



MEMBERS UPDATE

June, 2018



The Very Best Handgun Training **PART II**

Top 12 Machetes for Everyday Use

7 Hacks for a World Without ERs

The 6 Best Dry Fire Training Toys

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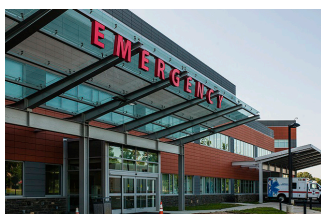
There's a very powerful reason the world's leading firearms experts swear by dry fire training, and it goes well beyond the convenience of training at home. In "Part II," we'll take an in-depth look at how to hack your brain's powerful natural processes to create the perfect training routine.



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Top 12 Machetes for Everyday Use

Now that spring has fully sprung, it's time to get out there and start clearing away all that brush and overgrowth with one of these high-quality blades. These 12 can't-miss machetes are perfect for the backyard, the vineyard, or even the end of the world as we know it.



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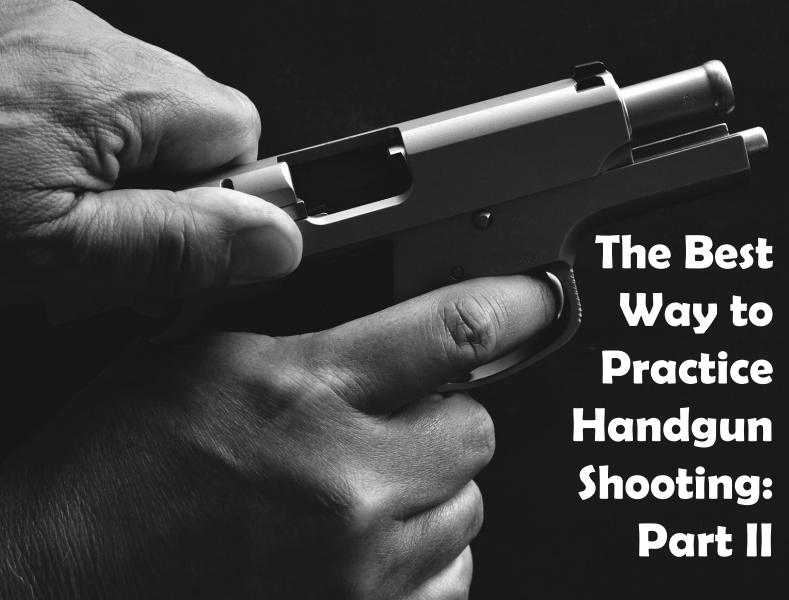
Do you know the most important thing to avoid immediately following a widespread disaster? We'll reveal 7 of the most powerful healing hacks you've never heard of, so that you can load up your medic kit with some very uncommon knowledge.



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The Very Best Dry Fire Toys

Just because you're not blasting live rounds at the range, that doesn't mean there aren't some badass toys involved. These addictive training tools are designed to deliver the realism and feedback you need, while keeping things exciting in your Dry Fire Training Facility.



The Best Way to Practice Handgun Shooting: Part II

In last month's issue, we dug deep into one of the greatest paradoxes of handgun training, which is, in fact, one of the greatest paradoxes of all firearms training. That is, the very best way to practice shooting a handgun is not actually shooting at all. Instead, it's a technique referred to as dry firing.

With roots in 19th Century firefighting, when fire crews trained using "dry runs" without any whiskey (just kidding), dry weapons training allows shooters to focus on their mechanics without the recoil, distractions, and stresses presented by live fire training. Even if you love the smell of gun smoke and the sound of a .357 Mag, the fact is even these are counterproductive. And distractions like these are ever more prevalent in the one arena most shooters rely on to train, the shooting range.

In fact, there's convincing evidence that more trips to the range can actually make your shooting troubles worse. There are several reasons for this, but our favorite "elevator speech" regarding this phenomenon goes something like this: As it turns out, holding an explosion in your hand can make it hard to concentrate.

It's also distracting when there's a stranger wailing away with a rifle in the next lane. The same goes for



range marshals, safety concerns, and that guy over there who looks like he's never held a gun before...

Come to think of it, a shooting range is a pretty bad place to learn a foreign language, build a house of cards, or study for a mid-term. The dirty truth is: It's not that great a place to study the 9mm handgun either.

Imagine someone doing their very best to concentrate, control their breathing, and focus on fine motor skills, all while some yahoo is shooting a .44 Mag next to them. In a word, it's frustrating. But the heightened adrenaline, recoil, and frustration factor present at the shooting range is only one part of the equation. There's another scientific reason that more trips to the range aren't productive.

The real reason it's so hard to improve has everything to do with our brain chemistry. Neuroscience has come a long way in the last decade. And while you may not have any interest in the subject, one very fascinating discovery is that researchers have uncovered why, as Bocephus put it, "Old habits like you, are hard to break."

Why Habits are Hard-Wired



We touched on this briefly in last month's article, but this concept is so fundamental that glossing over it seems borderline criminal. It goes way beyond just firearms training.

Electrical impulses in our brains travel through bundles of neurons almost like a circuit board triggering our actions, movements, and behaviors. Like the connections in an electrical circuit, these impulses typically travel down a defined pathway for each action. Where our brains differ is that they are constantly adapting and strengthening our most commonly used pathways.

Think of the first time you drove a car. You probably had to look carefully to make sure what gear you were in at first. After a little time, you could shift gears by feel, without having to worry if you were in drive or reverse.

What happened was this: At first, your brain was literally forming the connections to learn how your shifter works. With repetition and practice, the neural pathway got wider and stronger, easily guiding your hand efficiently on the shifter. Over time, your brain added a coating of “myelin” around this pathway, which insulates it and helps conductivity.

If you’re an electrician, it might be helpful to think of an early pathway as a single speaker wire, suitable for a 12V circuit. Next, the brain decides to wire the thing for 120V AC service. Later, it upgrades to a 240V circuit.

Quite literally, the more often you perform a motor function, the more insulation and conductivity the brain adds to strengthen that pathway, until it needs its own utility right of way, figuratively speaking.

It’s a very efficient and powerful system, but there is a downside. Bad habits can just as easily get hard-wired into this network of pathways. It happens so quickly and seamlessly that it also happens unintentionally, often when you begin learning a new skill. Later down the line, you’ll probably wish that you’d spent more time refining your technique as a beginner. But it’s too late.

Case in point, at some point in their development, most shooters realize they flinch. Even when you try your hardest to shoot without flinching, the impulse gets diverted back down the beaten path. And right in the middle of that pathway, wouldn’t you know it,

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is that same old flinch you’re trying to get rid of.

Because this “flinch” is hardwired, so to speak, it’s almost impossible to avoid it. The same system that helps you do things faster and with less effort also pulls you down the same old path with that big ugly flinch lying in the trail like a rattlesnake. Even worse, you just helped beat down the path again, making it easier to follow next time.

To correct the bad habit, you’re literally going to have to blaze a new trail. This new neural pathway will be different in two major ways. Yes, you will be able to delete out a few bad habits, but there’s some even better news: You can engineer this new pathway to be as perfect as humanly possible.

Like a highway, you can design it to bypass problem areas like Flinch-ville and Trigger Slap City. You can also take advantage of the latest breakthroughs to straighten the curves and flatten the hills. All it takes is a little extra thought, analysis, and discipline.

Troubleshooting: Rule of 3s Dry Fire System



Dry fire training is the most powerful way to “hack” the processes your brain is automatically working on in the background in order to improve your coordination and motor skills. You can piggyback on the work these neurological trail crews are doing, step-by-step. And again, keep in mind that these aren’t “dry fire only” pathways, they are the very same ones that you’ll use in a live fire situation.

There’s a common saying, often credited to the Navy SEALs that goes like this, “Under pressure,

you don't rise to the occasion, you fall to the level of your training."

The reason we mention this isn't to impress on you the importance of training. Instead, we want to impress on you how important it is you're getting the **right kind of training**. The right kind is so effective and rapid, it's like having an unfair advantage over your shooting buddies.

We're not big believers in a one-size-fits-all system, mostly because what some shooters find thrilling just bores the bejeezus out of others. There are infinite ways to use dry fire techniques to improve your shooting skills, but one of the keys is to keep it simple and personalize your training routine.

That said, we're going to outline a technique that we've found to be effective on our shooting mechanics here at the NSRA. Don't worry, it's dirt simple. What we recommend is that you take our simple but powerful training system, and adapt it for yourself.



We call it the Rule of 3s. Why the rule of 3s, not 5s, you ask? Frankly speaking, it's a lot easier to remember a list of 3 items rather than 5. Furthermore, we find that almost any aspect of training that you're working on can be broken into 3 parts.

With trigger pull, for example, there's breathe, squeeze, and trigger reset. With holster draw, it's get

your perfect grip, pull the handgun, and present the handgun up to your line of sight.

Obviously, you could break down each element into 3 sub elements if you wanted or needed to as well. And if you're having trouble with a certain movement repeatedly, you may actually need to get this detail-oriented to fix things.

The idea is that you want to get 3 "perfect" repetitions at slow motion, half speed, and full speed. Try this for each individual element before you start putting them together into a full on "holster draw" or "speed reload drill." Then, as you try putting it all together, shoot for 3 perfect repetitions at each speed level.

As you do this, you'll realize that some of the skills you thought were easy actually need more work than anticipated. Breath control, for example, is something that shooters are often surprised they need work on.

Again, the theory behind this is that breaking each action down into 3 fundamental parts helps you isolate and diagnose your trouble spots. In fact, it's one of the only ways we've found to successfully self-diagnose shooting issues (since it all happens so fast).

Typically, what happens in these training sequences is that you find there are 1 or 2 elements that come pretty effortlessly, while the snags and hang-ups occur with the other. Once you identify the specific element that's throwing you off, you've already done the thing people pay trainers big bucks for: Troubleshooting.

Now you simply need to apply the Rule of 3s to that specific problem area, beginning as slowly as you need to get it right. If you need help remembering it, just think: **3 Parts, Slow, Medium, Fast.**





Top 12 Machetes for Everyday Use

Machetes are handy tools that can help you accomplish a long list of tasks, ranging from cleaning up your yard to wilderness survival. Although they all have the same basic purpose, there are tons of different options available, and they all showcase unique features. Therefore, it might be difficult to make a decision if you're simply looking at a long line of machetes in a store. This is especially true if the store in question is virtual.

To help you narrow down the numerous options so you can make the best possible purchase, we've compiled a list of some of the very best machetes for everyday use. We'll take a look at the pros and cons of each, along with pointing out anything that each machete does particularly well. By comparing these details, you should be able to select the right machete to fit your needs and budget!



Tramontina 18" Machete with Hardwood Handle

This machete comes at a great price (less than \$25 with a nylon sheath), and it's extremely easy to wield. The full tang design provides a blade with more stability and bush-whacking power. For the uninitiated, full tang means the blade itself extends to the bottom of the handle. Of course, the handle covers the bottom portion of the blade.

The Tramontina 18" Machete features an 18" carbon steel blade. From the tip of the blade to the bottom of the handle, this machete is 23" long. It weighs less than 1.5 pounds and has a blade thickness of approximately 1/4 inch.

It works well for bush-whacking and cutting saplings, so it can definitely help you clean up unruly vegetation. On the downside, the nylon sheath isn't the best constructed sheath in the world. It should hold up if you treat it well, though.



Condor Golok Machete 14" Blade with Sheath

This offering from Condor Tool & Knife is by far one of our favorites. It's also a beauty to behold with its curved, walnut handle design and black powder epoxy blade finish. The blade length is 14" and the entire body of the machete is 19" long.

Durability is the name of the game with this machete, so it's no wonder that the blade is made from 1075 high carbon steel. People who've used this product for several years report that it has virtually limitless uses and performs well each time. If it has a weakness, it's the leather sheath.

If you want an everyday machete that can be used in a diverse variety of situations, you can't go wrong with the Condor 14" Golok. People have tested this with everything from splitting bullets to chopping down trees that are one-foot thick. It also performs admirably when called upon as a self-defense tool against a feisty rattlesnake.

The price point reflects these many uses (\$95 list price, \$75 online), but it's also a good investment that you'll use for many years to come.



Ontario SP8 Machete

This uniquely styled machete is intended for tactical and survival purposes. It's also excellent at handling hardwood. In fact, it can cut through more than 2" of hardwood in a single whack. The SP8's versatility enables users to saw, pry, chop, hammer, fillet fish, and skin small game.

The straight, 10" plain edge blade is very easy to sharpen. From the bottom of the handle to the tip of the blade, this machete is 15" long. It hangs easily from your side, but at 22 ounces, it can get a bit heavier than other machetes. The nylon sheath that Ontario includes also leaves a lot to be desired.

Despite these two minor issues, this carbon steel, epoxy textured, full tang, coated black machete is a great option for people who want a highly useful tactical product. The M8 retails for \$80, but you can usually find it online for under \$50.



Ka-Bar Kukri 2-1249-9

If you're anything like us, the unusual curved angles of this particular machete will capture your attention. Ka-Bar is known for making combat kukri knives, and they've taken that same basic design and elongated it into a useful machete.

The carbon steel blade measures 11.5” and weighs 1.7 pounds. The full tang machete’s overall length is 17” and the blade’s thickness varies from 3/16” to 1/8” depending on the section of blade you’re measuring. The blade is very solid, and the handle has a no-slip grip. The Ka-Bar is best used for clearing a campsite, chopping weeds, and cutting small branches, but it can also help you clear small trees.

The included sheath is better than most. On the downside, the black finish tends to flake off over time. Still, this is a powerful machete with multiple uses. And it’s also quite simply a lot of fun to use. Don’t throw it for fun, though; that can lead to breakage. You should be able to find this machete online for less than \$60.



Imacasa 27 Inch Colima Machete

Do you want to feel like a knight while you chop down weeds? This extra-long product from Imacasa is similar to an arming sword, which makes it fun to use and to look at. Interestingly, this is considered to be a normal, everyday use machete in Mexico. The length makes it very unusual in the U.S., though.

The blade length is an impressive 27” and it’s made from slightly weighted high carbon. Overall, this machete is 32” long. It comes with crossguard protection and is available in a two-sided version to make it easier to clear weeds and other yard debris.

This 27” blade is the thinnest in the Colima line. It’s intended for usage in agricultural, gardening, and construction projects. Skinny twigs and weeds won’t stand a chance against the dual-sided whacking action. You will have to get used to the length, though, and the blade naturally comes with aesthetic blemishes.

7 In other words, this is a solid work machete, but it’s

probably not pretty enough to hang on your wall. If those things don’t bother you, then you can pick up this solid piece for approximately \$25.



Cold Steel All-Terrain Chopper

The All-Terrain Chopper is another entry in the long blade category, with a length of 21.5” for the blade and an entire body that’s 30.5” long. The blade is carbon steel, and it has a matte, anti-rust finish and a standard edge. If you’re looking for a monstrously powerful machete that can easily accomplish heavy clearing, you should definitely consider this item.

A few caveats, though. First, the length and heft of this machete makes it more suitable for people who are strong and fairly tall. By using two hands, you’ll make easy work of trees, limbs, and brush. At the same time, you’ll need to have the physical endurance to keep swinging this beast. The case it comes with also isn’t the best (that seems to be a common problem, doesn’t it?).

Overall, if you’re doing everyday work that requires something with this much heft, the you can’t do much better than the All-Terrain Chopper. This isn’t a good option for backpacking or your bug out bag, though, due to its length and weight. This one retails for \$59 with a sheath.



Condor Mini Duku Parang Machete

This blade is 10” and the overall machete is just shy of 17” long. It boasts a finished, hardwood handle made from Central American hardwoods. The blade is made from high carbon steel and has a 4.5mm thickness. This product has some heft to it and weighs approximately 1.5 pounds.

This machete is small, but it packs a powerful punch. It has a convex edge and a full tang, distal tapered design. It’s also made to be extremely sharp and easily cuts through 3” limbs. This Mini Duku Parang is small enough to be easy to handle, but it does have some real weight to it. It’s also sturdy and fits comfortably in our hands.

If we have to say something negative about this machete, then it would probably be the price. Online, this often sells for around \$80. That’s not actually out of line for a quality machete, but this one is smaller than many of its competitors at this price point. Still, we wouldn’t let that stand in the way, especially if the size, weight, and power suit your specific needs.



Gerber Gator Bolo Machete

This is a beautiful machete that is long enough and strong enough to become your all-purpose, everyday machete. The design is based on the machete’s traditional jungle tool roots, but it’s been modernized and turned into a utility tool that everyone can use. Its best uses are cutting wood, chopping coconuts and other food, and clearing vegetation.

Gerber bills this machete as “one-part hedge trimmer, one-part axe,” and this is an accurate description. The blade is 15.5” long, and it’s constructed from corrosion resistant steel. It also has a slip-free grip and a full tang build.

The Gator Bolo comes with a wrist strap lanyard for added safety. There’s a sheath as well. The weight of

this machete is actually so far on the light side that some people may not feel fully confident in it.

Most users report being happy with its performance, although there have been a few complaints about manufacturing defects. If you choose this item, be sure to put it through its paces early on so that you can contact Gerber if there are any issues. You can pick it up online for only \$33.



Ontario 18” Military Machete

This is billed as a military machete, and we have no doubts that Ontario is providing the same strength as the blades they supply to the U.S. military. At the same time, this can be used in a variety of everyday ways, ranging from clearing shrubs to chopping down small trees. The blade is 18” and the overall body of this machete is 24” long.

This unit is designed to be no-frills. Therefore, instead of spending a lot of time making a piece that looks nice on someone’s wall, Ontario focuses on providing a solid, high quality product. With the black finish, though, this machete is still very eye-catching.

The riveted handle is made from molded plastic, and you’ll need to supply your own sheath. Of course, for only \$20, that’s not to be unexpected. The blade is made from carbon steel. One thing to note is that the plastic handle can get a bit slippery at times. Fortunately, you can solve this problem by using some sports grip.

This machete is very tough and can hold up to a lot of abuse. It can also be heavy to swing, so keep that in mind if you’ll be doing extensive clearing work with it.

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Columbia River Onion Halfchance Parang Machete

This might just be the only machete on this list that can rightfully claim to have been designed by an award-winning custom knifemaker. Ken Onion created the Halfchance as the ultimate survival parang. The carbon steel blade is nice and thick, and it has a durable black powder coating.

The blade is 12” long, and the handle was made with ergonomics and grip in mind. This is intended to make it easier for you to cut your way through the brush for longer periods of time without succumbing to exhaustion. There’s also multiple lanyard holes to help secure the machete to your hand in your preferred manner.

Halfchance easily cuts through small trees and brush, which makes it great for cleaning up a yard, walking through a heavily wooded environment, or cleaning up a campsite. The very firm grip helps you chop with ease.

The sheath is high quality, and the price of this product is only \$40. There have been a few reports of manufacturing defects, so be sure to check yours out very carefully. Columbia River Knife and Tool typically has good customer service, so any issues should be taken care of quickly.

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Kershaw Camp 18

This stylish, attractive looking machete has, as the name implies, an 18” blade. The blade is also full tang for added power and durability. One of our favorite features is the textured, contoured, polymer handle. The base is durable, and the rubberized grip makes it practically impossible to experience slippage.

The Kershaw Camp 18 is suitable for everything you’d need or want from a campsite clearing machete. In other words, it can handle trail maintenance, brush clearing, small tree removal, removing tough vines, and stripping bark. All of these things are useful in the woods, and they can also help you maintain a large property.

We can’t put this statement to the ultimate test, but the manufacturer claims this machete is ideal for usage during the zombie apocalypse. What we can confirm is that it works well on farms and in backcountry. We also have every reason to believe it would perform admirably in a jungle.

It does come with some minor blade grind issues, and the blade coating isn’t durable. Therefore, if maintaining the black blade appearance is important to you, then you might want to look elsewhere. Of course, the coating on most blades wears off over time.

This product typically sells for less than \$50. It weighs 2 pounds, 14 ounces and comes with a sheath.

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Fixed Blade 14” Rambo Tactical Machete

This product certainly conjures up memories of the Sylvester Stallone film series, but it’s actually a great machete, too. This is especially impressive considering the tendency to produce shoddy products that are tied into popular entertainment.

The 14” Rambo from Fixed Blade is made from stainless steel. It’s discretely sized at only 10” long, so you can stash it in your backpack or bug out bag. The two-sided, utility usages makes it ideal for many activities, including brush clearing, camping, outdoor adventures, and fishing. It’s also a handy, durable machete that can be wielded for self-defense.

The blade itself is approximately 8” long, which may be a bit too short for some people. On the plus side, Fixed Blade offers a 100% money back guarantee, so you can give this machete a try risk free.

The machete is solid enough to have some power, but not so heavy that it becomes a burden to use. If we’re being completely honest, this design is also pretty badass looking, and using the machete is a lot of fun. It’s also only \$32 online, which makes the overall package very enticing.

Picking a Machete

Now that you’ve learned about a nice mixture of styles, lengths, and price points (mostly ranging from \$20-\$80), it’s time to select one (or two!) machetes to add to your everyday tools and survival gear.

Only you know exactly what your needs are, but we do have a few pointers. If you’re on the short side or don’t have a lot of physical strength, it’s best to go with one of the shorter, lighter weight options. And if you want to get the most possible uses out of your new machete, be sure to carefully consider one of the tactical, utility blade options.

Also, always remember that looking cool should be the least of your concerns – unless you’re only buying a machete to hang it on the wall, that is. Look for the right specs first, and then you can find a machete that won’t let you down when you need it the most.





7 Medical Hacks for a World Without ERs



Medical Hack #1:

First Line of Defense is to Prevent Injuries

You made it through a collapse situation relatively unscathed. Congratulations! Now you'll want to keep yourself in good condition by exercising the proper amount of caution and by using preventive measures regarding your health and well-being.

As Bear Grylls said, "The first rule of survival is to not get injured."

Take his words to heart and always wear protective gear, including shoes, a hat, and eye protection. You'll especially want to take care of your feet. Your health will most likely depend on your mobility, and your

footwear should be designed to run at a moment's notice.

The U.S. Armed Forces are always reminded to protect their feet because they are one of your body's most vulnerable areas in combat situations. Crash scenes, battle fields, and disaster areas are littered with debris just waiting to be stepped on, causing sores to fester. Also, you'll want to cut your toenails straight across the tips to avoid ingrown toenails and infection.



Medical Hack #2:

Beg, Borrow and Stockpile Antibiotics

Stockpiling antibiotics could be the difference between life and death in a world without ERs. However, it's important to keep in mind that the following recommendations regarding antibiotics go against current medical advice. So only use this advice about antibiotics if you do not have access to medical resources.

This type of creative thinking can help you get much-needed medicine, thereby increasing your odds of long-term survival and putting you exactly where you want to be once the SHTF. Besides, you'll be better suited to the task with medicine that fights disease such as antibiotics.

Every prepper should have a wide variety of antibiotics and antivirals in their arsenal. Whether your health is 100 percent or not, it is going to be very difficult to get by without them. Believe it or not, you could actually die from a splinter if there is a shortage of antibiotics.

Anytime a wound breaks the surface of your skin, you need to take precautions and look out for skin reddening or festering. If either of these unpleasant things happen, you need to be treated quickly with the right antibiotics.

You would think that stockpiling antibiotics would be difficult to do before a collapse situation. To a certain degree it is, but a little creative thinking can get around that difficulty. The availability of antibiotics would allow the possibility of dealing with infections.

Short-Term Solution: One to Two Courses of Antibiotics and Antivirals



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The following plan is good for a short-term solution and will give you one to two courses of antibiotic

or antiviral therapy. Simply tell your doctor that you will be out of the country and would like something prescribed to fight “Travelers’ Diarrhea.”

You can also ask for Flagyl, Doxycycline, and Amoxicillin for bacterial and protozoal diseases. Likewise, you can ask for the antiviral Tamiflu during influenza season by telling them you are exhibiting flu-like symptoms during your visit.

Longer-Term Solution: Fish Antibiotics

An army physician by the name of Brandon J. Goff wrote to the New England Journal of Medicine about his encounter with an anonymous Army Special Forces soldier who had a sinus infection. What was interesting about the contents of this letter was that the soldier obtained fish antibiotics from a pet store to treat his sinus infection. According to Goff, the soldier went on to say that getting antibiotics in this fashion was common knowledge within the American Special Forces community.

Now it may be little reckless to rely on fish antibiotics when civilization is our safety net, but in the absence of such amenities, you'll want to be thinking ahead to provide enough antibiotics to protect your family or group in a collapse situation.

Going this route will allow you to have an alternate supply of antibiotics when needed. And if you were to inspect the bottles on fish antibiotics, the label would reveal that the only ingredients contained within were antibiotics, the same that you can pick up with a prescription at your nearby pharmacy. In other words, you actually can easily stockpile antibiotics that would otherwise be practically impossible to obtain in large quantities.

Some bird antibiotics are the same way, but steer clear from dog and cat medications because they can contain other chemicals. Of course, if you have pets, it's also wise to stock up on antibiotics for them.

The following is a sample list of fish antibiotics and their human equivalents that will be beneficial to stockpile in anticipation of a collapse situation:

- Fish-Mox (Amoxicillin)
- Fish Flox Forte (Ciproflaxin)

- Fish-Cillin (Ampicillin)
- Fish-Zole (Metronidazole)

Fish antibiotics are available without a prescription in lots of approximately 30-100.

Continuing, you may not want to buy antibiotics that are meant for aquarium creatures, or you may want to team your stockpiled medicines with alternative medicines. It's always good not to put all your eggs in one basket, right?



Medical Hack #3: Grow Plants with Medicinal and Healing Properties

Modern studies have scientifically proven that garlic and numerous other plants used by traditional healers do contain important antibacterial properties. There is even a traditional Welsh rhyme that can help you remember your options:

“Eat leeks in March and wild garlic in May, and all the year after the physicians may play.”

The process of using scientifically proven plants for healing is called Phytotherapy. Anyone who is looking around for alternatives to antibiotics will want to embrace this by growing plants that have antibacterial properties.

Aside from garlic and leaks, you may want to grow calendula, cayenne pepper, thyme, and eucalyptus. Additionally, some essential oils such as oils of clove and tea tree have antibacterial properties. They even fight gingivitis when rubbed on gums or when used to brush your teeth. You can also make antiseptic mouthwash by soaking cinnamon sticks in a jar of

water. Because there is plenty of stress to go around in collapse situations, you'll also want to try cultivating and using plants that contain adaptogens. Adaptogens help your body adapt to chemical, physical, and environmental stressors. Plants in this class include rhodiola rosea and panax ginseng.

If there are actually any left when society collapses, you can also raise honeybees. The honey they produce is another natural substance that contains antimicrobial properties.

If you can get past the ick factor, maggot secretions used in wound therapy have broad-spectrum antimicrobial activity. Their secretions include urea, allantoin, phenylacetic acid, calcium carbonate, phenylacetaldehyde, and proteolytic enzymes, just to name a few. Nonetheless, if you decide to use maggot therapy, there are a lot of pitfalls you can fall into if you don't know how to do it properly, which leads us into the next section.

Medical Hack #4: Educate Yourself Before Disaster Strikes

We can't stress enough the importance of knowing as much as you can about any medicines you have on hand post-SHTF. You'll definitely also want to purchase a copy of the annual Physician's Desk Reference. It contains information existing on the different types of medication, including those not requiring a prescription. You'll find dosage instructions, indications, and the risks and side effects associated with each major medication listed within its pages.

For instance, cephalosporin and penicillin is typically available in 500 mg dosages for adults that are taken 3-4 times daily. Antibiotics such as these will be worth their weight in gold during and after a collapse situation. It makes sense to be able to make more if supplies eventually run out, correct? The logical answer seems to be to make your own batches. Unfortunately, that's a good way to lose a limb or get seriously ill.

Fortunately, you can get around this issue by getting training in areas such as nutrition, botany, or chemistry, to name a few – then you can be self-sufficient in many ways. Regarding the medicine, you can only legally manufacture that in a post-collapse situation.

In fact, according to the law, not only is it illegal to manufacture your own medicine but it's also illegal to possess any medication without a current valid prescription. Steer clear of this issue entirely by learning the techniques and ingredients you'd use without actually making anything.

Medical Hack #5: Manufacture and Replenish Supplies

By the time your food and medicine run out, will you even remember what ER stands for? Probably not. As your supplies run low, stashes in drugstores, supermarkets, and hospitals will also rapidly deplete. And we're just talking about canned food, toiletries, and the like. Antibiotics and medical supplies will be long gone, as well, if not expired.

Guess what? Even the most well-laid plans can be laid to waste. Items you stockpile, from antibiotics to tampons, are going to run out or expire if the collapse situation is widespread or lasts long enough. In this worse-case scenario, you only have two options: do without or make your own.

How to Make Your Own Medicine



It's natural for survivalists to want to make their own medicine. But if you don't do it properly, you could make your situation much, much worse. When in doubt, it's probably best not to attempt these methods. This is especially true because it's illegal to try them out now, but as a novice medicine maker after the SHTF, your odds of doing more harm than good are really high.

Despite this, we're going to tell you how you could theoretically make penicillin. Be forewarned that there's nothing simple about this process. It's also

imperative that you never give penicillin to anyone who is allergic to Keflex or penicillin.

Once again, for those in the back row: The following information is for informative purposes only and shouldn't be used unless society has collapsed. And even then, you'll be taking a big risk unless you can be 100 percent certain that everything is done perfectly. We don't endorse trying this without the proper background, nor will we be held responsible for any injuries that result from making homegrown penicillin.

Getting Started



Penicillin is derived from the fungus penicillium. Unfortunately, you can't simply allow mold to grow and call it a day. Instead, after the fungus has grown, you must expose it to the right form of stressors.

Begin by growing the fungus and making a culture of it. This means giving the penicillium fungus a controlled environment where it can multiply at a microscopic level. Keep any and all animals and anything else that isn't sterile away from the culture.

Now that we have that out of the way, let's learn how to make penicillin!

Step One

Choose a cantaloupe rind, citrus peel, or slice of bread. Leave it exposed at a 70-degree temperature until the greenish-blue mold develops.

Once you've reached this point, make fresh whole wheat bread without mycoban (most store-bought bread has this). You'll need to cut two slices into half-inch cubes. Next, grab a non-absorbent plug

and a 750ml Erlenmeyer flask. Put the bread cubes into the flask, then sterilize everything by setting your pressure cooker to 15 pounds for 15 minutes. And yes, you want to sterilize the flask with the bread cubes in it.

Once this is complete, use careful, sterile means to take the fungus that has grown on your rind, peel, or bread and put it into the flask with the freshly sterilized bread cubes. Put the flask in the dark, set the temperature to 70 degrees, and leave the entire thing alone for five days of incubation.

Step Two

If you're still with us at this point, be sure to hang on tight because things are about to get a lot more difficult.

You must prepare a one-liter solution using the following ingredients and measurements:

- Lactose Monohydrate 44.0 gm
- Corn Starch 25.0 gm
- Sodium Nitrate 3.0 gm
- Magnesium Sulfate 0.25 gm
- Potassium MonoPhosphate 0.50 gm
- Glucose Monohydrate 2.75 gm
- Zinc Sulfate 0.044 gm
- Manganese Sulfate 0.044 gm

Without a gram scale that can measure to the tiniest possible amount, you'll never be able to get these measurements correct. You may also need to invest in a huge quantity of each ingredient from a chemical supply store in order to have the things you'll need on hand if the SHTF.

Pour 500ml of cold water into a sterile glass container and then dissolve each chemical listed above into it, in the order listed. After which, you'll need to add more cold water until you've got one-liter total.

A pH test kit is imperative for the next part of this process. Your pH level in the solution needs to be between 5.0 and 5.5. Use hydrochloric acid as needed to hit this metric. To get the best results, fill multiple

right amount in each container when you can put it on its side without the liquid touching the plug.

Now it's time to sterilize the containers again with the solution inside them. Use the same method in the previous step above.

After everything cools off, you can scrape up a tablespoon of the bread cubes' fungus and add it to the solution.

The containers will need to incubate for seven days now. Put them on their side and keep them at 70 degrees. Do NOT allow them to get moved during this period.

After seven days, use a coffee filter to catch the liquid portion of the solution in bottles. Plug and refrigerate them right away.

Step Three



You're now ready to extract the penicillin!

The cold solution must be adjusted to 2.2 pH. Use .01% hydrochloric acid. Using a separatory funnel with a stopcock, mix the cold solution with cold ethyl acetate. Shake it very well for 30 seconds.

The ethyl acetate should be on the bottom. Put a beaker into an ice bath and then drain the ethyl acetate into the beaker. Then repeat the process. Next, you'll add 1% potassium acetate and mix everything.

Let the ethyl acetate evaporate off after this. You can help induce this by running a fan or another constant flow of air over the beaker. Once everything dries, you'll have crystals that are mixture of potassium acetate and potassium penicillin.

The Results

If you have everything you need and pull it all off correctly, you'll have made penicillin. But if you're anything like us, reading through all of this makes it abundantly clear that this isn't a very viable option. Which is exactly why you need to stock up on legal antibiotics right now. It would be a real shame to die from an infection or to make yourself even sicker after the SHTF because you botched the penicillin recipe.



Medical Hack #6: Tweak Your Diet

Do you know how to get the proper nutrients to prevent issues such as scurvy and rickets? Taking a nutrition class will be greatly helpful in this regard. But here are a few quick tips: Vitamin C is essential to prevent scurvy, Vitamin D prevents rickets, and an Omega-3 fatty acids supplement might help reduce depression symptoms. You can also use eggshells as a calcium supplement and prevent anemia by using iron cookware.

If you have access to fish, you can naturally provide your body with plenty of Omega-3s. The best resources for this nutrient are salmon, trout, sardines, canned albacore tuna, and herring.

Aside from this, your best course of action is to eat a primarily plant-based diet that is high in fruits and vegetables. You can also get a lot of your daily nutrients from fortified cereal, but make sure it isn't high in sugar or sodium.

Medical Hack #7: Prepare Your Body and Mind

16 Can you walk five miles (or more) per day without being in a world of pain the next morning? Are you

flexible enough to pull off complex maneuvers? Do you have the physical strength and stamina to chop firewood and complete other essential tasks?

Start preparing your body now by starting a daily workout routine. Be sure to alternate exercises throughout the week to get the best overall results. Walking or running, weight lifting, resistance training, and increasing your flexibility (through tai chi or yoga) will go a long way toward ensuring you're able to deal with a post-collapse world.

Having your body prepared will also make it easier to prepare your mind. Another aspect of mental preparation is taking steps to keep your spirits up. After all, whether it's the end of society or you're simply at work, you need to be healthy enough mentally to want to survive. Otherwise, to put it quite bluntly, you won't.

Let's add a word about supplements here because they often get a bad rap. In times of peril, life is challenging, and you may benefit from them if there isn't access to fresh food sources. To explain, there is research out there saying that vitamins and supplements don't work like they should.

However, prenatal vitamins have been recommended by OB/GYNS for years to expecting mothers as a solution to gaps in their nutrition. Even ketchup has kept many a youngster from getting scurvy during modern times when processed stuff passes for food. So, clearly supplements and other alternative to fresh foods can be good for your health in certain situations and in times of crises.

That reasoning can really be used to your advantage during collapse situations. One supplement that works well for building stamina and stands out for preparing you mentally is Phenylethylamine, or PEA for short. UFC fighters use it to condition themselves for fights. On the other hand, the similar-sounding Phenylalanine also doubles as an anti-depressant, controlling your mood when black clouds of depression will hang over you like a fog during the hardest times.

In a similar fashion, your brain doesn't even need to be prone to dark thoughts; you will still need to be prepared for the hopelessness that you're likely

to carry around after a large-scale disaster. To that end, research shows that St. John's Wort has benefits similar to antidepressants.

On an interesting side note, some studies show that St. John's Wort was not any more effective than placebo when treating symptoms of major depression. Here's the kicker; though, conventional drugs also studied didn't fare any better. Guess which one is easier to get ahold of? The answer to that is a no-brainer and St. John's Wort can be grown in your backyard, making it more easily accessible.



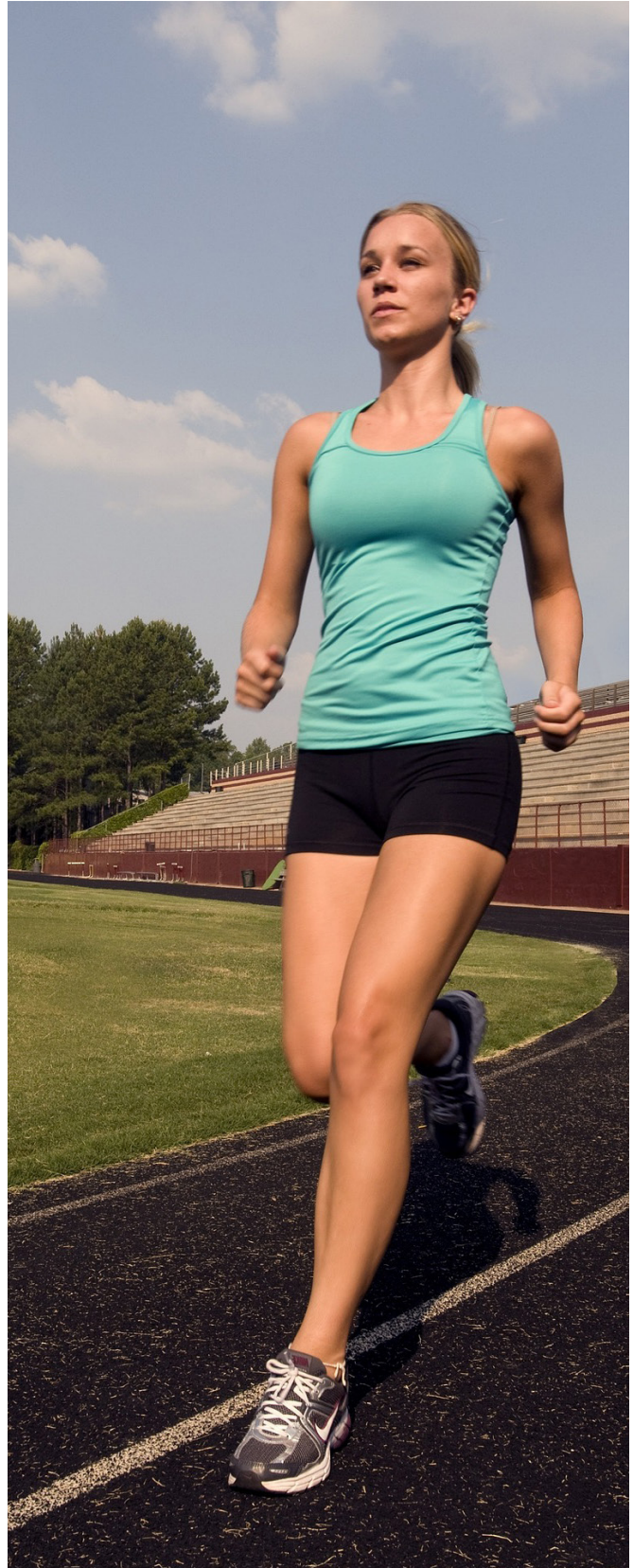
Other common supplements that fight depression also combat inflammation. Keep in mind that inflammation can hurt you during everyday parts of your life, too. The five top ones are Fish oil, B-complex vitamins, L-Theanine, 5-HTP, and Vitamin D. Some of the big five also help blood pressure and anxiety, as well. In other words, all five have good and multiple attributes to take advantage of post-SHTF.

So, to sum all this up, you can help keep your mental preparedness in line through exercising, eating a balanced diet, stockpiling necessary supplies (for peace of mind), and keeping some items on hand that are purely for mental stimulation/fun. A few prime examples would be books, board games, and adult coloring books.

Final Thoughts

As you can plainly see, some of these medical hacks are easier and more viable than others. We don't suggest relying on your ability to make antibiotics (although if you have everything needed and a good understanding of the process, it might just save your life), but we do recommend stockpiling meds, eating

getting more educated about health and survival topics, growing the right plants, and taking steps to prevent injuries altogether. When put altogether, this provides you with your best chance for survival in a post-SHTF world.





THE TOP 6 BEST DRY FIRE TOYS

As we stated several times in part 1, the best place to tune up your shooting techniques is inside your “Dry Fire Facility” (AKA your garage, shed, spare bedroom). The more convenient the location is for you, the better. That’s because you don’t need a huge investment of time; just 15 minutes, a couple of times a week, can really make a difference.

To keep things interesting in the dry fire facility, we highly recommend you invest in a couple training accessories, maybe even periodically. We all like new toys because we’re excited to mess around with them and learn how they work. But the best part is that these can really help you engage with your training in a new way. Heck, we’ll come right out and say it, these things are fun to play around with.

DRY FIRE CARDS

Let’s begin at the beginning. One of the hardest things when it comes to dry fire training is getting **18** started. By the time you get your gear and your space

all set up, the mind tends to go blank. “What do I do?” is the most common dry fire training question we get. It’s true, once you work through a few of the basics, it’s hard to come up with new and engaging ways to train.

If that sounds like you, these cards are a great solution. The drills listed on these cards are literally plucked from the US military and competitive shooting programs. So, not only are they exciting but they’re very apt for anyone looking to advance their self-defense or competitive shooting skills.



The beauty of the cards is that, if and when your mind goes blank during your training, you can simply draw a card and get back in the game. Plus, they really help you build a well-rounded training regimen.

BARRELBLOK TRAINING SYSTEM



One of the most common complaints we hear from shooters who want to train with their actual CCW is that they are constantly feeling the need to do redundant safety checks. Again, this is a very good impulse safety-wise, but a bit of a constant drag on your training. It makes it a lot harder to get in “the zone.”

One excellent way to overcome this is the Barrel Blok system. This system, as we’ll call it (it’s actually just a few pieces of polyurethane), allows you to do a couple of things with your dry fire weapon. First, there’s a bright colored plug that fits inside your pistol’s chamber, blocking (or is it blocking?) any chance of a live round feeding in. Attached to the plug is a flag that sticks out of the barrel, letting the operator know that the gun is totally safe.

The second piece of the system goes into your magazine. This bushing actually creates the pressure of another round in the magazine, tricking your slide and allowing you to rack it freely as if the weapon is loaded. This allows you to practice speed magazine changes, malfunction drills, and reset the firing pin as you might in live fire tactical shooting drill.

Another nice thing about the Blok system is price. It's much less expensive than buying a training pistol or laser system. For under \$20, you can practice with a very high degree of realism, using your actual firearm, and avoid any disassembly.

SIRT TRAINING PISTOL



Next Level Training's SIRT Pistol (Shot Indicating Resetting Trigger) is probably the most popular choice among the gear fanboys. And the concept behind this laser training pistol

ties in perfectly with many of the brain training fundamentals we've discussed in this series.

In short, these laser guns provide a completely safe, lifelike experience that users can run dry fire drills with and get a high degree of feedback from the comfort of home. The SIRT Performer models indicate both trigger uptake, engaging a red laser when you take the slack out of the trigger, and a green laser to simulate your shot. The combination is an excellent recipe for focusing on trigger control mechanics.

Most of us don't get much feedback on our hold, only sight picture and the actual shot placement on a target. Let us tell you, watching a laser bounce around all over a target during your supposedly "rock-steady" target hold is enlightening, if not a little unnerving. The greater value though is training yourself to adopt a slow trigger release where you can feel a reset, rather than just releasing it all at once.

And that's good, because one area where the SIRT really shines is the excellent trigger feel and reset. These pistols do a great job mimicking the real thing and have a nice reset "click" as well. The high quality of these training pistols is a pleasant surprise for

most users. They come with weighted magazines for running quick change drills, and those have a really nice and realistic feel as well.

There are only two notable downsides with the SIRT, from our perspective. First off, it's missing a couple of features we'd like to see, i.e. some kind of dots/markings on the open sights and a working blowback slide. The other downside is price. We'll just come out and say it, these things ain't cheap. The base models start at around \$279.

Currently, Next Level Training offers several models, either faithful reproductions of two very popular platforms, the Glock 17 or the full-size Smith & Wesson M&P. They also carry a generic "Pocket Pistol" intended to replicate compact carry pistols.

LASERLYTE LASER TRAINER REVOLVER



If your primary handgun happens to be a revolver, you've probably been shaking your head. None of the aforementioned training systems even pay lip service to this classic and still very

popular segment. The LaserLyte system stands alone here, which is another way of saying it's your only choice.

The good news here is that this pistol, designed to model the S&W J-Frame dimensions, is arguably the best training pistol LaserLyte makes. One of the biggest complaints we hear about the LaserLyte semi-automatic trainers is a ridiculously long trigger pull and reset. The same trigger, when placed in a double-action revolver replica, is actually very true to life.

Another bonus with the LaserLyte system is that the laser activates for 1/10th of a second, unlike the SIRT, which remains on as long as you hold the trigger. That comes in handy if you are using an interactive target system of some kind, of which LaserLyte offers several. If you use a SIRT and hold the trigger down, it can cause these systems to malfunction, registering multiple shots, etc.

Perhaps the best news regarding the LaserLyte is that it's not anywhere near as expensive as buying an actual firearm, unlike the SIRT. As of this writing, the LaserLyte revolver is listed at \$40 on Amazon, and you can get the full "shooting gallery" package with the revolver plus 3 interactive targets for \$200.

Truth be told, the LaserLyte trainer pistols are no match for SIRT in the quality department. But they are substantially more affordable. At SIRT prices, it's tough for most gun nuts not to just buy a real semiauto.

MANTISX

Here's something for those who like to mix their shooting with their smartphone, but not the way you're probably thinking.



The actual product here is an accessory that fits on your handgun's rail system, much like a laser sight. Rather than projecting light toward your target, this gizmo tracks the movement of your firearm during your trigger pull.

The data, analysis, and recommendations are all delivered through a smartphone app that communicates with the device on your pistol's rail. If you like apps, smartphones, and technology in general, this might be a winner for you.

You can use the MantisX during dry fire or live fire target practice and it will score your technique and give you information about what you are actually doing as your trigger breaks. As we've discussed before, it's surprisingly difficult to self-diagnose some shooting issues, even during dry fire drills. The MantisX software will tell you if you're slapping the trigger, flinching, etc. The software even tells you which direction you are moving the muzzle as you pull the trigger.

REPLICA AIR PISTOL

Did we save the best for last? This one is certainly our favorite option, for reasons that will soon become obvious. Thing is, this recommendation goes for

those who have access to a space to shoot BB guns and also for those who don't.



Many gurus recommend blowback laser training pistols or even pricey airsoft replicas. You can get many of the same features in a much cheaper air pistol like the S&W M&P. Thus,

even if you never put a BB through your air pistol, it's functionally the same and much cheaper. And while some may argue that shooting BBs isn't truly "dry firing," it is a heck of a lot of fun – so who cares?

Obviously, an air pistol is optimal if you can practice in a backyard where you can literally fire at targets. But even without the ability to shoot a projectile, some of the more advanced models have functioning blowback slides, and very realistic trigger mechanisms.

The weight, trigger pull, slide operation, and even the accuracy of these guns (at close range) does an impressive imitation of the real thing. And, of course, many of the replicas are designed with the same specs, so your CC holster and other everyday carry accessories are compatible with your training pistol.



We might go as far as to say that if you can find a well-made replica of your primary sidearm, you may simply use it for "dry fire" purposes and leave the real firearm in its holster. Many of the drills you might run, such as drawing from a concealed holster and clearing rooms, are just as effective with a replica. Just remember, don't shoot your eye out!

We use a cheapo BB pistol quite often in our testing facility, and 95% of the time it's not even charged with CO2. And while there are a lot of things to like about the inexpensive models, we'd highly recommend paying the extra \$20 to get a working, blowback slide. Again, we recommend going for a blowback design like the Umarex 9XP blowback and the Walther PPS Co2.

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