don't have the right materials to use them with. Throughout my life, I have always heard about plywood selling for \$50 each sheet or even more after hurricanes. No matter what area the hurricane hit, the price always rose exponentially. Those who had plywood drove towards the affected areas and came back rich from selling loads of plywood.

The same concept applies to any sort of repair material. The combination of scarcity and need will jack prices up, which follows the law of how supply and demand work. Sadly, greed can interfere with this too, making prices much higher than they need to be.

If your disaster survival plan involves using your skills to get by, you need to have something to

work with. You could always get the \$50 plywood, but your best bet is to have your own materials to work with, purchased at reasonable prices.

Of course, you can't stockpile the right things for each and every disaster scenario. Having that sort of foresight is impossible. Still, there are a few common items that can be used across the board. Plumbing fittings, plywood, electrical wire and hardware items are a few examples of things that everyone will need, no matter what.

Getting all of these things together is not only expensive, but it can also take up a lot of space. The best thing to do is to get started with a small stockpile. Make sure that these things are truly effective, by fitting a wide array of needs in different scenarios.

Plumbing is a great example to use. One common element within all natural disasters is damage to plumbing systems. Oftentimes, water service is completely shut off, because too many pipes have broken, putting tons of water into streets. If you are skilled with plumbing, you should keep a small stock of various fittings and caps to repair pipes. It might not completely solve the issue, but if a broken pipe is capped, undamaged portions of a home could still have water.

Plumbers tend to have these things with them at all times, but average homeowners do not. If your plan is to help support your family by using your plumbing skills, you need to act just as a plumber would, gathering supplies beforehand.

27. COMFORT ITEMS FOR YOUR PERSONAL MENTAL HEALTH

This may seem odd, but it is my firm belief that everyone needs to have at least some way to entertain themselves, to ease their worries and take their minds away from problems. Relaxing and recharging is important. This is true for real life, but even more so in survival situations, since stress levels will be elevated significantly.

On its own, stress can actually kill you. Without a method to take away stress, it can damage both health and mental capacity to deal with stressful situations and problems.

Keeping a good level of mental health is crucial to survival. Many studies have been conducted to demonstrate how important it is to stay positive, whether going through cancer treatments or surviving a crisis. As a result, you need to have provisions for mental health inside your own personal survival plan.

Think about the things that make you feel relaxed. It might be reading a book, or playing an instrument. Maybe comfort foods are what helps you feel comfortable. Your relaxation might

even be a few keepsakes that keep you grounded. Whatever you decide on, make sure that you include it into your plan, so you can ensure your mental health.

Children can't comprehend negative events—they only know that something is off or wrong. There is no way to rationalize what is happening. The only thing they can do is turn to their parents to make things right again. Unfortunately, parents probably won't be able to recreate life as it was, instead creating a new sense of normalcy.

As disruptive and concerning as it is for adults, children can feel the exact same way. Adults can understand the full impact of what is happening, which can certainly be scary. For children, they are simply scared, without having a full understanding of what is happening. For this reason, you are going to need to ensure that your children can have high levels of mental health, too.

Being busy with survival doesn't excuse you from attending to the needs of your children. Of course, you are busy trying to meet their elemental needs, but don't forget that they also will need entertainment, time, and affection. Make sure that spending time with your children is a fixed part inside your survival plan.

Board games are easy and efficient means of spending time together as a family. They don't need electricity to operate, and can be used by candlelight. Keeping a good collection of board games handy might become the best way to keep the mental health of your family intact. You could establish a habit of ending each evening by playing a game together, which will help everyone relax, forget about survival stress, and pay attention to each other.

There it is: 27 items to begin hoarding now in preparation for any sort of disaster. The type of disaster doesn't really matter. It could be a forceful act of nature, a financial crash or downturn, or even the predicted end of the world that Mayans promised. Each and every disaster comes with similar problems, needs, and difficulties when locating survival items. Keeping these 27 things handy will make survival much easier, and much more comfortable, regardless of government assistance.

Don't forget that you need to align your stockpile based upon your family's individual needs, and the unique dangers that you might face in your area. Everyone has varying needs, we all reside in varying climates, and we will all have varying methods for disaster survival. Everything on this list might become useful for you, but there will inevitably be things that are more useful than others, dependent upon your unique situation and needs.

There could be things that aren't listed here, but you still need. I haven't talked about gear for hunting and fishing, because finding ways to produce your own food is much more efficient. Still, if you happen to live in a wooded area where you have plenty of game, you could be better off investing your time in shooting a couple deer. This is a good example of how each plan needs to be specific to situation, environment, and skills.

HOW ARE YOU GOING TO STORE ALL THIS STUFF?

One particular challenge faced by a lot of preppers is how to find the right room to keep their stockpile of food or goods. This would even be challenging for an average family who doesn't prepare for disasters, or someone who isn't interested in stockpiling. Given that, how can you find a way to store everything?

Your first step is to comb through your house and eliminate things that you are keeping, but not using. Most of us are already hoarders in some way, but we collect the wrong sort of things. Rather than hoarding items to get them through emergencies, many Americans are hoarding unused baby beds, sports trophies, and mementos from grade school that they have forgotten about.

It's certainly a difficult thing, but you need to get rid of these things. If it truly has sentimental value, then by all means, hold onto it. But the things that you never use, look at, and never will need to be gone. If it hasn't been used within the past couple years, it probably never will be.

When you rid yourself of things you aren't using, you could find tons of additional storage space. This space should be completely separated from everyday items, so you don't accidentally use your stockpile. Make sure your emergency stockpile is used exactly for that purpose.

The attic and the basement are two common home areas that are actually ideal for stockpile storage. This is mostly because these areas are generally left untouched. Depending upon your home, they might actually have some of the largest footage, too.

Between these two, the basement is a better option. Food and water needs to be stored in a cool, dry place, and attics typically don't provide that. On the other hand, an attic is ideal for storing things that don't depend upon temperature and sunlight. Many supplies in this list can easily be stored in an attic or basement.

Your storage system should be detailed and organized, with every container having clear markings so that you know what is in each container. You certainly don't need to waste time digging through 60 boxes to find candles. My personal preference is to place some sort of marking on all sides of my containers, so that you don't need to worry about placing the containers at a certain angle.

Those who don't have an attic or a basement get much more creative. A common and effective hiding place is underneath the bed. This area actually has several square feet of unused space. There are tons of things that can get stored underneath a bed, which is also a cool and dry place.

Make sure to create an inventory list, too. This list should display exactly what you have, the amount of it you have, and where each item is stored. Keeping a detailed list makes it much easier to find emergency items once you need them the most. Print your inventory list out and keep a few copies around the house.

GET YOUR HEAD TOGETHER

A lot of what I have done is talk about experimenting with things, training, or practicing with your items. This is an essential element of being truly prepared. You may have the best stockpile ever, but you still might not survive if you aren't mentally prepared.

Each and every police, fire, military and government department keeps countless plans for emergencies. These plans are already detailed, typed, filed away, and more importantly, practiced. This is because once crisis hits, you want each and every move to be ingrained into your mind. Having a plan is the best way to prepare.

Government agencies call these sorts of plans "contingency plans." Essentially, these plans are a big group of instructions for various "what if" scenarios. "What if aliens finally land and they do it right in our city?" "What should we do if it turns out that the Mayans were right all along, and the earth suddenly ends?" "How should we proceed if the president suddenly walks through the front doors of City Hall?"

Whether or not you actually realize it, this is a contingency plan. Every action you take, from gathering food to learning how to load and reload a crossbow is an element of that plan. It might not be written down, but in the back of your mind, you are still thinking, "What will I do if—?"

This is a very smart and healthy way to think. You are preparing yourself mentally to handle anything that comes your way. When a crisis does happen, you won't need to take that extra time to panic, stop, and think. You will be fully prepared to snap into action.

In all actuality, our minds are terrible with handling crisis situations. The vast majority of the time, when you really need it, your brain shuts off as a result of panic and stress. Being prepared is the one and only solution for your brain not knowing what to do, and shutting down. People who can efficiently work through those types of moments are the people who have thought about what they need to do beforehand.

We can look at this in a different lens by examining fighting. Martial arts experts are amazing to watch. They are incredibly fast, as if their bodies are moving completely independently of thought. In a way, this is exactly what is happening. Heavy training is repetition, and repetition leads to muscle memory, which means that signals are subconsciously sent to muscles. They react without needing to think it through.

Their preparation enables them to perform at high levels. You might not have any interest in earning your black belt for martial arts, but what you are essentially doing is earning a black belt in preparedness. Training, repetition, and muscle memory are crucial parts to being

prepared. Keep running through different scenarios to assess what you will do in each and every one, so that you can react without having to think it through.

It is possible to train your body and mind to both act and react, simply by using your imagination. A few years ago, I had to learn how to type faster. In high school, I had taken a typing class, and had achieved 20 words per minute. Of course, I needed to significantly increase my typing speed. I decided to train myself to do it.

I decided to think about typing faster as much as I could. When I passed street signs in my car, I would read the sign and use my imagination to type them out on an imaginary keyboard. After two months of using this technique, I improved my 20 WPM into 45 WPM—and I never even touched a keyboard to do it.

You have the ability to train yourself to act and react amidst any emergency. First, decide on what the emergency will be. Second, do a little bit of research in order to pinpoint the best reaction. Use that information to create an action plan. You can train yourself to react to almost any emergency. Finally, start practicing as much as you can, either physically or mentally. Practice enough so that your body and mind learns how to react without taking extra time to think about how to react.

CONCLUSION

Most people who begin prepping for disasters find that it becomes a whole new way of life. They begin by thinking that they want to stock up for a few different things, just to be ready, and soon they are continuously adding to their list of preparations. The list can be endless.

In fact, the act of becoming prepared points to you changing the way you view life. A new perspective results in different financial habits and living habits. You might find yourself looking at the world through a whole new lens. The news is received through a lens of what the potential threats for your family may be, rather than to simply complain about government actions.

There are some activities that will necessitate a lifestyle change. Starting an aquaponics system after disaster strikes won't do you any good—you need to do it months before a crisis occurs. You can't stockpile things you need for this sort of activity.

On a grander scale, being prepared means returning to earlier days where most of us were self-reliant, instead of depending upon society's infrastructure to take care of our needs. Even as recent as one hundred years ago, there were many people who raised chickens and kept vegetable gardens. Electricity wasn't quite so important. Personal wells provided drinking water, rather than the city water system. Apples came from nearby orchards, and produce was canned all at home.

Once you start doing more of these things, your life will get much simpler. You will certainly have more work to do—like raising fish and tending to a garden—but when you happen to need an onion or a green pepper, you can forgo a grocery store trip and walk right to your backyard.

There is quite a bit of satisfaction and even enjoyment to be had when creating things on your own, cultivating your own food sources, and taking control over your life. Growing into a self-reliant person offers this exact satisfaction, as you relearn how to rely upon yourself, rather than depend upon the surrounding society to provide for each and every need.

Now, get started prepping!