



MEMBERS UPDATE

July, 2017

The 3 Pairs of Boots Every Prepper Must Own

How to Survive A Gunshot Wound

This \$1 Item May Save Your Life

How to Build a "Hillbilly"
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3 BOOTS EVERY PREPPER MUST OWN

It's time to take a serious look at 3 of the most important pieces of SHTF gear you can own. Your boots protect your feet; and your feet are some of the most critical pieces of equipment you've got, especially in a crisis.



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Do you know what to do (and what not to do) if you or someone around you has been shot? Between Hollywood misinformation and ever changing trauma care techniques, now is the time for a refresher.



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THIS \$1 ITEM MAY SAVE YOUR LIFE

Bandanas are the Swiss Army knife of EDC gear. When was the last time a Swiss Army knife bandaged a wound, prevented heat exhaustion or filtered drinking water? Who needs a reusable toothpick anyway?



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DIY "HILLBILLY" WATER FILTER

Water is notoriously heavy to carry, dangerous when contaminated, and very essential to human survival. Given this, we'd like to introduce you to the DIY "hillbilly" water bottle filtration system.

Look, as one self-reliance enthusiast to another, we don't need to tell you that a good, solid pair of boots is the foundation of any serious expedition you plan to pursue outdoors. We'd even go so far as to say that proper footwear is at the very top of the list of make or break EDC items.

It's hard to argue that a good sharp knife or handgun is going to help get you out of the woods, literally or figuratively, if your feet are too injured or sore to walk out. If you've ever had foot problems or a foot injury, you know just how helpless that feeling is when you can't support your own weight. Forget carrying a pack, you simply can't stand without intense pain.

3 BOOTS EVERY SURVIVALIST SHOULD OWN

The tragic irony here, because you know how we like a little drama, is that even among the people who understand how important boots are, this key piece of equipment seems to fall down to the soggy bottom of the list.

The reason for this is simple, of course. Who gets that excited about a pair of lacers? Who really geeks out on Gore-Tex? Believe it or not, some people do.

In fact, our goal is to pique your interest in apocalypse-ready boots. More than that, our goal is to prepare you to take action. Take a look at your go-to SHTF boots. If they're the same ones you wear to rustic outdoor weddings or out two-stepping, it's probably time you take a second look.

Comfortable cowboy boots are great, but take them out hiking and you'll be slipping down muddy banks, rubbing sore spots, and taking on water as your cross streams. In a dire situation, where time is of the essence and stopping to rest is not an option, inadequate footwear can destroy the condition of your feet in a couple of hours. Healing those blisters, bruises, or worse takes far longer.

FOOTWEAR FOR A DRASTIC LIFESTYLE CHANGE

The fact of the matter is, in the event of a SHTF crisis, be it long or short-term, you will be going through a major shift in what you need and what you value. It doesn't matter if you get stranded in the backcountry and have to hike out, your area is inundated with floodwaters, or hackers have disrupted the power grid.

Suddenly, you'll be thrown into a situation where you're on your feet an awful lot more than usual. If you don't have access to some comfortable, well-fitted boots, you'll regret it by the end of day 1, if not sooner. You'll be really up a creek if you are in flip flops.





Suffice it to say, the downsides of having the wrong footwear at the wrong time are pretty self-evident. Even selecting a single pair of boots, i.e. choosing the “ultimate” SHTF boots, verges on the impossible. That’s exactly why we don’t recommend you go on a quest to find this all-in-one perfect boot. Hint: it doesn’t exist.

The best way to manage your SHTF boots is to think of them as you do your shoes.

No one expects one pair of shoes to fulfill every need, from work to running to going on a job interview. That’s why you need at least a few pairs of shoes that you can go to in a variety of scenarios. The same can be said for boots, and it’s actually much easier to find great single-purpose boots for a reasonable price. Not to mention, having a variety of boots allows you to have backups in case one pair gets damaged.

No matter how much you paid for those comfortable, insulated, waterproof boots, once they’re damaged or busted, you’re out of luck. All the more reason to spread your investment out over several pairs of boots instead of taking a flyer on the “perfect pair.”

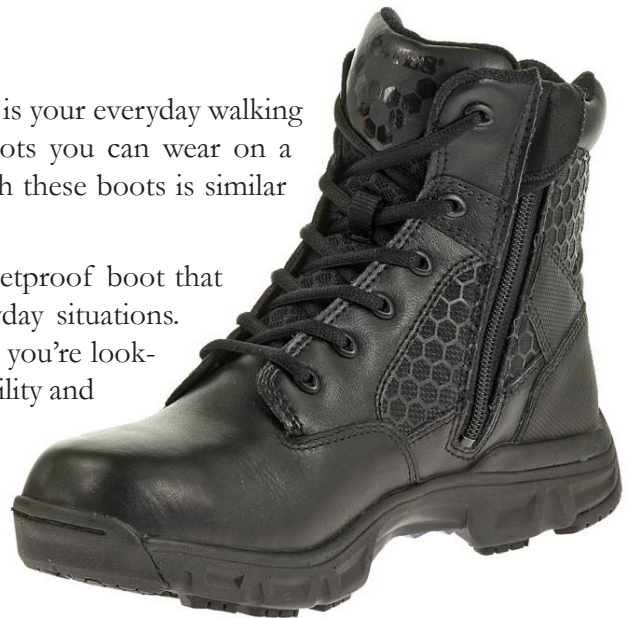
Everyday Utility Boots

Perhaps the first pair of boots you should grab is your everyday walking around boots, i.e. lightweight comfortable boots you can wear on a regular and ongoing basis. The philosophy with these boots is similar to our EDC concept.

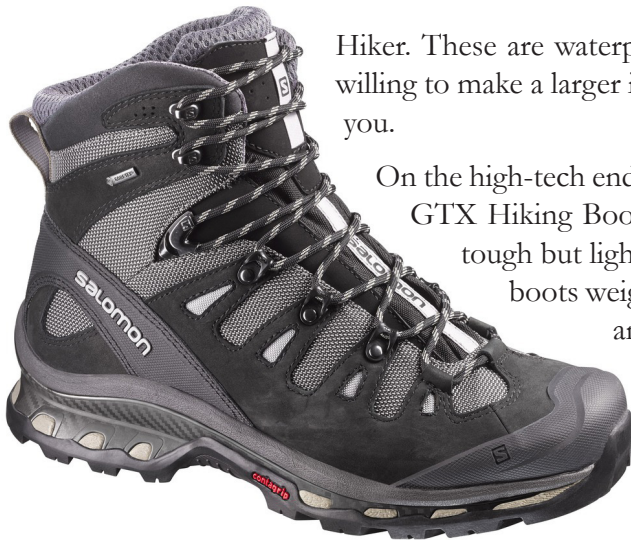
For this boot, you want the most capable, bulletproof boot that you will also wear without hesitation in everyday situations. Much like a knife, flashlight, or what have you, you’re looking for the sweet spot between maximum capability and maximum utility.

For fashion conscious types, the look of these boots will play a significant role; we pity them, as their options will be narrowed based on solely superficial criteria. Then again, narrowing down your criteria in this crowded field isn’t a completely bad thing.

Patrol boots are an excellent place to start. Well-crafted ankle high patrol boots by makers such as Bates or 5.11 Tactical are comfortable with quality soles, and both are great options for well under \$100. The side zipper versions are extremely convenient and these boots do a great job balancing comfort and ruggedness.



If the military/tactical look isn’t your thing, there are plenty of options in the hiking category that will get the job done. One example is the Cabela’s Rimrock



Hiker. These are waterproof and insulated for around \$100. If you're willing to make a larger investment, we've got two very good options for you.

On the high-tech end of the spectrum, there's the Salomon Quest 4D GTX Hiking Boot. These boots are designed to be mountaineer tough but light enough for lighter use. In fact, the men's size 9 boots weigh a total of 22 ounces. These Salomons come in an array of colors and can be purchased on Amazon for about \$130.

For a classic, leather hiking boot option you can wear daily and be more or less ready for anything, there's the Danner Mountain Light. Now, just to get it out of the way, Danner boots are not cheap. But many folks swear by them, and they do have a great reputation for being comfortable and lasting forever and a day. These boots retail for about \$250, and if you believe that any boots are worthy of that type of price tag, then give them a gander.

Yet another great option is to acquire a pair of military surplus desert combat boots. These can be found at Army Navy Surplus stores or on eBay for \$50, and we do recommend you go with true military surplus boots, rather than one of the many consumer versions.

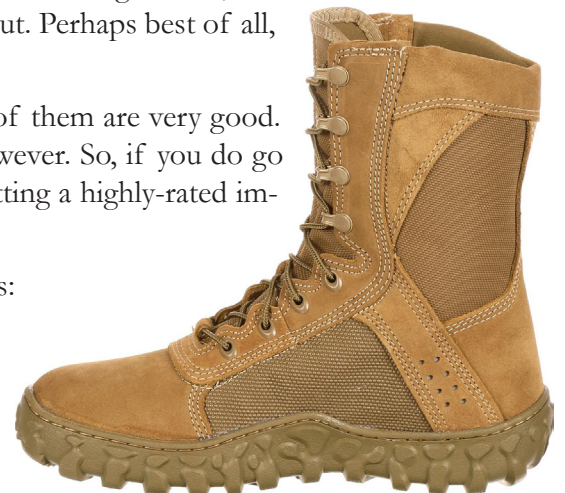
The nice thing about the desert combat boot is that they're light-weight, extremely durable, and they breath well enough to wear year-round in most climates. An awful lot of research and development has gone into these boots, and you get to benefit as a result.

Surplus desert boots are mildew resistant, they've got ventilating insoles, and their duck uppers are fairly good at keeping moisture out. Perhaps best of all, you can pick these up for around \$50 pretty easily.

There are several civilian copycat versions, and many of them are very good. Quality and durability do vary with these versions, however. So, if you do go this route, do a bit of research to make sure you're getting a highly-rated imitation.

Here's a short list of the best non-military desert boots:

- Belleville 610Z Side-Zip
- Rocky S2V Coyote Boot (steel toe)
- Tactical Research Minimalist Transition Boot
- 5.11 Taclite 6" Coyote Tactical Boot



A WORD ON POPULAR ADVICE: UTILITY VS COMFORT



Nearly every boot salesman will tell you the same thing: Try on all the boots available and see which ones feel the most comfortable to you.

Under any normal circumstances, we'd tell you this is good advice. It's true that comfortable boots are more likely to be on your feet when you need them, rather than in your closet the vast majority of the time.

There's just one problem with this approach; while this advice may help consumers select boots that they like and won't return, our criteria for a SHTF boot is a bit more rigid than simply customer satisfaction. The reason here is two-fold.

First, because your goal is to have an EDC boot that is capable of going completely feral and becoming a real live action hero, that extremely comfy pair of Uggs just ain't gonna cut it. You're going to want footwear that's relatively bombproof. Otherwise, you might as well be wearing sneakers.

Second, some extremely capable and long-lasting boots aren't all that comfortable on day one, unfortunately. The break-in period on most boots, particularly leather boots, can vary quite a bit. It may take a day or two to get the boots molded to your feet. It may even take a week. The good news is that lots of high quality boots age like wine; they continue to get more and more comfortable over time.

All that to say, don't let the break in period scare you away from a truly SHTF ready pair of EDC boots. The long-term payback in comfort and utility is well worth the up-front investment.

Instead, if comfort is an issue, particularly if it's preventing you from wearing your EDC boots, don't abandon ship. You still have a few rounds left in the magazine. First and foremost, try wearing your new boots in a few hours at a time, instead of just going whole hog.

Second, walk on the toes, heels, and ankles of your new boots. Literally step on them and mash them up a bit before putting them on.

Third, change your socks. Grab a few pairs of cushioned hiking socks that will pad the most blister prone areas around you toes and ankles during break-in. A low-cost work around to this is to go ahead and apply a few Band-Aids to your feet for the first couple of days as a preventative measure.

Bonus Tip: Consider buying a pair of cushioned insoles. These should help get you through the break-in period, or you might decide to keep them for the life of the boots. We've found that often we put these in and never take them back out.



RUBBER KNEE-HIGH BOOTS

If you live near a swamp or marsh, then you probably already have a pair of these. Even if you don't, it's important to remember that any disaster scenario can coincide with, or be amplified by, torrential rains. In fact, heavy rains are often the cause of these crises.

Thus, it doesn't take much in the way of foresight to see how a pair of rubber knee-high boots would come in handy in a situation in which you cannot afford to sit back and wait for drier conditions. If you've ever had to walk several miles in waterlogged boots or shoes, you know just how miserable that can be. They're slippery, heavy, and significantly increase your odds of falling flat on your back.

While it's true that many emergency scenarios come along with massive rains and flooding, you'd be just as happy to have rubber boots if you experience a massive plumbing disaster and can't get professional help. Likewise, you'll be glad to have these if you're fishing or spending a lot of time working along a river bank. It just takes one careless step into a puddle and your footwear could be soaked for the rest of the day.

Waterproof leather boots are a workable alternative for the short-term, but if you do live in a flood prone area, or your SHTF plan involves wetlands and fishing, we'd take rubber boots any day. You don't need to spend a ton of money on these, but we recommend going for a nicer name brand designed for hunting or working, not the cheapest option at the mega mart.

These rubber boots are literally the dam that stands in between your precious feet and the icy, muddy, or contaminated water that will quickly fill your entire boot. Cheapo rubber boots will tend to get brittle quicker than high-quality rubber. Once they've got a hole, they're completely useless to you. That \$15 you saved won't seem so smart then.



WATERPROOF COLD WEATHER BOOTS



PHOTO:

Above: Randall McNair, Flickr CC

Should a crisis strike in the dead of winter, your desert combat boots may prove woefully under-insulated. Whether you're doing search and rescue work, walking to find help, or keeping a low profile outdoors, the cold can impact your work in so many ways both physically and psychologically.

That's why the third class of boot that every self-reliance enthusiast should own is the cold weather work boot. Even if you live in the South or Southwest, where the winters are generally on the mild side, it's important to realize that hypothermia doesn't require sub-zero temperatures to set in.

Even fairly mild temperatures in the 40s will feel a whole lot colder if no shelter is available to you. Think about it, when was the last time you stayed out in the elements all day long on a brisk winter day? What about overnight?

In virtually any type of wintertime SHTF scenario, you may need to endure icy temperatures for as long as it takes to get your work done. The frigid conditions can make difficult working conditions downright miserable; dangerous, in fact.

That's why you really must own a pair of waterproof, insulated boots. If you can find a pair with reinforced toes, steel or composite, all the better. The good news with this category is that there are literally hundreds of worthy options, which is a testament to how important insulated work boots are for anyone who earns their living outdoors.

Wolverine, RedWing, TimberlandPro, and many others offer dozens of styles of lacers, pull-ons, side-zips, short or tall. If you prefer a more western style boot, Justin and Ariat both offer high quality work boots that are quite comfortable once broken in.

For those who don't expect to wear these boots regularly, once again, get a pair of military surplus "Mickey Mouse" boots. These waterproof Army issue rubber boots are rated to -20°F, so sitting still in cold weather for long hours is no problem. As for comfort, they are middle of the road. Now, keep in mind that these boots were "state of the art" during WWII, i.e. they're very heavy by today's standards, and the traction is only passable.

Still, if you want to have your waterproof, cold weather boots checked off the list for \$50, look no further. "Mickey Mouse" boots pass the test with flying colors, but they don't go above or beyond. When facing down some very harsh winter weather, you'll gladly trade the traction and weight for the warmth.

HOW TO SURVIVE A BULLET WOUND



There's an awful lot of sensationalism out there regarding terrorist attacks and shooting rampages. Let's be upfront here, our goal is not to stoke those anxieties or pretend there's some kind of step-by-step method to insulate ourselves from the dangers of the world.

Facing the unpleasant facts with a clear head and a desire to become prepared for anything is what we are all about at the NSRA. And there's no doubt that one of the most terrifying and unpleasant situations in which you may one day find yourself is dealing with a gunshot wound.

Whether it's a shooting accident, hunting mishap, or the result of a hostile encounter, it's critical that we

understand exactly how to increase our odds of survival. The fact is, this guide is more helpful if you think about how to care for someone who's suffered a gunshot wound around you. Sure, it may help you somewhat if you are the victim of such a traumatic injury, but only so much as you are conscious.

BY THE NUMBERS

A gunshot wound is always going to be painful, but it doesn't have to be fatal. In fact, with medical attention, only 33 percent of all gunshot victims will die. Surprisingly, a 12-year study in South Central Los Angeles that was conducted from 1972 to 1984 showcased that only 24.5% of gunshot victims who were shot in the

heart died from their injury.

In other words, a gunshot wound isn't currently nearly as fatal as many people believe. However, what's going to happen when the SHTF and medical assistance isn't available? Without taking the proper precautions and becoming educated about gunshot wound first aid, the odds are high that most people will either bleed to death or die from an infection.

This doesn't have to be your fate, though. Instead, you can start learning right now how to boost your odds of survival if someone shoots you or a loved one.

SAFEST PLACES TO GET SHOT

Your odds of survival depend greatly on where you've been shot. For example, 34 percent of people with a head wound die, which makes this a deadlier location than being shot in the heart. Overall, the safest spots to take a hit are your feet and hands.

The impact of a bullet would most likely shatter the bones in your afflicted hand or foot, but you're not as likely to bleed out quickly. Addi-



tionally, the odds of a bone shard jamming into a vital organ after the gunshot are significantly lower than if you take a bullet anywhere else.

Your survival chances also greatly improve if a bullet goes cleanly through your body. This will leave you with an entry and exit wound to treat, but it will make infection less likely. It will also mean that the bullet's kinetic energy wasn't as high when it hit your internal body.

Of course, there are very few situations when you'll get to choose what part of your body suffers from a gunshot wound. Still, it's wise to be aware of the safest and deadliest areas so that you know how to react after the fact.

BASIC PROTECTION PLANS

The absolute best way to survive a gunshot wound is to avoid getting one. Do you own a bulletproof vest yet? If not, this could be a very good investment for you and every other survivalist.

Many people believe that the best way to take an opponent down is by aiming for center mass. But if you're wearing a bulletproof vest when this happens, you're much less likely to suffer from a serious injury.

Other methods for protecting yourself include remaining armed at all times, learning how to shoot quickly and accurately to defend yourself, practicing using the environment around you as a shield, learning



how to move quietly and, if all else fails, knowing how to negotiate with someone who is angry.

After all, if you can keep them talking, you may be able to convince them not to shoot. Alternatively, distracting them with a conversation will give you a better opportunity to shoot first.

HOW DOES BLOOD LOSS IMPACT THE BODY?

There are four stages of blood loss, and if the victim gets to stage three or four without access to immediate medical assistance, they're most likely going to die.

Stage One:

Blood loss of less than 15 percent. Most people can deal with this without suffering from too many issues. It is common to feel a bit weak, though, and individuals who are especially sensitive may faint. When you give blood, you lose between 8 and 10 percent of your body's blood. If you've ever done this, you have a good idea of what stage one feels like.

Stage Two:

Blood loss of 15 to 30 percent. When a gunshot victim reaches this stage, they begin to experience several symptoms of blood loss. You can expect cool skin, a faster heartbeat, pale skin and feelings of weakness.

Stage Three:

Blood loss of 30 to 40 percent. Blood pressure drops and the heart starts beating extremely fast in an attempt to keep the person alive.

Sadly, in a SHTF situation, this would typically lead to death. That's because people who lose this much blood will almost always need a blood transfusion to survive.

Stage Four:

Blood loss of more than 40 percent. Organs will begin to fail and a co-



matose state will begin. If the victim doesn't have immediate medical assistance, they will die. Unfortunately, even if a hospital is available, there's no guarantee that the damage can be reversed quickly enough to prevent death.

You're probably wondering how long it takes to bleed to death. This statistic won't provide you with any comfort: a gunshot wound to a major artery can lead to bleeding to death in as few as 20 seconds. The best-case scenario for a major artery wound is usually only two to five minutes. If you don't act fast in this type of situation, the victim is going to die.

WHAT TO DO AFTER SUFFERING FROM A GUNSHOT WOUND

No matter how many precautions you take, it's still possible that you'll get shot. If this happens, your actions during the first couple of minutes can make the difference between living and dying. This is true right now, and it'll be especially true if emergency medical care is no longer an option.

STEPS TO TAKE IMMEDIATELY AFTER A GUNSHOT WOUND

1. Do a Safety Check

Whether you're the victim or a bystander, you must take a few seconds to determine if it's safe to move. For example, if the person who shot you fled the scene, it should be okay to take action. However, if they're still standing there with a gun pointed at you, there's not much you can do aside from try to prevent a second gunshot wound.

2. If Possible, Call for Help

If 911 is still available, be sure to call immediately. If 911 is no longer an option but you have a camp nearby you can contact via walkie-talkie, reach out that way for assistance. If neither of these options exists, you'll need to know some gunshot wound first aid and be able to keep calm. We can help you with the first part, but you'll need to find a good way to center yourself. For many people, closing their eyes and taking three deep breaths works well.

Keep in mind that it's important to work on the next step, minimizing the bleeding, at the same time as calling for help.

3. Minimize the Bleeding

You know how quickly someone could bleed out. Armed with that knowledge, you must be prepared to minimize or, if possible, stop the bleeding.

Your best bet is to apply firm, direct pressure to the wound. Use a trauma pad if you have one handy. If not, grab the cleanest wound dressing material at hand (which might be a towel or your shirt), put it in place and press against it firmly. You need to apply this type of pressure for at least 10 minutes.

Please note: Each type of wound requires a slightly different approach. We'll elaborate on this later.

4. Prevent the Onset of Shock

After sustaining a painful injury, the body can begin to go into shock. The odds of this happening greatly increase with blood loss. Unfortunately, if they go into shock at this stage, it will be even harder to keep them alive.

The good news is there are a few things you can do to prevent shock.

- Reassure the victim. Tell them they're going to be okay, even if you can tell they're not likely to survive.
- Cover them up. Use a blanket, jacket or anything else nearby to help keep them warm.
- Keep them talking. One of the best things you can do is help the victim stay conscious and focused.
- Elevate their legs if shock begins to set in. Unless the victim was shot in the torso or chest, you can elevate their legs by a few inches to reduce the impact of shock.



PHOTO:

Right: U.S. Naval Forces Central Command



5. Utilize the ABCDEs of First Aid

When someone becomes unconscious after a gunshot wound, you can remember how to help them by using the acronym ABCDE.

A: Airways. Check to make sure nothing is obstructing their airways. If you don't have a reason to believe that their spinal cord could be injured, you can slightly tilt their head back to open their airways.

B: Breathing. Do they appear to be breathing normally? If not, repeat step A.

C: Circulation. Do they have a pulse? If so, great! If not, you'll need to perform CPR.

D: Disability. You've made sure they're breathing and have a pulse. Next, look for any key disabilities such as broken bones or the inability to move their feet or hands. Issues of this nature can be a symptom of a bigger injury.

E: Exposure. Check for any exposure wounds. In the case of a gunshot, this means entry and exit wounds. If you find a wound, apply pressure to minimize the bleeding. If

you can't find the wound, carefully check uncommon spots such as their buttocks and armpits.

6. If All Else Fails, Apply a Tourniquet

A tourniquet should never be used for anything other than a life or death situation. This is because they quickly cause necrotic tissue and can lead to the loss of the afflicted limb. However, if the choice is between letting someone bleed out or possibly lose their arm, a tourniquet is the right decision to make.

Applying a tourniquet is relatively simple. You can use almost anything

to make one, including a bandana, large bandage or belt. The proper position for a tourniquet is between the victim's heart and the wound. Place the tourniquet as close to the wound as possible, and make sure to tie it securely.

7. Don't Remove the Bullet

You've undoubtedly seen countless movies where the hero gets shot and digs the bullet out. Real life isn't Hollywood, though, so you should avoid doing this unless you have some medical training.

Lead poisoning is a possibility if the bullet stays in, so be sure to have someone with experience help out as soon as possible. Remember, even during the apocalypse, there are going to be former nurses and doctors ready to help.

STOPPING THE BLOOD FLOW OF SPECIFIC WOUNDS

You'll always need to apply pressure to minimize the bleeding from any gunshot wound. However, a few extra guidelines exist based on the exact type of wound that victim has.



1. Abdomen

This is one of the most painful areas to get shot, and it's also highly prone to infections. Be sure to use the most sterilized field dressing possible. Cover any open wounds and exposed organs. Also, prevent the victim from taking anything via their mouth, including pain pills.

2. Appendages

Apply firm and direct pressure to the wound. Be aware that bones are probably broken, and your actions may cause a lot of pain. If an artery has been hit, you'll most likely need to use a tourniquet to stop the bleeding. Remember: someone can bleed to death in as few as 20 seconds from an artery wound, and most of these wounds will cause death within five minutes.

3. Chest

Chest wounds are the most likely to be accompanied by a spinal injury, so you need to be extremely careful when moving the victim. In some cases, the bullet will puncture a lung. If this happens, carefully block any visible entry or exit wounds.

4. Head

A head wound is terrifying for everyone involved, but it doesn't have to equal death. The bleeding from these wounds can typically be slowed down dramatically by applying continual, direct and steady pressure.

The biggest risk from a head shot that doesn't kill the victim instantly is actually choking to death on blood. Therefore, you must make sure their airway isn't blocked or impeded in any way.

AVOIDING INFECTIONS AND PROPER AFTERCARE

Another misconception about getting shot that is often perpetuated by movies and TV shows is that people will be able to go back to their normal activities almost instantly. Depending on where the wound is, it may be possible, but the victim will

most likely need some significant recovery time.

1. Avoiding Infections

The biggest risk after someone survives the initial impact and bleeding from a gunshot is the development of an infection. To help avoid this, the area should be cleaned thoroughly and kept as sanitary as possible. Always wash your hands after removing the old wound dressing. Keep the area clean, dry and covered. Wash your hands again after applying the new dressing.

2. Reduce Swelling

Elevating the wound above the heart can reduce swelling. If you need to do this while sitting or lying down, use pillows to elevate the afflicted area. An ice pack may also help, but it's recommended to do this only with permission from a physician.

3. Things to Avoid

You've survived a gunshot wound, and so far, you don't have an infection. All signs are positive, but if you make a mistake during your aftercare, you could accidentally slow down the healing process. Do not apply any of the following to the wound, especially not without a doctor's recommendation:

Peroxide, alcohol, iodine, antibacterial soap, skin cleansers, cream, lotion or herbal remedies.

Also, never tug or pull at stitches. Don't participate in activities that put your stitches at risk of popping.

4. Bathing

If you don't have a waterproof dressing, you may have to wait a few days before bathing. It's best to have a sponge bath or to take a shower. Soaking in a bathtub could cause the wound to reopen. Don't rub or scrub the wound while cleaning it. Always use a clean towel to pat dry the area around the wound. The wound itself should air dry.

5. Be Aware of Common Psychological Ramifications

Some people get PTSD after suffering from a gunshot wound. Even if that doesn't happen to you, it's highly likely that you'll spend the first two to three weeks dealing with anxiety, depression, a lack of energy, irritability, nightmares, insomnia and difficulty not thinking about the shooting. If these issues get worse or last more than three weeks, you may need psychological help.

6. Watch Out for Signs of Infection

If any of the following issues occur, you may have an infection.

- Your temperature stays above 100 degrees Fahrenheit for more than four hours.
- Increased wound drainage.
- Red streaks that look like they're leading away from the wound.
- Drainage that smells bad and/or has become thick, yellow, tan or green.

Other problems that may require medical help include bleeding that won't stop with 10 minutes of direct, gentle pressure and pain that keeps getting worse even after you take pain relievers.

Save Yourself or a Loved One

Now that you have a better understanding of how to deal with multiple types of gunshot wounds, your odds of surviving have increased. Always do your best to remain calm during an emergency situation. Try not to go anywhere deep in the woods, or anywhere at all after the SHTF, without carrying at least a basic first aid kit and a gun for self-defense.

WHY A BANDANA

MUST BE A PART OF YOUR EDC

Whether you are preparing for a future apocalyptic situation or simply want to improve your EDC kit, it is a wise idea to invest in some bandanas. Although many people may not think of this \$1 when making their self-reliance backup plans, the reality is that bandanas are one of the most multi-functional things you can buy. As an added bonus, they take up a very minimal amount of space and weigh next to nothing, which gives them a natural advantage over other items you may wish to stock up on.

In fact, you could say that the bandana is the Swiss Army knife of survival attire, except the bandana is several times more useful. Don't believe it? By the end of this article, we hope to change your mind.

To help you learn how to get the most out of bandanas, we have compiled a list of some of their most effective uses. Here's a quick bullet point look at the list, which will be followed by in-depth information about some of the most useful examples.

PHOTO:

Above: lastonein

How to Use a Bandana After the SHTF

- As a mask.
- To filter water.
- To protect your neck.
- To keep you cool.
- To tie things to your bag.
- To tie things together.
- To gather foraged food.
- To mark a trail.
- To wrap a sprained ankle.
- As a tourniquet.
- As a makeshift bandage.
- To plug a bloody nose.
- As an arm sling.
- As a sanitary napkin.
- As an eye mask for sleeping.
- To blindfold someone.
- To bind someone's hands.
- To create a rope.
- To create a clothesline.
- To make a belt.
- To keep your hand safe while opening a radiator cap.
- To protect your head from the sun.
- As a makeshift dog collar.

This list is by no means exhaustive, and we are certain that you can quickly come up with at least five more handy reasons to keep a stash of bandanas around at all times. But once you stock up on this essential item, do you know how to put it to use properly? After all, it is one thing to say you can filter water with it, but it's quite another to know how to do that as effectively as possible. Let's take a closer look at some of the most practical and important uses for a bandana during an emergency situation.

To Filter Water



There are several ways to use a bandana during the water filtering process. If you have charcoal, gravel, pebbles, iodine and a water bottle, you can actually create a water filter that will work very similarly to a filter you might buy from

a local store. However, in a true disaster scenario, the odds are high that you will have a minimal amount of supplies with you or you might even find yourself lost in the woods without all of these components. Fear not because there are still many ways to put a bandana to good use.

One of the easiest ways to filter water with a bandana is to place a bandana over the top of a container, push it down slightly into the container as shown in the nearby image and then allow a running water source to move over the bandana until your container is full. This works best with running streams and other water sources that are not sitting still. Doing this will remove a lot of the sediment and other debris from the water, but it does not actually purify it.

To complete the purification process, you will need to boil the water or use another technique such as iodine or a water purification tablet. None of these methods are guaranteed



to remove 100 percent of the bacteria, pathogens or metals that are in the water, but they will make the water much safer and more palatable to drink during an emergency.

As a side note, you can also use a bandana as a makeshift tea or coffee filter! This could be extremely helpful for those of you who need to get your caffeine fix each day.

To Wrap an Ankle or Wrist Injury

If you sprain your ankle or wrist, it will be best to provide the area with some much-needed support. After all, you probably won't be able to stay off of your feet until the ankle heals, and walking on a sprain without some support could exacerbate the injury.

Much like a store bought wrist or ankle brace, you will want to take the bandana and wrap it tightly --but not too tightly-- around the injured area. Be sure to also wrap it at least once underneath your foot for added support. Doing this will keep the ankle less mobile, which will allow you to walk without having the same amount of natural ankle movement. This may sound undesirable, but it will actually provide the ankle with the necessary rest to begin healing.

The same process is true for a makeshift wrist brace. Wrap it around the wrist and then around your hand between your thumb and forefinger before finishing by going around the wrist once more and tying it securely. Again, you want this to be tight enough to offer support, but not so tight that it cuts off the circulation to your hand. If your fingers begin to feel numb or your hand starts looking red, you need to loosen the bandana.



To Make an Arm Sling

If someone's arm is injured, especially with a broken bone, it is important to put it in a sling. There are many tutorials about DIY slings, including how to make one from a t-shirt. The same thing can be done with a bandana, but you will need approximately 40" square of cloth material to get the best results. Therefore, some people may need to tie two bandanas together to make this work.

Once your bandana is prepared, fold it in half so that it makes a triangle. From there, slip half the bandanas around the injured arm. The other half will go around the person's neck. Pull the two halves of the bandana together and tie them behind their neck. This isn't the perfect arm sling, but it will work in a pinch and should make it much easier to remain safely mobile.

As a Makeshift Bandage

Wounds need to be covered up to help avoid infections, and a bandage is also the perfect way to put some pressure on a bleeding wound so that the blood flow comes to a halt. Always clean the wound as thoroughly as possible before bandaging it. Next, wrap the bandana around the injury. As always, you'll want to do this tightly enough to keep the wound secured without doing it so tightly that it causes circulation issues.

As a Tourniquet

A tourniquet could save someone's life, but you shouldn't apply one unless you know what you're doing. The sad fact is that putting a tourniquet on incorrectly could cause the person to suffer from even more harm, and it may even lead to dead tissue or death. Having said this, if you are sure that you know how to apply a tourniquet, one or two bandanas tied together can act as one in an emergency situation.

As a reminder, always place the tourniquet between the wound and the heart. In other words, if someone gets a serious wound on their forearm, you would tie the tourniquet a few inches above the injury. Keep in mind that simply tying a bandana tightly might not be enough to do the job. Therefore, you should look for a stick that you can use for torsion. Do a half knot with your bandana, followed by putting the stick in place and tying a full knot over it.



One more thing to note: if the wound is slightly underneath a joint, be sure to place the tourniquet just above that joint. Also, if you have a real tourniquet with you, it is best to place a soft buffer between the skin and the tourniquet. A bandana could fulfill this role as well.

Neck, Face, Head and Breathing Protection

Bandanas can serve numerous functions for your neck, face, head and lungs. The most commonly thought of option is putting a bandana around your mouth and nose to keep harsh and irritating contaminants out of your lungs such as smoke. Much like the makeshift water filter, this is not going to remove everything. However, if you hold the bandana firmly against your mouth and nose, it can help you get through a smoky area without suffering from a lot of lung irritation. Also, if something truly awful happens when the SHTF and you don't have a gas mask handy, it couldn't hurt to try this option.

Your neck and head can easily become sunburned, especially if you are walking long distances each day or if you do not have an inside shelter.

Fortunately, you can wrap a bandana around your head to prevent the sun from beating down on it. Similarly, wrapping a bandana around your neck will keep it from becoming sunburned.

During the summer, you can get your bandana wet before you wrap it around your neck or head. This will temporarily help you cool off. Another method you may wish to utilize in the summer is spraying the bandana with bug spray and then wrapping it around your neck. This will keep mosquitoes away from your neck without forcing you to put the spray on that part of your skin.

To Tie Gear to Your Bag

Even if you are more into homesteading survival than prepping survival, it is still wise to consider having a bag handy that can carry some of your most necessary items if an emergency makes it necessary to flee



your home. With this in mind, bandanas become even more vital because they can be used to tie numerous things to the outside of your bag. Not only will this free up interior bag space but it will also give you the opportunity to keep a larger quantity of small items with you.





If nothing else, tying your bandanas to the outside of your bag keeps them from taking up precious space on the inside. So even if you aren't tying something to them, it still makes sense to go this route.

We have seen some people tie basic cooking gear to the outside of their bag. This makes sense from a space standpoint, but keep in mind that you still need to be able to maneuver through a wide variety of spaces.

Remaining quiet may also be imperative to stay safe while you are on the run. In other words, be sure to carefully consider all of your options when you begin using bandanas to increase your storage space.

Self Defense

We would all like to believe that others will be cooperative and will stick to their own supplies if an emergency happens, but this is not realistic. Unfortunately, there will always be members of society who will prefer to steal and injure people to get their way. This problem is likely to become even worse after society begins to crumble.

If you encounter someone who is up to no good and are able to temporarily disarm or disable them, you will need to take further steps to protect yourself. In this instance, bandanas can become a big part of your preventative self-defense plan. A bandana can be tied around someone's head and used as a blindfold or a gag. These methods are the least likely to be neces-

sary, though, because you will be defending yourself instead of kidnapping them.

Having said that, the place where a bandana truly will come in handy for self-defense is tying someone up who has poses a threat otherwise. Remember to tie their hands behind their back for the best results. You may also wish to use a stick to make the knot tighter, which can be tied in place the same way we described for a tourniquet.

If you find yourself in a real bind and have no other options, a bandana can also be thrown in someone's face to give you a couple of seconds to run. Alternatively, you could use a bandana to choke someone from behind. Of course, we don't advise doing any of this before the SHTF unless your life is at risk. Even after the SHTF, it's best not to pull out any of these self-defense tips unless you absolutely have to.

Hundreds of Additional Uses

One of the best things about bandanas is that they are small, lightweight and have a practically endless list of useful applications. We're sure that there are hundreds of ways to put these items to use, so don't forget to take some time to brainstorm a few new ideas and test them out before you end up in a real-life emergency. By doing this, you will be much more prepared to handle everything from an intruder to a serious wound.

The DIY

Water Bottle Filter

A filtration system is a must-have for any survival stockpile or bug-out bag. The reason is simple: Potable water is second only to air in the hierarchy of survival, and yet it's difficult to store in large quantities and even more difficult to transport.

In a bug-out situation, it's probably not going to be practical to pull a 500-gallon water tank behind the family sedan. Even if you have a pickup, chances are you only have room for a 55-gallon barrel or two -- that's over 918 lbs of water, not counting the weight of the barrels!

No matter how you slice it, a filter is the ultimate back-up plan. Whether it's a personal filter like a LifeStraw, or a larger Berkey system, it's much easier to store and/or carry a water filtration device than the water itself.

A filter will allow you to be flexible about which sources you can tap into, such as rainwater, tainted municipal water, pond water, etc. But what if you lose your filtration system? Or, equally as likely, what if it breaks?

That's when it pays dividends to know how to properly filter water the old-fashioned way.

A Quick Word of Caution

Drinking water from an unknown source is never the preferred option. Even rainwater collected from your own roof and stored in USDA-approved containers may house harmful micro-organisms.

Never trust a water source. Unless it's factory sealed, it's always better to filter it, just to be on the safe side.

Materials:

- ▶ 1 T-shirt or bandana
- ▶ 1 Plastic bottle (a plastic Gatorade bottle, water bottle, or even a 2 liter bottle)
- ▶ Knife
- ▶ Small pebbles
- ▶ Coarse sand
- ▶ Fine sand
- ▶ Charcoal
- ▶ Dirty water
- ▶ Wire, paracord, or a rubberband

Your DIY Filtration System

First things first, planning and patience are absolutely necessary when it comes to safely filtering water. It takes time to filter water with or without the convenience of modern filters. Start the process well before you're in dire need.

1. With that said, the first step to filtering water is to allow it to sit for a few minutes, allowing any solids, plants, or moss to float to the top so you can skim them off. That certainly helps make it look more appealing.



2. The second step requires a plastic bottle of your choosing (we prefer a Gatorade bottle) and your knife. Carefully cut the bottom off of the bottle and set it aside, as you may want to use it later to re-seal the bottle.

3. Next, cut a piece of cloth (about half the size of a bandana) and shove it down through the bottom of the bottle, stuffing it into the bottleneck with the tip of your knife.

4. This step of the filtration process requires crushed charcoal. Now, maybe you're thinking, "What!? I'm not lugging around a 20lb bag of charcoal in my bug-out bag!"



Don't worry; you can make charcoal by simply taking charred pieces of wood out of the nearest fire pit, wrapping it in your bandana (or t-shirt), and then smashing it with a hammer or the back of a hatchet. Think popcorn size, not crushed to smithereens.

Take a pile of the charcoal and pour it on top of the cloth in the neck of your bottle. Shake the bottle around a bit until the charcoal pieces settle. You're looking for 1.5" to 2" layer of charcoal in your bottle.

5. Next add a 1" to 1.5" layer of fine sand. Playground sand is perfectly good here, as is sand from a riverbank or most beaches.



The important thing at this point, on top of the charcoal, is to create a gradient for the water to travel through that gets finer and finer until it reaches the charcoal.

6. On top of your finer sand, add a 1-2" layer of coarser sand. Think paver sand. This stuff can range a bit from tiny pebbles to decomposed granite or limestone, as long as the grains are larger than the fine sand below.



7. Your next layer should consist of small pebbles and very coarse sand. If you're near a river, dry creek, or drainage area, this can often be found along the banks or in the river bed itself.

8. The top layer consists of actual gravel, 1-2" of the stuff. Typically, we aim for a completely full bottle, so if there are 2-3" left, just fill them with gravel.

9. Last, take the other half of your bandana, or a nice big piece of cloth, and place it over the hole that you cut in Step 2. Use a rubber band or a piece of paracord to tie the cloth over the opening. Now you're ready to filter some water.

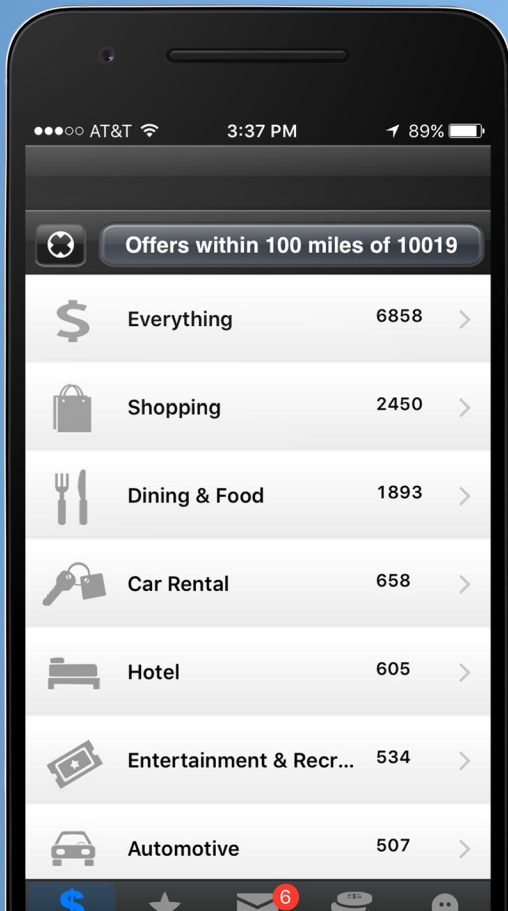




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