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All Kitted Out

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- Skills and guides - Bushcraft and Survival -



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Description :

An extensive and evolutive kit description.

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Over the last twenty or so years that I have been involved with Emergency preparedness and the great outdoors I have seen many interpretations of the term "survival kit". Most books and training manuals include a list of items that would be life saving in a wilderness emergency situation, if your plane were to ditch or you found yourself stranded far from civilisation or you were simply lost. As the interest in survival has grown and the theories of survivalism have developed, more threats and potentially dangerous situations have been identified. The various scenarios are too numerous to list, but it is now accepted that it is prudent to carry a few, well chosen items for use in a wide range of emergencies. Choosing items for inclusion in an Emergency Kit can be immensely complicated, you are planning for a situation, but you do not know exactly what the situation is, how long it will last, when it is going to happen, or where you will be when it occurs.

SO WHERE DO YOU START ?

There are a few books that have guidelines for what to include in your kit and of course the Internet is a very good resource when researching for this type of project. In some ways there may be too much information and too little explanation, the lists of equipment are great, but very few tell you why those items have been included.

As well as lists for pocket type "survival tins", a look at most survival websites will reveal the terms "Bug Out Bags" & "72 hour kits".

A "Bug Out Bag" (BOB) is a larger survival kit that you can get to quickly and its contents should be designed to provide you with all you need to survive a host of situations, while being light enough for you to carry while returning to a safe location. It should provide some sort of shelter/protection, a source of warmth, water, emergency food, first aid and something to carry it all in, as a minimum. A bug out bag should allow you to live out of doors, fairly comfortably, for approximately 24 hours.

Many of the lists you will see recommended are based on the equipment that a soldier would carry on a short, overnight patrol or a hill walker would carry in case he was "benighted" on the side of a mountain. While this kit is not designed for longer periods, the contents, if wisely chosen, would give a knowledgeable survivalist the capability to be out of doors for much longer, if the situation dictated. The "Bug Out Bag" needs to be not far from you at all times and for that reason it is normally kept in your car or close by, ready for when it is needed.

A "72 Hour Kit" is exactly what it says, all you need to survive for three days (72 hours). The US government recommends that all citizens have such a kit packed at home. Why 72 hours? That is the maximum length of time that the government estimates a US citizen would have to wait before aid arrives in an emergency.

Once again, it should include all the essentials to support life (shelter, warmth, water, food & first aid) in an outdoor environment and should be packed into a suitable bag, so that in an emergency you can "grab it & go". It should be kept at home normally and used if your home was "cut-off" or basic services, like gas, electricity or water were to fail. It would also be taken with you if for some reason you had to evacuate your home to a safer location.

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If you travel more than two days walk from home (40-50 miles) then the 72 Hour Kit should replace your Bug Out Kit in your car.

Here again the knowledgeable survivalist could make the contents of the kit "stretch" for a much longer period if needed.

The lists do not stop there!

Long-term survival kit "Heavy kit lists" are concerned with running a home during an extended emergency, possibly even permanently. But for now we will look at the basics — from what you can carry in your pockets, up to what goes into a 72 Hour kit.

As you read through your various sources of information and start to think about the numerous scenarios that could befall us all, you will start to gain some idea of the items that you may well need. At this point it is important to remember two things:

- 1) Don't concentrate too much on any particular disaster/emergency. Your preparations should cover a wide range of situations.
- 2) You cannot carry all your gear all of the time.

A TIME & A PLACE

It would be highly impractical to be, permanently, weighed down by a 72-hour kit, not to mention a little out of place while shopping with your family on a Saturday morning.

Not only must you assess what gear you need, but also when you are most likely to need it. True you will not be able to forecast this exactly, but you could make an educated guess based on your knowledge of your own lifestyle.

If you were to draw a pie chart, divided into 24 segments (to represent the hours in a day) and then write your movements, during your average day, into to each segment. The largest piece of pie would be the one marked home, for the majority of people.

For that reason the majority of your kit should be at home (or wherever you spend the most time) and all your other survival kits/items must aid you in returning to that location. Our second biggest piece of pie would be the one marked "work"; and after that, probably, travelling to work and so on.

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Once you have completed this exercise you will have seen that our original task is not so “immensely complicated” once it has been broken down into these smaller segments, now you are designing a survival kit to help you get to the next “level” of survival kit, if the situation warrants it (and 99% of the time it won’t).

ALL THE GEAR AND NO IDEA!

Before you start to actually assemble your kit, I will remind you that you can buy the most expensive piece of equipment, but if you do not know how to use it, it’s a waste of time & energy carrying it.

Don’t just read about the skills you need, get out and practice them and keep practising, until you can do them almost without thinking. A wilderness location is not needed to learn skills like fire lighting, you can perfect that in your back garden. Leaving it until the situation is for real, when you are cold, wet & frightened is a recipe for disaster.

The following details what I carry & why I carry it. Some would disagree with my choices, but I only use gear that I know works and I have tested fully, under different conditions. I have named specific brands or manufacturers because they are the items that have worked for me and I would not hesitate in recommending them to others. My incentive for choosing carefully is simple – my LIFE may depend on it one day.

THE KITS

Modules is the best way to describe how my survival kits are constructed, each one is a self contained module that is complete enough to be used on its own or be used with another module, if the situation warrants it. There are five modules, taking me from the “everyday pocket kit”, up to the “72 hour grab & go bag”.

MODULE #1



This is my most basic kit; it is a collection of simple items that are carried on my person at all times. I do not use a pocket survival tin as these are always being left "in my other jacket" or in the summer when I may only be wearing a pair of shorts and a T- shirt I may well have no pocket to put it in and so again it would be left behind.

I have made these items as difficult as possible to forget, by attaching them to my keys, my watch and my trouser belt.

The items are;

1.
Leatherman Wave or Normark Super Swede Lock knife.
2.
BCB Permanent Match.
3.
Small torch [1] (1x AAA) Flashlight.

4.
Life Systems Emergency Whistle.
5.
Suunto Watchstrap Compass.
6.
Faders Screw gate Karabiner.
7.
Para-cord key fob.
8.

Leatherman Wave or Normark Super Swede. A good cutting edge is essential; the knife has been our most useful tool since the time of the caveman. Whether you are cutting cordage or making “fuzz-sticks” to start a fire you will need a knife and for many years I carried a good quality lock knife, but in recent years I have found the Leatherman Wave more & more useful. In a technological age you are more likely to have to tighten screws or crimp wire, than skin a small mammal. It has two good cutting edges (that you can open with one hand), plus a range of other tools, like a wood saw, several screwdrivers, pliers, scissors etc. Blade steels are not a bad quality and the edge retention is reasonable. It lives on my belt.
1.

BCB Permanent Match. The ability to light a fire is essential, from keeping you warm, to signalling to rescuers, you should always have means of starting a fire. Attached to my key ring, this small metal match (that runs on petrol) is a reliable source of flame. Even if the fuel runs out, the metal flint will still give off sparks and the casing can be cracked open to provide tinder.
1.

Small [\[2\]](#) flashlight. A small torch is invaluable, whether you are trying to find the hole for door key or map reading. The construction, of these small American flashlights is very durable and will stand plenty of abuse.
1.

Life Systems Emergency Whistle. A very effective way of getting peoples attention (the international distress signal is six flashes from a torch or six whistle blasts) whether you are on the side of a mountain or about to be mugged in a back alley.

1.

Suunto Mini Compass. A good way of staying orientated, without, drawing imaginary lines between the sun & the hour hand. This is not a basic button compass; it has a rotating bezel so you can set bearings and is very useful for checking your direction while on the move. It simply clips to your watchstrap.

1.

Faders Screw gate Karabiner. I normally use this for clipping my keys to my belt, but it can be used in many other ways, a friction device for belaying/abseiling, in place of a knot if you need to attach two items together quickly, even a crude knuckle-duster for breaking windscreen if I were trapped in a vehicle.

1.

Para-cord Key fob. This is a clever way of carrying extra cordage, as the intricate knot work uses two quite long lengths of Para-cord. Making cordage from natural materials is very time consuming and if you use your bootlaces, well they were keeping your footwear on your feet, so I always try to carry odd bits of string around with me. The Knots form a good handle when using the key ring as a flail (in a self defence situation). This is also the reason I have chosen a metal torch and whistle over plastic alternatives, they are heavier and hurt more.

Those are the basic items that I carry everywhere and these, along with sensible clothing and footwear, form the foundation of my emergency preparations.

Sometimes a potential survival situation can be avoided by simply calling for help, perhaps shouting or by telephoning for assistance. For this reason I also carry two other items:

1.

A Mobile Telephone

2.

Loose Change

3.

A Mobile Telephone. The days when cell phones were a car battery with a handset on top are long gone. Modern technology means that we can all carry a very advanced form of communication that is lightweight, compact and able to provide a service more reliable than most military communication systems. In any emergency the mobile telephone is very useful. The only major drawback is that most units are very fragile and

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are not suited to damp conditions. To combat this I place my mobile into an Ortleb waterproof document pouch. These clear bags have a neck cord and a roll-down top allowing you to use a hands-free kit, enabling you to operate the phone without removing it from the pouch.

1. Loose Change. If you can't get a signal on your mobile then making your way to the nearest public pay phone may be an option, Always carry a few coins, solely, for this purpose. If necessary, paint them red to remind you they are only for emergency use.

MODULE #2





Housed in a heavy-duty nylon, rucksack side pocket and worn usually as a small pack (complete with harness similar to the British Army PLCE Bergen side pocket system), this module accompanies me whenever I stray any distance from my car. If I drive out to the moors to go running, I may be away from the car for several hours and so I would carry this kit with me, in case of a fall or twisted ankle etc. Other occasions when this pack would be with me include, visiting a new town or area, cycling to & from work, and when walking locally.

When not in use it lives under the passenger seat of my car, so that it is out of sight, but easily accessible.

It contains a lightweight, but comprehensive range of items, covering each of the main survival priorities (shelter, warmth, water, food & first aid) and the pouch/side pocket allows it to be attached to either of my larger kits, supplementing their contents. The items in the kit do not fill the pouch allowing the stowage of a fleece or waterproof jacket.

The items are as follows:

CRKT STIFF KISS Knife.

Fire Steel.

Pocket Wire Saw.

Camo-Glo Emergency bag.

Sierra Club Cup.

Folding Pocket Cup.

Tin of Jelly Fuel.

Brass Picture Wire.

Emergency Food.

Nylon Para-cord.

Four inch Nails

Small Brew kit

First Aid kit

Platypus Hoser hydration pack.

Lipsil/Insect repellent.

Waxed paper & Pencil Stub.

Candle.

Disposable Lighter

Pertex Wind shirt.

Meraklon Hat & Gloves.

Princeton Tec Sport Flare.

1.

Columbia River Knife & Tool Co STIFF KISS Knife. Accidents happen usually when you are tired, stressed, scared, all things you would experience in a survival situation. Add to this cold, wet hands and a folding knife and the results could be very nasty. For this reason I have chosen a small fixed blade knife, that is sharp, light

and strong. This small knife has been used for everything, including log splitting (to expose the dry centre of wet fuel) and skinning.

The original blade shape was a "tanto" style, which I changed to a more utilitarian shape. The handle is bound with nylon cord and the sheath system allows for multiple carry options, but I prefer a simple neck-cord. I have also added a small pocket on the sheath for a fire-steel. The whole thing weighs about two ounces and worn around the neck you hardly notice it until it is needed. The blade holds a good edge and the cost is minimal.

1.

Fire-Steel. On issue to Swedish forces, this is a very reliable source of ignition for fires or stoves, providing thousands of showers of very hot sparks. Matches get wet, lighters run out of fuel, but this will keep on going, and going, and going.

3) Pocket Wire Saw. A good quality item that will assist you with shelter construction and in making logs into a more manageable sizes for your fire. It will not only cut wood, but also plastic, bone or soft metals. Mine also gets used to suspend cooking pots over the fire.

1.

Camo-Glo Emergency Bag. This consists of two large polythene bags (one orange, one green) that can be used as a shelter, sleeping bag, rain coat, rain water collector, etc.

2.

Sierra Club Cup. A stainless steel pan shaped cup with a wire handle that can be used as a small cooking pot.

3.

Folding Pocket cup. This small Swedish army cup folds flat to fit into your pocket and is used instead of the metal cup as it burns your lips when drinking hot liquids.

4.

Tin of Jelly fuel. Can be used for heating water in the Sierra cup or as a fire starter.

5.

Brass Picture Wire. About 1 metre, can be used in many ways, e.g., lashing a stick to the handle of the Sierra cup for cooking over a fire (it won't melt like nylon cord), tying timbers together when shelter building or even as a snare for catching food.

6.

Emergency Food. Chocolate melts too easily and Kendal Mint cake is far too fragile, so I choose GORP (Good Old Peanuts & Raisins). The bag is wrapped in lots of "duck" tape so I'm not tempted to

eat them unnecessarily.

7.

Nylon Para-Cord. I carry 10 metres as this has thousands of uses. This cord has a fine inner core that can be removed and used as fishing line or strong sewing thread.

8.

Four inch Nails (4) These have several uses, pot stand, shelter building, tent pegs and even as a source of sparks when fire lighting.

1.

Small Brew Kit. Just a couple of tea bags & some sachets of whitener.

1.

Small First Aid Kit. Keep it very simple and only include items you know how to use. In mine I have assorted plasters, lightweight triangular bandage, paracetamol, zinc oxide tape, anti-septic wipes and a few safety pins.

1.

Platypus Hoser Hydration Pack. A collapsible laminated polythene water bottle that has a drinking tube with a special "bite valve"; it allows you to drink while on the move. Remember dehydration can be a serious threat to the survivor and anything that will aid you in ensuring you consume enough fluid is good.

2.

Lipsil/Insect Repellent. These two are alternated depending on the time of year. Lipsil is a winter item, which will protect you from cracked, split lips (which under field conditions can become infected). The insect repellent will be needed more & more as the climate warms up.

1.

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Waxed paper & Pencil Stub. The coating on the paper makes it water resistant, making it ideal for use out of doors. Good for writing messages and starting fires, I carry several rolls each containing 2 metres of paper.

2.

Candle. This can be used as a source of light or for fire starting.

3.

Disposable Lighter. A throw away gas lighter is a good source of flame.

1.

Pertex Wind-shirt. Having a lightweight extra layer to put on can literally be a lifesaver. This generously sized, hooded top folds down into a ball that would fit in the palm of your hand. Its colour is bright purple to attract attention.

1.

Meraklon Hat & Gloves. Large amount of your body heat are lost through your head and hands, so keeping them covered will help you stay warm. Meraklon has the highest warmth to weight ratio of any fabric and continues to work even when wet. Combined with the wind shirt they are a vital part of this kit.

2.

Princeton Tec Sport Flare. This stubby torch is a reliable source of light. It will give eight hours of light from the two AA batteries that power it and are waterproof. It comes with a detachable luminous rubber cone that means the torch can be used as an area light or marker as well as a reliable flashlight. Very good for alerting motorists of your presence on unlit roads too!

MODULE #3



This is the "BUG OUT BAG". As stated earlier this kit lives in the back of your vehicle, ready to "grab & go" in the event of a major emergency. My bag also supplements my car kit and is carried with the water, fuel and tools that are in the boot at all times. In the event of a breakdown I can't fix, I can take the kit and move to a safe distance from the car, with the contents of my bag I know I can remain comfortable & safe regardless of prevailing weather conditions and away from the car means I won't be injured if my vehicle is hit by another while it is on the "hard shoulder".

The main criteria for this module is that it will allow me to travel "fast & light", aid me in crossing obstacles while providing me with shelter, warmth, water, food, first aid and navigational equipment. It should provide all of these things without the need to improvise too much. Shelter building & maintaining a fire consume large amounts of time & energy, both of which may be in short supply in an emergency, so this kit has, shelter, fuel, water and food included. If the situation should become more protracted, the contents will aid me in surviving if used with natural resources.

The main kit is housed in a 35litre day-sack and while the pack is not ultra-lightweight, it does provide a comprehensive range of equipment, which fulfils my criteria and needs during a crisis. Many of the items will be transferred to my pockets or attached to my belt (compass, knife, etc).

The items are well used and the food is rotated regularly as this rucksack is normally used when I go hill walking or

training.

The contents are as follows;

1.
Sheath Knife.
2.
Estwing Hatchet.
3.
Fire-Steel.
4.
Lightweight Basha OG.
5.
Thai Hammock.
6.
Dutch Army Gore-Tex Jacket Liner.
7.
Gore-Tex Waterproof Trousers.
8.
Buffalo Mountain Jacket.
9.
Arktis Antarctica Shirt.
10.
Spare Socks & Shorts.
11.
US Army Water bottle.
12.
Metal Mug & Stand.
13.
Trangia Meths Burner & Sigg Fuel Bottle.

14.

Brew Kit & Spoon.

15.

Folding plastic Cup.

16.

Emergency Rations.

17.

Chemical MRE Heater.

18.

First Aid Kit.

19.

Swiss Army Knife.

20.

Shemagh.

21.

Princeton Tec 20 Torch.

22.

Headband & Spare batteries.

23.

Long-life Candle.

24.

Waxed Paper & Pencil Stub.

25.

Recta Scout Sighting Compass.

26.

Local area Maps.

27.

Pace Beads.

28.

Safety Line.

29.

Fishing Kit.

30.

Barnett Slingshot & 200x .38 BB’s.

31.

Kitchen Knife Sharpener & Crock Sticks.

32.

Faders Screw Gate Karabiner.

33.

Neoprene Waterproof Bergen Liner.

1.

Sheath Knife. The ideal survival/utility knife should be a small fixed blade of 3-4 inches in length that is strong and uncomplicated in design. My favourite knife is a very old custom made blade that is a joy to use. However it is far too nice to be abused in a survival type scenario, be it real or training. So my second choice is the Fallkniven F1.



Designed for use by the Swedish Defence Forces and made from the highest specification materials, this knife is light & small enough to be carried everywhere, yet it is capable of dealing the tasks you would expect to encounter while trying to survive in the harsh climate within the Arctic Circle.

The drop point blade is made from VG10 stainless steel, which will hold a superb edge and is fairly easy to re-sharpen. The handle is covered with non-slip Thermorun and the tang protrudes from the handle, allowing it to be hammered without damaging the grip. The sheath totally encloses the knife for security and is made from good quality leather.

The United States Marine Corps and Navy have now authorised its use by all aircrew. This testifies to the design & quality of materials as Uncle Sam rarely issues items not made in the good old US of A.

1.

Estwing Hatchet. During survival training I have used many tools over the years, large survival knives, machetes and folding saws have all been used to construct shelters and acquire firewood. All require large

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amounts of energy to carry out the task. The hand axe has two major advantages working for it – a) the weight of the axe head & b) gravity. Both are used to your advantage and make the hatchet my choice as it requires less energy (and therefore less calories) and is far more effective if you have to maintain a fire for any length of time. It can also be used as a hammer and the top edge can be struck with pieces of flint to produce sparks for fire lighting. The Estwing hatchet is carried in the aircrew survival kits on RAF aircraft & helicopters.

Pilots of light aircraft flying over Alaska & Northern Canada are advised to carry one piece metal shafted axes, the handle won't burn if the plane crashes (not sure about the pilot though!) and so it could be used by survivors to maintain a fire in the freezing conditions in that part of the world.

My hand axe has a handle is made up from leather washers (which is more heat resistant than the neoprene model). To stop it slipping in my hand when it is wet I have fitted a tube of rubber over the handle, these are available in sports shops as they are normally used to cover cricket bat handles.



1.

Fire-Steel. As used in the previous kit.



4) Lightweight Basha OG. This is simply a large rectangle of waterproof material with various loops & eyelets around the edges. It is the most simple and versatile form of shelter available and can be used in any climate or terrain. With a little practice it takes minutes to create an effective barrier between you and the elements. Not only has mine been used as a shelter but also to catch rainwater, to build a coracle and to wrap my Bergen in when using it as a flotation pack for river crossings. To each of the ten loops I have tied a 2metre length of nylon cord to allow me to attach it to various anchor points and I also carry a bag of screw-in tent pegs to aid me in rigging my basha. Many people rave about Gore-Tex “bivvy-bags”, but if you have ever tried to get changed into dry clothing inside one, while its pouring with rain outside, you will know why the basha is still my primary shelter item.

1.

Thai Hammock. My original one of these came from Brunei; it was a present from my brother. The Special Forces instructors at the Jungle Warfare School used them in preference to the issue hammocks. Made from a doubled layer of fabric, with webbing ties at either end, you can sleep on top of or between the layers of fabric (providing some protection from biting insects). There are no “spreader bars” so it wraps around you, making it impossible to fall out. On the jungle floor lurk many diseases and of course poisonous insects so hammocks are used throughout the “tropics” to provide somewhere comfortable to rest, sleep & carry out personal administration. In a temperate climate a hammock allows the cold night air to circulate around you, leaving you very cold and are rarely used to sleep in. This can be easily remedied by placing a Thermarest mattress between the layers of the hammock, grass, bracken or fir boughs can be used as a substitute and like this I have spent many nights, even winter ones, quite comfortably. The hammock keeps your sleeping bag off the wet ground; it also allows you to bivvy up in areas where the ground is far from flat, rocky or even flooded. In the summer months the hammock means you won't be lying on the ground where the ticks are and it will keep the midges at bay allowing you a decent nights sleep. I have made a copy of

my original hammock from parachute silk, to reduce the weight and pack size. Across the base I have added a strong nylon mesh and grab handles so that it can be used as a stretcher if needed.

1.

Dutch Army Gore-Tex Jacket Liner. A very useful piece of kit that buttons into any jacket and turns the garment into a waterproof jacket. Your outer jacket also protects the fragile Gore-Tex membrane from brambles and thorn bushes. Again this weighs next to nothing and packs down to a very small size.
2.

Gore-Tex Waterproof Trousers. To keep your lower half dry.
1.

Buffalo Mountain Jacket. Buffalo clothing & sleeping systems use the "double P" system (pertex & pile) to create a range of equipment that does not rely on membranes or waterproof coatings. That means you get wet, but you stay warm and "sort of" comfortable. I have been using their kit for years and it works. Designed for use in cold-wet environments and used by soldiers, cavers, canoeists, mountain rescue teams, yachtsmen and anyone who has to venture out into bad, damp, cold conditions. The mountain Jacket is a long fibre pile jacket with a wind/water resistant pertex shell. I have one of their lined hoods attached to mine and it is used as my warm layer for resting and sleeping in.
2.

Arktis Antarctica Shirt. The design of this shirt is based on the Norwegian army shirt with a zipped roll neck, but this one has a longer back and thumb loops on the sleeves. The fabric is a very soft, non-itchy wool which is very warm & comfortable even when wet. This item is part of my "dry kit" and is only used for resting & sleeping.
3.

Dry Socks & Shorts. Knee length loop-stitch woollen socks & Lycra shorts which again are part of the above "dry kit".
4.

US Army Water bottle. This is the standard 1 quart plastic model, which is a robust & reliable water carrier. There are now a range of accessories which fit this bottle including a screw-in filter, hands free drinking tube and the following items:
5.

Metal Mug & Stand. Both of these items are stowed on the bottom the water bottle when not in use and so take up very little extra space in your kit. The system is very simple, the metal mug stands on top of a metal ring, under which you insert a heat source (hexamine, alcohol jelly, twigs, paper, etc). This allows you to boil water & heat rations. Although it is not the fastest stove ever made, it is simple and has no moving parts to go wrong. I

have drilled two small holes in the rim of the mug so that I can attach a piece of wire (or even my wire saw) allowing it to be suspended over an open fire for cooking. Trangia Meths Burner & Sigg Fuel Bottle. These Burners have been around for years and can be purchased separately from the rest of the stove system. Reliable and safe to use in confined spaces, it will not give off the noxious fumes that hexamine or trioxane do, so if you have to, you can cook under your basha. It burns unpressurised methylated spirits, which I store in a small aluminium fuel bottle.

6.

Brew Kit & Spoon. Again a few tea bags & some sachets of whitener. A good stainless steel spoon that will not melt or brake for eating/cooking with.

7.

Folding Plastic Cup. As used in the previous module.

8.

Emergency Rations. I look for dried foods that are almost instant or require very little simmering, as this will consume more fuel. Dried pasta with various sauces can be purchased at our local Lidl's, these are light, cheap, have a good calorific value and need only a 5minute simmer. Instant noodles work well too, just add a stock cube and any wild edibles you come across and you have a fair meal, these can be eaten uncooked if you have to, but drink plenty of water. British Army rations are good, but heavy and bulky. I normally keep a couple of the desserts for emergencies, if I am not able to cook, one of these will fit into the MRE heater to provide a warm & "morale-booster".

1.

Chemical MRE Heater. Used to re-heat the US Army ration, the MRE (Mainly- Rat- Excreta). It consists of a sealed plastic wallet containing a square of cardboard, in which there is a chemical that when it comes into contact with water produces heat. To use cut open the bag, place the ration inside (on top of the cardboard square), add water, fold over the top of the bag and wait. In a few minutes your meal will be pretty hot. One "top-tip" is use a bulldog clip to hold the top almost closed, it creates more pressure in the bag. The disadvantage is that you cannot use the water for a brew.

1.

First Aid Kit. As in the previous module, this kit is kept very simple. In this one I have added tweezers, a small bottle of tea-tree oil, a strip of fabric plaster, butterfly strips, cotton buds and a first field dressing.

1. Swiss Army Knife. Made by Wenger, its most useful feature is the superb scissors, which have tiny teeth to aid in cutting. Better than any found on the various multi-tools and even compare with nurses scissors. Great for cutting dressings, skin and zinc oxide tape. They also get used for keeping finger & toe nails a sensible length. You also get a main blade, screwdriver, tin opener, and of course, a cork screw for those who survive in style!

1. Shemagh. A traditional Arab headdress made from loosely woven cotton. When opened out you have a piece of material approximately 1 metre square that is lightweight and fast drying. Besides being a headdress it can be a scarf, triangular bandage, a sling, a towel, a table cloth, a loin cloth, it will keep midges off your face while you sleep, protect your hands while lifting hot pans off the fire and if you lay it on the ground before opening any of your kits that are full of small items, you won't lose them in the grass. A brilliant bit of kit!

1. Princeton Tec 20 Torch. A very powerful torch in a tiny body and powered by only two AA batteries. Princeton Tec make torches for divers so they are waterproof, the bulb is a halogen unit that will burn for two hours. You can also get an LED unit to upgrade this torch, the beam is not as powerful but you will get 40 hours of light from two standard AA batteries (even more if you use lithium units).

2. Headband & Spare Batteries. This is a homemade item using nylon webbing & Velcro for adjustment. It allows me to have both hands free while using the torch. On the side there is a pouch for two spare batteries.

1. Long Life Candle. These extended burn candles are a very useful item, they will help you get a fire going and give off enough light & heat to keep the inside of your car comfortable if you should be stranded in the snow (making sure you leave a window open for ventilation).

1.

Waxed Paper & Pencil Stub. As used in the previous kit.

1.

Recta Scout Sighting Compass. This is a conventional sighting compass, which is useful for precision navigation. What is unusual about this item is that unlike most other sighters, the sighting mirror and base plate can be opened out flat, making an extended base plate. This makes measuring longer bearings a little easier. Once folded again the mirror/lid protects the compass housing from accidental damage.

1.

Local Area Maps. As it is "your area" you will be using this map a lot, so pay the extra cash and get a laminated one. I use two 1:25,000 scale, which cover my area completely and show plenty of detail.

1.

Pace Beads. A simple aid to assist you in "pacing-off" bearings (judging the distances you have travelled by counting the number of paces you taken). All that is needed is a length of cord and ten beads that can be slid up & down the cord.

1.

Safety Line. Another item normally used by troops in a jungle environment. A 15 metre length of tubular nylon webbing, identical to the material used on climbing slings, but narrower, with a small fixed loop at each end. It is immensely strong and can be used for a "confidence-line" on steep ground, a safety line when crossing rivers or streams, for hauling your rucksack up rock faces or steep ground or as a suspension line for your basha.

1.

Fishing Kit. This kit has been modelled on the item issued to some elements of the British armed forces. It

contains 40 metres of braid, dozens of hooks, lures, weights, etc. Designed to be used as "nightlines", this is a dependable source of food if the situation runs longer than the expected 24 hours.

1.

Barnett Slingshot & 200x.38 BB's. Used for silently taking small game, creating noisy diversions and possibly in self defence (shoot it & run). A simple tool, but one which takes a lot of practice to master.

1.

Kitchen Knife Sharpener & Crock Sticks. A butcher's steel is a very effective way of maintaining an edge while you are working in the field; this is a highly compact version using two small steels held in a crossed position. The Crock Sticks are a ceramic version used for putting a finishing fine edge on your blade.

1.

Faders Screw Gate Karabiner. As used on the first module.

1.

Neoprene Bergen Liner. Many manufacturers claim that their rucksacks are waterproof, none are! The water will get in sooner or later. The old solution was to pack every thing in individual polythene bags or line your rucksack with a dustbin liner, both work very well, but can be fragile & the contents of your pack can tear them easily. Now you can purchase neoprene Bergen liners, a heavy gauge waterproof bag with taped seams and special roll down tops to stop the ingress of water. These are very good, but very expensive. I line my rucksacks with a heavy duty polythene bag and then place all my kit into an old neoprene stuff sack I bought for a couple of pounds at a surplus store. The stuff sack protects the waterproof integrity of the plastic bag, which is very important, particularly if you ever have to use your pack as a flotation aid when river crossing.

MODULE #4



Module # 4 is different to the other modules in that it contains clothing and not equipment. It is kept in the boot of my car along with my Bug out kit and provides me with a set of clothing and footwear that are robust and far more suitable for outdoor use than my everyday clothing. While you should always try to dress in “sensible” clothing, there are always occasions when it is just not possible & its “sod’s law” that when disaster strikes you will be at a local showing of the “Rocky Horror Picture Show” wearing only a Basque, stockings & suspenders! These items of clothing are tried & tested and again, are used for walking/training on a regular basis.

1.

Ventile Jacket or Wind-shirt.

2.

Lightweight Trousers.

3.

Duofold Thermax Long Sleeved top.

4.

Lowa Walking Boots.

5.

Walking Socks & Liners.

6.

Nylon Webbing Belt.

7.

Knitted Hat.

8.

Bush Hat.

9.

Head Over.

10.

Leather Gloves.

11.

Gaiters.

1.

Ventile Jacket or Wind-shirt. Ventile is very weatherproof, quiet, durable and does not melt when burnt, so is suitable for use around fires. The wind-shirt is used during the summer months, as it is lighter, but still provides good levels of protection from the elements, having a generous length and good hood. The Jacket is used in the winter and has features you would expect to find on such a garment, four good sized pockets for stowing hats & gloves, two fleece lined hand warmer pockets, internal map pocket, large wired hood and a long length. In very wet weather both of these can be used with the button-in Gore-Tex liner carried in my rucksack. This combination is "bomb-proof" and has kept me dry even in very severe weather.

2.

Lightweight Trousers. As issued to the British army and worn on building sites all over the country, lightweight, fast drying and incredibly hard wearing. They are cheap and ideally suited for this type of use. They have a good-sized map pocket, buttoned rear pocket and two thigh pockets.

3.
Duofold Thermax Long Sleeved Top. A good base layer is essential if you are going to stay comfortable. Man made fabrics that transport moisture away from your skin are best and won't leave you feeling cold & damp like cotton (which could lead to the on-set of hypothermia in protracted situations). Always choose the long sleeved versions, if its really cold you can't roll the sleeves down on the others.
4.
Lowa Walking Boots. Good, well broken-in boots are worth their weight in gold! Look after them and they will look after you. These boots are all leather and offer good levels of support, but are light enough to run in.
5.
Walking Socks & liners. Knee length, loop stitch, woollen socks and Meraklon liners are an excellent combination, that keep your feet warm, dry and blister free.
6.
Nylon Webbing Belt. For keeping your trousers up and hanging kit off, like your Leatherman or survival knife. Leather belts are not good when you get them wet. Nylon webbing does not absorb water and therefore dries quickly.
7.
Knitted Hat. A woollen "watch cap" helps prevent the massive loss of body heat through the head. Good for rest stops & sleeping in.
8.
Bush Hat. Helps keep the sun off the whole of your head, unlike baseball caps. They also help support mosquito nets.
9.
Head Over. A simple tube of thermal fabric (meraklon, wool or fleece) that can be used as a scarf, balaclava or watch cap, again good for rest stops and sleeping in.
10.
Leather Gloves. Your hands should be well protected, from the weather and "wear & tear". Cold, cut or infected hands may not be able to carry out tasks like lighting fires, chopping wood, or even picking things up. I use "Soldier 95 combat gloves", made from soft leather & lined with Gore-Tex, with an extended cuff.
11.
Gaiters. These are often over looked when writing kit lists, yet for years these have proved invaluable for the protection of my lower legs. They will keep water, mud & stones out of your boots and off your trousers. They will prevent your legs from being scratched by brambles and help keep ticks a bay. The most comfortable to wear for long periods are made from cotton canvas, they are also the most durable. I only know of one civilian manufacturer that produces these, however the army issue ones are the best design, having a good zip flap, reinforced fore foot and steel wire under boot fixings.

MODULE #5



This is the largest of the kits described on this list and represents the 72hour kit found elsewhere. It would replace module #3 if I were travelling more than two days walk from home and would be used if I had to evacuate my home for any reason. All of the items of equipment found in module #3 are used in this kit; to these I have added items to make it more suitable for usage over an extended period. If, however, I was not able to retrieve the "bug out kit"; I have duplicated many of the items or have alternatives.

To carry the kit I have used a Berghaus Crusader expedition rucksack, this is a well-proven large capacity load carrier. I have modified it so that it can be "shrunk" to carry smaller loads, yet remain "stable". This also restricts what I can carry, as the temptation with such a large rucksack is to fill it up, for the same reason I do not use the large zip-on side pockets, instead using a much smaller version. The large capacity could be used if I felt a situation warranted it, perhaps if it was a long-term evacuation scenario or extremely cold weather was expected and full winter kit was needed.

All Kitted Out

I will only list the items that have not already been listed in the "Bug Out Kit".

1.
Buffalo Special 6 Shirt & Trousers.
2.
Buffalo All Weather Sleeping Bag.
3.
Issue Gore-Tex Bivvy Bag.
4.
Therma-rest Mattress.
5.
Petzl Zoom Head Torch.
6.
Primus Yellowstone Cook Set.
7.
Go-Gas Converter.
8.
Emergency Rations.
9.
Ortileb Water bag.
10.
Millbank Water filter.
11.
Spare Clothing.
12.
Teva Sandals.
13.
Medical Kit.
- 14.

Mini Survival Handbook.

15.

Sharpening Stone.

16.

Dump & Wash Kits.

17.

Neoprene Bergen Liner.

18.

Small Personal AM/FM Radio.

1.

Buffalo Special 6 Shirt & Trousers. As this is far from a perfect world, the chances of a major disaster striking during a lengthy period of very fine weather are slim to say the least. For that reason it is prudent to prepare for the worst and so I have chosen the Buffalo System. It is clothing that does not rely on waterproof coatings or membranes. Instead it uses a combination of two fabrics to create a "micro-climate" around the user. Fibre pile, the insulator, keeps you warm, even when saturated with water. Pertex is a highly windproof and fast drying fabric that prevents the wind from cooling the moisture that your body heat has warmed. The result is that although wet you stay comfortable. Designed to be worn on its own, it replaces the need for the traditional layering system, no underwear or waterproof shell garments are needed. Numerous zips on the garment regulate body temperature. The clothing system has been copied by many companies, which testifies to its effectiveness and is used by people who have to work in cold & wet environments. I have used these items for many years and can testify to their performance under some pretty foul conditions. When living & working out of doors, the biggest threat, to your survival are the combined effects of wet, wind & cold. These garments are very effective at combating the dangers of hypothermia.



2.

Buffalo All Weather Sleeping Bag. A system of several bags that can be used in various combinations to suit any climate zone on earth. Once again the Pertex/Pile fabric combination is used to produce an item that's performance is not affected by moisture. Though not the warmest or lightest system on the market it is very durable and will out last all other synthetic bags. I use the "four season outer" bag combined with the clothing system to save weight/bulk and have used this system in temperatures as low as -18 centigrade.

3.

Gore-Tex Bivvy Bag. I'm not a great fan of this item, but in an emergency it will allow me to sleep "low-profile", requiring no setting up it is very good for those times when you are exhausted and the weather is not looking too threatening. If you use a feather & down sleeping bag this is an essential item.

4.

Thermarest Mattress. If you get "good quality sleep" you will perform better. These mattresses offer very good insulation and cushioning, in fact I find them as comfortable as my bed. Care must be taken when using them as they can puncture, so always carry a repair kit so you can repair in the field.

1.

Petzl Zoom Head torch. A well-proven head torch that allows you to carry out cooking, eating & personal administration without having to juggle with a torch.



6) Primus Yellowstone Cook Set. A very well made all stainless steel “storm-cooker” designed in Sweden for their Defence Forces. Runs on gas cartridges and although not the quickest on the market it is one of the best made. As it is a “storm-cooker” it can be used for cooking in the open, even in severe weather. I have drilled holes in the pans, so that using a piece of wire, or similar, they can be suspended over an open fire.

1. Go-Gas Cartridge Converter. This useful piece of kit turns the 190gram butane gas cartridge into a re-sealable unit. These cartridges are very cheap and, more importantly, are available at a wide variety of outlets (not only camping shops). You will find them at DIY stores, ironmongers, garden centres, garages, etc. So in a national emergency you will stand a better chance of “topping up” your supplies.
2. Emergency Rations. Virtually the same items as carried in module #3, just more of them. I also carry 2 pounds of rice for use if the situation lasts longer than 72 hours.
3. Ortileb Water Bag. Having the capability to carry extra water is very useful, while on the move a couple of water bottles may suffice, but once you start cooking & washing you will need more water and repeated trips to the stream may not be desirable or possible. I always fill up the water bag & bottles before “bivvying-up”. A water bag packs away flat when not in use and can also be used as a flotation pack, pillow or even a hot-water bottle if the weather is cold enough.

4.
Millbank Water Filter. During periods of high rainfall, all streams and rivers are carrying vast amounts soil & debris; in the summer when water may be scarce you may have to collect water from some dubious sources. In both instances the water will need to be treated, boiling is not a problem but effective filtering can be. Millbank water filters consist of a densely woven canvas bag. You first soak the bag (allowing the fibres to swell) and then fill with water. The water will begin to slowly filter through the fine weave of the canvas. A very simple & effective piece of kit with no parts to break or filters to clog.
5.
Spare Clothing. A basic change of clothing, socks & underwear, to be used only as "dry-kit".
6.
Teva Sandals. These allow your feet to dry out & air. I use mine for river crossing too, in preference to walking in wet boots all day.
7.
Medical Kit. This is not a First Aid kit. The contents are for treating colds, aches, pains, bumps & bruises, etc. The kit includes: Nurofen - a basic pain killer, Lemsip Max - for colds, Ibuleve Gel - for bumps & bruises, Drapolene cream - for treating sores, Electrolyte powders & Immodium - for treating a "runny bum", Vaseline - for preventing sores, Canesten Combi cream - treats fungal foot infections, Potassium Permanganate - disinfectant, water purifier, etc, Piriton tablets - antihistamine for treating allergic reactions and insect bites (SAS medics even use it for scorpion stings), Spenco Second Skin - use on blisters & burns, Spenco Skin Care Padding - prevents blisters, self adhesive roller bandage - a good all round bandage, Zinc Oxide tape - good sticking plaster, a thermometer - for checking body temperature and a pair of nurses scissors.
8.
Mini Survival Handbook. A Collins Gem version of John Wiseman's now classic work. A very useful aide memoire, packed full of information.
1.
Sharpening Stone. The pocket steel and "crock stick" will only keep an edge for so long before your knife needs sharpening on a stone and the hatchet should be sharpened after each task. I use a small synthetic sharpening stone for field use and I only ever use water as lubrication. This is not a full size stone but it does the job.
1.
Dump & Wash Kits. Poor personal hygiene and sanitation can have dire consequences if your body is at all "run down", a bout of the "squirts" can leave you seriously dehydrated and severely lacking in minerals & salts. Minor cuts & scratches can soon become infected and septicaemia will follow if you

All Kitted Out

are not vigilante about keeping clean. Wash daily and if you go to the toilet wash your hands after (all those things your mother told you!). When cooking wash your hands before & after. For a wash kit all I carry is a couple of small tubes of Coglans Sportsman's soap, a small tube of toothpaste, a cut-down toothbrush and a plastic comb. I have a mirror on my compass and my shemagh doubles as a towel. The dump kit consists of; toilet paper (in zip-lock bags), a lighter for burning used paper and a lightweight plastic trowel for digging a "cats-scrape" to go to the toilet in.

1.

Neoprene Bergen liner. As used in the previous module, but in this kit all of the items are split into two bags.

1.

Small Personal AM/FM Radio. Adequate for picking up local & national radio news, although I will probably upgrade to a "world-band" version.

So there it is, from "every day pocket kit" up to the "72hour module". It is not "carved in tablets of stone" and no doubt I will change the contents from time to time, but it will only be minor items as most of this kit has been used & abused for many years and has been proven to work. You should remember, however that all of this gear is no substitute for training, they are survival aids and do not guarantee you surviving a situation. Your most important piece of kit is between your ears.

[1] Well known brand name removed

[2] Well known brand name removed