

Outdoor Survival Tips - Ten Uncommon Ones

Contributed by Steve Gillman
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There are books full of outdoor survival tips these days, most with the same advice. Here are a few tips you probably haven't heard.

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The outdoor survival tips you'll find here are not the usual fare. They come from the unusual techniques that myself and others have experimented with. Keep them in mind in case the day comes when you are lost in the wilderness.

Outdoor Survival Tips - Fire Making

{bot_wrgoogle}1. Pull a piece of pack rat nest loose to use for tinder. These are usually found under rock ledges and in small caves, so they are dry even when it is raining. They are commonly full of plant fuzz, dry grass and other flammable materials.

2. Polish the bottom of an aluminum pop or beer can, and you can use it to focus the sun's rays to start a fire. Chocolate has been used to do the polishing, but you can also experiment with various natural substances. This is not easy, and probably not possible if the sun is too low, or the can not shiny enough, but I have seen it work. Point the can-bottom at the sun and focus the rays to a small point of light on a piece of natural tinder or paper (a dollar bill works well).

3. Another good source of dry tinder is from old milkweed pods. These often cling to the stalks all winter, and some of them usually have silky seed fuzz still in them, which can be dry even during pouring rain. Any source of flame, or even a spark will ignite this.

4. Bottles and other glass can be used like a magnifying glass to start a fire. Ever since the first forest fire investigator traced the cause of a fire back to a discarded pop bottle, we have known that in bright sunlight, various types of glass can focus the rays to start a fire. You might want to try your own eyeglasses as well, especially if they are a thick prescription.

5. Another source of dry tinder during wet weather is under things. Specifically, look under leaves for dry leaves, or under large logs for anything dry and flammable.

More Outdoor Survival Tips

6. Keep batteries against your body, or at least in your clothing during cold weather. They lose their power more quickly if they are cold, and depending on what they are for, they may be crucial to your survival.

7. To cross a stream on a slippery log, throw some sand, grainy dirt or gravel on it. It will provide some traction. Using any stick for balance helps as well.

8. Lost in the desert, but still have your tent? Use it to collect water. Let the rain fly drape over it, directly against it, so moisture won't escape as it is normally supposed to. The resulting condensation may collect in small puddles on the tent floor. Scoop it up or drink it directly. You can also mop up moisture on the walls with a small piece of cloth and then wring out the water to drink it. This works especially well on cold nights.

9. Need food? Trout often hang out where faster water dumps into pools, so look there first. You can sometimes chase them into shallows and catch them by hand, which usually means scooping them up quickly and throwing them onto the shore. As a child, I regularly caught fish of several types by hand.

10. No shoes? Losing or destroying your footwear is always a possibility in a survival situation. If it happens, find pine

trees that are oozing sap. Scrape it off with a piece of bark or wood. Spread it thickly on the soles of your feet, using it to glue strips of a soft bark to them. Cedar bark works well. It will provide some protection while you are walking. In cold weather, you may also want to cover your feet with plastic bags full of cattail seed fluff, to keep them warm.

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