



Outdoors-Magazine.com

<http://outdoors-magazine.com>

# The Belt survival kit

V Shrake

- Skills and guides - Bushcraft and Survival -



Publication: Friday 6 September 2002

**Description :**

What to carry in it ?

---

Copyright (c) Outdoors-Magazine.com under a Creative Commons

Attribution-Non-Commercial-Share Alike License

---

Circumspection is the word these days. Maybe not just for survivalists, but for free thinkers of any stripe, and we should all have learned that it's best not to attract attention to oneself.

That applies to our everyday lives, when we're at work or just going about our daily affairs of buying groceries or getting gas. The reasons for maintaining a low profile are numerous and obvious to anyone who has given it much thought, and need not be belabored here. Instead, what say I give you a way to maintain that low profile and still be prepared? For under twenty five dollars, or thereabouts? Sound like something you might be interested in?

As the title implies, I wanted something that I could have on me at all times, as an adjunct to whatever other kit I might be carrying. In an earlier article I talked about an urban survival kit, and what went into it. Just like a wilderness kit, it was a fairly substantial undertaking to carry food, water, first aid and everything else we might need in an urban crisis such as an earthquake, riots, or the like. While we want to keep a large kit handy at all times, it may not be possible to lug it around with us all day, every day. Something smaller was needed for that. Also, I wanted a kit that would pass a visual inspection, and not draw attention to itself. This kit is not all-encompassing, nor could it be or should it be. Its small size, while limiting in some areas, provides the basics to sustain life if it's all you have.

That's what this kit is all about, providing the four most important things in a survival situation:

1. Knife;
2. Fire;
3. String for a variety of uses;
4. Snares and fishing kit for procuring food; high-energy carbohydrate bars for short term rations.

If you can fit in a tube tent, Mylar blanket, or the like, you'll even have shelter taken care of.

The BSK can be carried anywhere (except by yuppies whose corporate policies forbid pocket knives), and added to any other kit as another level of protection and preparedness. It can be as fancy and expensive as you want it to be, and I chose to make mine as complete as such a small kit can be. You can certainly get by with less; items marked with an \* are essentials, not to be left out. Here's what you'll need:

1. A pocket knife, preferably multi-function with a large main blade (\$14.00)\*
2. (4) 35mm film canisters (empty) (free)\*
3. Strike-anywhere stick matches (\$.50)\*
4. nylon cordage, braided copper wire (small gauge) (\$2.00)\*
5. small whetstone (\$1.00)\*
6. fishing kit (\$2.50)\*
7. ten feet of paracord (\$1.00)\*
8. Large, ziplock freezer bag (\$.10)\*
9. energy bars (\$4.00)
10. cold light sticks (\$3.00)
11. belt pouch (\$5.00)\*
12. Mini-torch [\[1\]](#), extra batteries and bulb (\$12.00)
13. Mylar space blanket (\$3.00)

## Belt survival kit

---

The above prices are approximations only, and you may have some of this stuff lying around already.

Step one, the knife, is about the only area where the cost can be significantly higher than the twenty five dollars I specified for the basic kit. The knife I use is a German Army-issue pocket knife, and you can't go wrong with it. I purchased it at my local surplus shop. Alternatively you could order from one of the many fine mail-order surplus companies out there such as Brigade Quartermaster or U.S. Cavalry. Find a knife you like and buy it. Just make sure that it has multiple blades and uses. The model I chose has a saw blade that zips through any kind of wood, which would be handy for making trap parts. On the end of the saw blade is a straight-slot screwdriver, and a can opener which also doubles as a bottle opener (it seems that the German Army issues beer to its troops). On the back of the knife are an awl and corkscrew. Lastly, there is the main blade itself, which has enough of an upswept point to make it an adequate Skinner, and enough length to use as a last-ditch weapon. Any knife along these lines will work, such as a Swiss Army Knife, the SwissBuck, the old, all-stainless Marine and Navy-issue pocket knife, or any other surplus or civilian knife built along the same lines.

You'll need the 35mm film canisters to hold all of the little goodies that make the kit so versatile.

Put together a small fishing kit with hooks, sinkers, some jigs, a piece of rubber worm or other artificial baits, maybe a small spoon, and use dental floss for line. Dental floss is strong, lightweight, waterproof and holds a knot well; you also get a lot of it on a small roll.

Get yourself some nylon cord, such as they use to tie down duck decoys with, and stuff as much of it as you can into a film canister. I have never bothered to measure how much you can get into one, but it's more than enough for our purposes here. Get yourself two eighteen inch pieces of wire for use as snares.

The matches won't fit in a film canister unless you cut them, but a sharp knife makes this no problem at all.

And to keep your knife sharp, get a small pocket hone and toss it in as well. I also carry an M-1 Carbine oiler filled with Three-in-One oil to facilitate sharpening.

Toss it into what, you say? For that you need a small belt pouch, such as those sold in the above-mentioned catalogs. A small fanny pack would also work. With a little ingenuity, it will all fit.

The matches, fishing kit, green cord and freezer bag all go into their own film canisters. Folded up small, the ziplock bag will just fit, though it is a bit tight. I've found these types of bags to be much better emergency canteens than condoms, which are traditionally recommended for this task. The ziplocks are sturdier, easier to fill, and hold more water. Once it's full, just put it into a coat pocket. Sport-type bars, sold just about anywhere, have a fairly long shelf life, taste good enough that it's not a hardship to eat the old ones when it's time to rotate your stock of e-rats, and travel well. Sturdy packaging and modern food preservatives are a survivalist's friend. I like to toss in a couple of snap-lights, as well as my Mini-Mag, so I won't have to stumble around in the dark. The Mylar blanket can be used as a rain slicker, tarp, or for its intended role. Everything, with the exception of my knife, goes into a black nylon belt pouch that looks fairly innocuous, if it's noticed at all. I keep my knife in a separate sheath, and tuck the lanyard into my pocket. The lanyard, incidentally, is long enough to allow me to wear my knife around my neck; by doing so, and taking the contents of the belt pouch and spreading them around in various pockets, the whole thing is even better concealed. This might be handy in some situations which I'm sure we could all easily envision.

String of all weights will find many uses in a survival situation. The dental floss, in addition to being used for fishing line, can also be used to lash fletching to improvised arrows. The white nylon cord in my kit came from an old set of blinds, and would make a great bowstring; all I would have to find is feathers and wood, and I've got a bow and arrow

## Belt survival kit

---

to gather food with and provide protection. I also have two, five foot lengths of 550 paracord, which used to be a pair of boot laces. The boots wore out, but the paracord keeps on keeping on. And so can you with this small, potentially lifesaving kit.

*Post-scriptum* :Original article at [OldJimbo's site](#).

---

[1] brand name removed