



MEMBERS UPDATE

November, 2018



THE NSRA'S 2018

Christmas Shopping Cheat Sheet

12 DIY Ways to Slay Back Pain This Fall

6 Biggest Mistakes Hunters Make

IT'S LIKE HAVING YOUR VERY OWN **HUBBLE TELESCOPE** FOR HUNTING & SHOOTING!

You're looking at one of the most trusted tools by our nation's top snipers.

With the Ranger Spotting Scope you can find and hit targets hundreds of yards out. You can use it to practice your long distance target shooting or of course, looking for that prized six point buck.

The Ranger is both shockproof and water resistant.

When you look through the prism you'll enjoy rich 3D images with an anti-fog lens with no loss of light.

Also, each Ranger Spotting Scope comes equipped with a carrying case and tripod for easy deployment and packing.



RANGER **SPOTTING SCOPE**

SPECIFICATIONS

- 15x — 40x Magnification
See 400% more detail than with standard binoculars
- 50mm Objective Lens with focus adjustment
- Shock-absorbing rubber armor
- Small, ultraportable form factor
Only 9.5" long, with foldable mini-tripod
- Includes rugged carrying case
- Weather-resistant
- Anti-fog lens

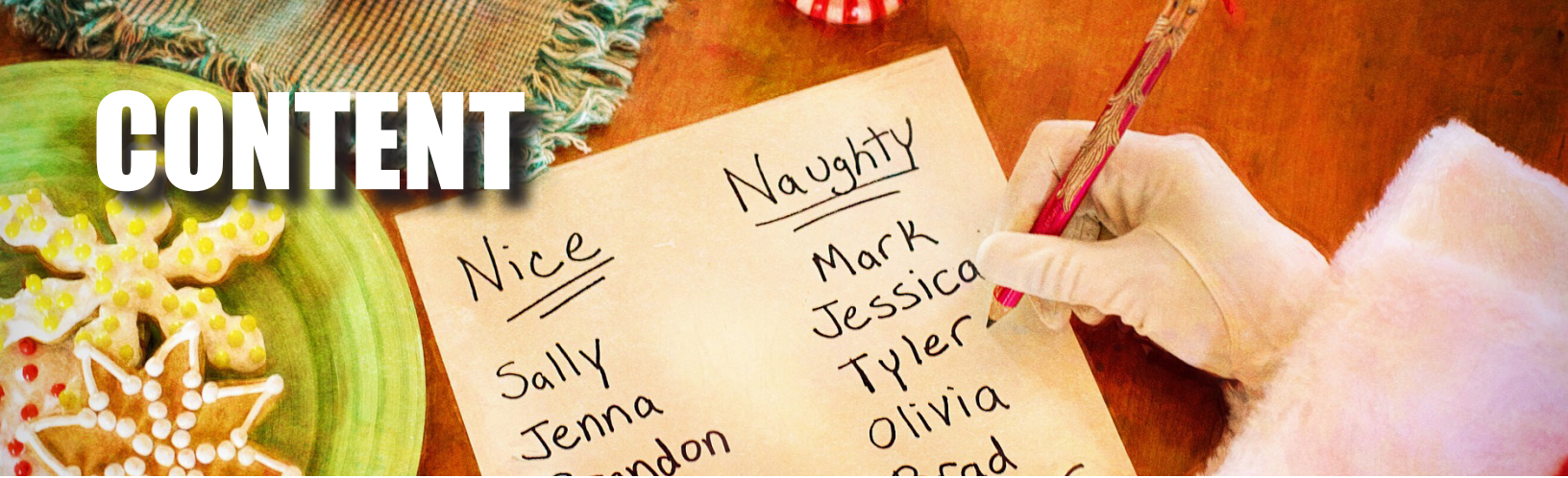



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The NSRA's 2018 Christmas Shopping Cheat Sheet

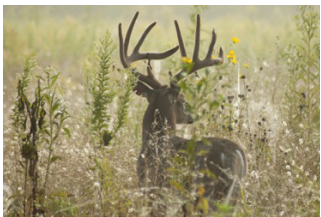
We've been building this list all year, and checking it far more than twice, to make sure this is the best damn shopping list around. Whether you're shopping for a lumberjack or a college freshman, we've got you covered.



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12 DIY Ways to Slay Back Pain

With so many important events coming up this season, you can't afford to be sidelined with debilitating lower back pain. Good news, you may not need to schedule a doctor's appointment or take prescription medication. Try this first.



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6 Biggest Mistakes Hunters Make

You've built the world's most elaborate deer blind, spent hours glassing game, and paid a small fortune on gear. The most critical next step is to avoid sabotaging your hunts by making these simple, yet costly high crimes of hunting.

Best Damn Christmas Gift Guide 2018

Just hear those steel targets jingling,
rimfire plinkering, too...

Come on it's lovely weather to throw
some washers together with you.

Outside the shells are falling
and your brother-in-law's hollerin'
"Woohoo!"

Come on it's lovely weather to pop
a cold beer or maybe a few...

Giddy up, giddy up let's go folks. We may not be able to fully automate your Christmas shopping this year, but we can help you put this often-stressful holiday process on cruise control.

One of the most precious resources, for each and every one of us, is time. That's why, after thinking long and hard about what we could do to spread some holiday cheer, we decided we'd like to help you save some of this precious resource. The NSRA's Best Damn Gift Guide is here to help you

knock your Christmas shopping out in one sitting, all online and on-budget.

It may sound crazy, but our goal is to make it so easy, all you need to do is wrap your packages when they arrive at your front doorstep. It's easier than ever to load your truck full of tactical gold for the good little boys and girls on your list!

We know what you might be thinking: Surely you can't find truly great gifts for everyone on your list online and under budget? And anyway, isn't the misery of trying to find parking spaces and standing in long checkout lines a necessary part of the Christmas experience? Just drive by any major big box retail area right now and you'll see hundreds of people who apparently believe that.



But we say let them have all the lines and shopping gridlock to their hearts' content. Why not save your time to spend with the ones you love? And while you're at it, you can save a little money too -- and brain cells -- because there's nothing worse than deciding on a gift for a loved one only to find that they've run out at this location... but they have 2 more in stock across town!

Yes, you really can knock it out of the park with a highly memorable gift for way less than you think. And we're talking the kind of gifts here that will keep your recipient smiling for many years as they pause to remember you -- the thoughtful gift master who so generously and effortlessly came through bigly on Christmas Eve.

What Makes This the Best Damn List



There are two major reasons that the NSRA's gift guide is so powerful. First off, this guide is the byproduct of, dare we say it, a level of resourcefulness only a self-reliance publication is capable of. We've been working on this Christmas list all year long, and checking it twice so you can have the best damn gifting cheat sheet around!

And the second, equally powerful, reason is that we've partnered with MyCrisisGear to feature several of their best-selling products at the lowest possible prices. So, if you have hunters, outdoor-types, and/or shooting enthusiasts on your list -- you have a secret gifting weapon at your disposal. We have several of these one-size-fits-all secret weapons sprinkled throughout this list like a splash of rum in your eggnog.

We know how difficult it is to make decisions once shopping fatigue sets in. You're at a big box shop-o-plex, trying to find that perfect gift that really sums up how much you care. But all you see is a bunch of overpriced crap, with only a couple items that are remotely interesting. Which one will you pick? It's tunnel vision at its worst.

Our goal with this list is simple: We want to make shopping for your loved ones a cinch, by offering up a slate of top-notch, memorable gifts that all come in at \$50 or less... tactical gifts, thoughtful gifts, and even heirloom gifts. There's something on this list for everyone on yours, and all of these items are available online too so you don't have to arm-wrestle anyone for the last one on the shelf.

YETI Rambler

Let's start with a dirt simple, one-size-fits-all item that's pretty much perfect for any who, a.) Enjoys cold or hot beverages, and b.) Wants their beverage to stay that way for as long as it takes to enjoy every last drop. For this not-so-rare type of individual (who you may not have any other ideas for), we highly recommend the YETI Rambler.



Yes, for a travel mug at least, the Rambler is not exactly cheap. But for a Christmas gift, it's not really all that expensive either. And the fact is that the Rambler, in all honesty, is the highest quality travel mug we've ever tested, and that includes some of the offering from some very direct competitors.

Interestingly enough, what sets the Rambler apart isn't actually the vacuum insulated, no-sweat design of the tumbler itself; it's the lid. YETI's MagSlider

lid is just extremely well insulated and seals up tighter than a duck's butt. We wouldn't go so far as to call it spill-proof, but the lid is substantially better than the imitators.

For \$35, the 30oz Rambler is about as nice a travel mug as it gets. Plus, there's the cachet of owning something that says YETI on the side, if that does anything for them. If you're shopping for a coffee drinker, the 20oz is ideal. For folks who like to ice it down, we'd suggest the 30oz.

Retail: \$35 on Amazon

MCG Tactical Laser Sight

Got a tactical shooting junkie on your list? Or maybe just a gun nut who also loves playing around with new gadgets? As an NSRA subscriber, chances are pretty high that you know somebody (or a dozen somebodies) like this.



Well, here's your chance to come off like a hero, because you can give the gift of great accuracy this year with a high-quality laser sight, developed by a US Army veteran. The MCG gun laser is compatible with pretty much any of the best-selling semiautomatic handguns on the market today. Almost all of the current polymer designs come standard with an accessory rail.

Likewise, any sporting rifle, airsoft, or paintball gun with a weaver or Picatinny rail mount is compatible with this laser sight. The housing of this sight is

made of high strength aircraft aluminum, with an easily accessible on/off toggle switch. It projects a powerful red laser that's ideal for shooting ranges, varmint hunting, or even dry fire practice.

We can attest to this, using a laser has made us far more aware of the rough spots in our technique, e.g. trigger pull, point of aim, etc. For those who want to take their handgun technique to the next level, laser sights are extremely helpful.

But the number one reason, by far, that makes this a great gift is that it makes you feel like an elite Special Forces badass when you're shooting. That's a pretty great bang for your buck when it comes to stocking stuffers.

Retail: \$20 at Mycrisisgear.com/laser

Vaschy Backpack

Here's something that even the pickiest young whippersnappers on your list will appreciate. Throwback style backpacks are hot stuff these days, convenient for us because backpacks are also super high-utility items from a self-reliance perspective.

Whether it's filled with a laptop, school supplies, or your "bug out" evacuation items, backpacks are the kind of gift that's perennially useful. Everyone needs a hands-free way to carry stuff back and forth from the car, to the office, to the gym. The Vaschy backpack is about as standard as a backpack can get, but in a really good way.



The fabric is a tried and true water-resistant polyester with leather where it counts, on the bottom and on the hog snout. In case you've ever wondered what that thing is for (the hog snout), it's for hanging things on the outside of your pack, like dirty shoes. It's got a convenient front pocket, a 14-inch laptop sleeve pocket inside, water bottle pockets on the sides, and a mesh pocket inside.

All in all, it's a very basic pack that serves its purpose well and appeals to both older and younger people. Plus, it's a really good deal at \$29 on Amazon. For a more buttoned up, business casual type of person, you might consider Vaschy's slightly larger leather laptop bag (also under \$50).

Retail: \$29 on Amazon

MCG Recon Binoculars 10X42mm

A good set of binoculars is a must-have for anyone who loves to spend time outdoors. It doesn't matter if your favorite destination is the beach, high in the mountains, or on a guided safari, haven't we all been on a sightseeing tour or three where we wished for superhuman vision?



Whether you use them for birdwatching, people watching, or even checking in on livestock from across the pasture, magnification is key to observing

the details of exactly what's going on. And don't even get us started on ballgames... the Recons come in handy there too.

The MCG Recon Binoculars have a rubberized, shockproof coating and handy flip-up lens covers to stand up to rugged outdoor use, but what interests most users is long distance clarity. That's where these binoculars really shine.

For any hunter or adventurer who's shopped a pair of capable binoculars, you quickly discover that \$100 or \$200 is considered an "entry-level" price. The 10X magnification, with the aid of cutting-edge BaK7 prisms that do the heavy lifting for the MCG Recons are the same ones you'd find in a set 5 times the price.

If you happen to know anyone who'd like the ability to count the whiskers on a trophy buck at dawn, these are an excellent choice. The clarity of these at full magnification is right on par with any of the name brands, just not the price.

Retail: \$40 at MyCrisisGear.com/recons

Magellan 40°F Mummy Sleeping Bag

If you have hunters, campers, National Park enthusiasts, or even college students on your list, a sleeping bag is pretty much a slam dunk gift idea. This mummy style bag from Magellan checks all the boxes, with a super soft liner that will keep you warm and cozy in temperatures down to 40°F. It's even got a zippered ventilation duct at the bottom to air-out your feet when temperatures are a little warm for that fiberfill insulation.

Designed with campers in mind, this bag features a water resistant, ripstop polyester taffeta outer shell to stand up to rugged nights out in the elements. It's also self-contained, coming with its own compression stuff sack, a must for easy portability.

While it's not rated for arctic temperatures, that's actually a good thing in our view. We find that a

nice 3 season bag is far more practical for the vast majority of users. They're also a lot more cost effective, coming in under \$40 at Academy.



Thing is, sleeping bags are one of those items everyone should own from a self-reliance perspective. Of course, they're synonymous with tent camping, but they're just as useful if you're on a road trip, RVing, or even in the event of a sudden evacuation. Sometimes you just don't know when you'll need a comfortable way to get some shuteye outdoors or even on someone's couch (or dorm room floor).

Retail: \$40 at Academy

Case XX Trapper

While we're on the topic of items that everyone in America should own, let's take a look at a super handy tool that folds neatly into a pocket, purse, or vest. We're not talking about just any pocket knife here, we're talking about a Case XX pocket knife.

This iconic American company out of Bradford, PA still makes the highest quality pocket knives around, with the best materials, and they're still made by hand. The Trapper model is as tried and true as they come, a best seller for Case for 100 years. How's that for a track record?



So why did we pick this knife? First and foremost, the Trapper is a very versatile pocket knife with a blade that holds an edge like few others. Available in either Chrome Vanadium (CV) or TrueSharp surgical stainless steel, one of the highly desirable features of a Case knife is the fact that they can be easily sharpened. According to the collectors, the CV tends to sharpen a bit easier, while the stainless version holds an edge a bit longer.

The second reason we picked this knife is there's a bustling collector's market for these knives, believe it or not. Maybe you'll get bit by the collecting bug or maybe not. Either way, it's cool to know that these things are an excellent bartering item, and that feature is included free of charge.

But the main reason we like the Trapper is that it's just so damn cool. You can choose a color and material for the scales that you think suits your recipient and they get a piece of American history. Who wouldn't want that?

Retail: \$40 (depending on color options)

MCG Reflex "Red Dot"

After extensive field testing, we're very happy to announce the NSRA's #1 Shooting Item of 2018! This reflex sight consistently delivered the most dramatic improvements in both speed and accuracy over traditional iron sights and traditional low-magnification optics.



There's a very powerful reason this technology was adopted by the US Military; and it's the same reason this optic performed so well in our testing. Simply put, it's the most user-friendly shooting technology out there.

Anyone who enjoys plinking, hunting, or target shooting can attest that the less they have to struggle to concentrate on their sight picture, the better their groups tend to get. This thing is like a little computer screen on top of your rifle. Reflex sights give you a video game-like ability to aim, allowing you to focus on trigger pull, breath technique, etc. No more struggling to align the front and rear sights and see the target clearly.

Ironically, the MCG Red Dot is just as popular with senior citizen shooters as it is with the younger generation shooters who love high-tech. The reason is, this sight plays well with glasses, and is the great equalizer for those who have poor eyesight. With the Red Dot, both the target and the glowing green or red (6 color and shape combinations) appear on the same plane.

This compact shooting device mounts easily on all Picatinny and Weaver rails, as well as many other scope rail systems. It's a bolt-on job that takes less than 2 minutes to install. Then, blam-o, you've got a high tech targeting system that makes shooting so much more fun!

Retail: \$35 on MyCrisisGear.com

Estwing Fireside Friend

When it comes to seasonal gifts with an outdoorsy flair, it's hard to beat this one. We've tested, recommended, and received tons of positive feedback regarding the Fireside Friend over the years.

Why is this small camp axe thing so popular? For starters, it packs a surprising amount of power and utility in a very compact tool. If you've ever owned a hatchet, you know how useful it isn't for tasks like splitting wood. Splitting axes, on the other hand, are huge and heavy, not particularly convenient to bring on a camping trip or swing in the backyard while tending your fire bowl.



In our experience, multi-tools are like multi-tasking. Yes, they can do several things. No, they don't compare well with a single purpose tool. The Fireside Friend is the rare exception. The backside doubles as a heavy shop sledge, while the grind on the blade is sharp enough to work as a hatchet.

It's only 4lbs and 14 inches tall, yet it splits wood as well as a full-sized splitting axe. In fact, the size and weight is designed to provide the optimal leverage and splitting power. Plus, we've always appreciated the solid full-metal construction and the shock reduction grip.

This splitting tool/wood maul checks a ton of boxes, making it a popular choice for a very wide variety of users and settings. Hey, don't believe us; go read some reviews online and you'll get a sense for how pleased people are with this thing.

Long story short, if you're shopping for someone who like to spend time around the fire, why not get them a friend?

Retail: \$35

Arcturus Military Wool Blanket

When it comes to items you didn't know you needed, military wool blankets are high on the list -- often climbing higher the longer you own one.



We received a US Army blanket as a gift roughly a decade ago. At the time, we said “thank you,” and kinda mentally shrugged it off, thinking: What the heck am I gonna do with this?

Fast forward about 6 months and we had used the blanket for sleeping, picnicking, and used it in place of a tarp for making repairs on the underside of a truck when stranded on a ranch road. Since then, it’s been a seat cover, outdoor area rug, and a warm dry surface to lie on while long distance hunting in the backcountry.

Obviously, being a military-spec design these are durable as can be, machine washable for convenience sake. One part saddle blanket, one part area rug, military blankets are also generously large, over 5’ X 7’ in size. Bottom line, these blankets are a unique, lifetime gift and they’re extremely useful at home or out camping.

Retail: \$38 on Amazon

just learning the ropes, or a forgetful driver who routinely goes 15,000 miles between oil changes, this is the kind of person we’re talking about.

But any type of driver, meticulous or not, could seriously benefit from having one of these babies in their trunk. The Stanley FatMax jump starter is a virtual “get out of jail free” card for drivers who forgot to turn their lights off or roll up with a shopping cart full of groceries only to notice they have a flat tire.

For anyone who likes road trips or makes long trips regularly, a portable battery pack is an excellent thing to keep on hand. Instead of jumper cables, flashlights, and an air-compressor, this jump starter does it all.

Plus, this Stanley can be used like a light-duty generator. With a simple inverter plug, it can run a stereo, Christmas lights, and charge your smartphone at the same time, pretty handy for campers, hunters, and boaters.

All that in a relatively small and lightweight package makes the Stanley Fatmax Jump Starter a slam dunk gift.

Retail: \$45 on Amazon

Stanley FatMax Jump Starter and Compressor

Leatherman Squirt PS4

Sometimes, the people who need automotive items most are the very ones who know the least about cars and maintenance. If you know a young driver who’s



When it comes to the difference between having the right tool when you need it and being up a creek without a paddle, it’s really nice to have a Leatherman. Although the Leatherman Squirt PS4 doesn’t list a paddle as one of its many functions, this tool covers a lot of bases and covers them well.

Slimmer and more stylish than the original Leatherman multitool, the Squirt is a miniaturized, pocket-friendly EDC tool. In fact, it comes standard with a split ring, ready to hop on your key ring. All folded up, the tool is smaller than many car key fobs these days.

The highlights are that this impressive mini tool is insanely carry-able, sleek, and performs its 9 tool functions at a high level. The tools in this arsenal, for the record, are 3 screwdrivers, a knife, scissors, a wire cutter, pliers, a file, and a bottle opener (but who really need that?).



Sure, it's not suited for heavy duty work in the oil fields, but this kind of tool is not designed as out and out replacement for any tool (besides a pocketknife). Instead, its virtue is being there when you need it, incredibly compact and portable. Read: It loves pockets, purses, backpacks, etc. It's the thing that's on your person when you need it.

While this tool is definitely jealousy inducing for the Everyday Carry (EDC) crowd, its appeal is far broader. This is a great tool for college students, 9-to-5ers, and people who don't typically carry any EDC tools.

Retail: \$35

The MCG Ranger Spotting Scope

Last but certainly not least is this high magnification optic with its own tripod. You hunters and long-distance shooters out there know exactly what a spotting scope is, but to the rest of the world this thing really seems like a telescope. In fact, we're not really sure what the difference actually is either, but who cares? This thing is awesome.

To make a long story short, when you're looking at something very far away, further than even your 10X magnification binoculars can see, you break out the big guns. In this case, it's the 40X magnification Ranger.

Particularly if you are watching animals from a vast distance, or you need to get a good look at a paper target that's a couple hundred yards away, there is no substitute. We've even used the Ranger for star

gazing and it's arguably better than most entry-level telescopes. Of course, the main applications this optic is built for are watching animals, birds, or faraway targets.

In fact, the modern spotting scope was developed for military purposes, being used by the "spotter" in a two-man sniper team. The spotter used his skills to identify targets, take notice of key challenges, and often watch vapor trails to determine where the bullets were traveling.

Both hunters and long-distance shooting teams use this instrument in much the same way. Someone with the more powerful magnification tells the other what they are seeing.

Recently, however, spotting scopes have become popular with nature watchers and even nature photographers who use adapters to take pictures through the optics with their smartphones. Pretty cool.



Retail: \$40 on MyCrisisGear.com

The Wrap-Up

Bottom line: We really hope we've helped take at least some of the pressure off when it comes to your Christmas shopping. These gifts are cool, on-budget, and most of them appeal to both soccer moms, grandfathers, and teenagers as well.

Plus, you can rest easy that each of these, beyond simply being desirable, also have a self-reliance dimension that gives the recipient ammunition to take charge of their own readiness if the need arises.

If that sounds like music to your ears, we urge you to hop online and knock that shopping out with some classic gifts. Then get back to what's truly important this season: Hunting. Just kidding, we meant spending time with your family and friends.

12 Stretches to Slay Lower Back Pain This Fall



Whether you suffer from old sports injuries, your work requires strenuous activity, or virtually no activity at all, we all suffer from various types of long-term back pain at some point.

Lower back pain while hunting, hiking, or just having fun in the wilderness can seriously damage the hobbies you look forward to all year. Once the back seizes up, your favorite outdoor activity is immediately overshadowed by a nagging discomfort that can last for days.

This pain comes from the back muscles tightening up after sitting in a particular stance for a long time, making a quick movement, or picking something up incorrectly and can lead to a long-term injury if not dealt with immediately.

While back pain is one of the most common reasons why people go to the doctor, there are many measures one can take before opting for surgery or pharmaceutical treatment. The most important preventative measure is being more aware of what your body is telling you. Often as not, many of us tough guys and gals find some virtue in ignoring pain. Bad move.

Left untreated, you might notice that your lower back is not the only thing impeding your movement. When you have a tight lower back, the tightness can spread throughout your body and create imbalances that can further increase your discomfort.

As an incredibly complex system, everything in your body is connected. If your lower back is tight, most likely your hamstrings, glutes, and hips are just as rigid. The combination of these four areas is what

is causing you more and more pain.

Ok, so you're more aware of your body but the pain is still there. You're out in the wilderness. It feels like someone is twisting a knife in your lower back. You can't just lay down and ice your back or sleep it off. There's no doctor in sight... What should you do?

You don't have to bail out on your trip or stop enjoying the outdoors all together. All you need to do is add a daily stretching routine to release the tightness in your hamstrings, glutes, hips, and back.

And because every body is different, we've pulled together a variety of stretches for you to choose from and create a routine that fits your needs.

With these twelve simple stretches, you'll be able to reduce your lower back pain so you can carry on with your day, no matter what you're doing or where you are.

Tabletop Stretch

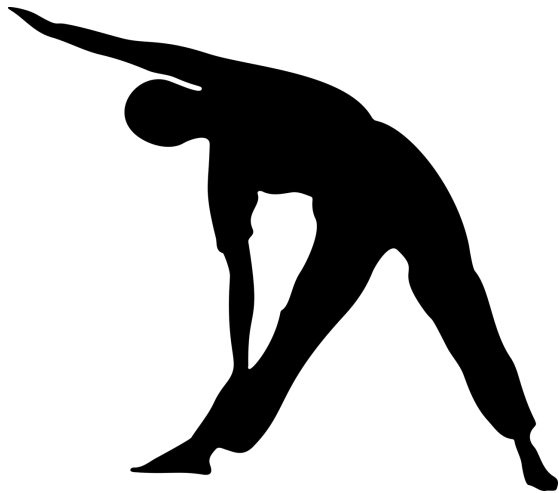


What It Does: Helps align the spine while releasing tension in the shoulders, back, and legs

How To Do It:

- Find something sturdy you can place your hands on (like a tabletop, thick tree branch, fence, etc.)
- Keep your hands on the object and step your feet back until your hips are in line with your feet
- Keep your back flat and parallel to the ground
- Make sure to keep your core engaged by pulling your belly button to the back of your spine. This will protect your back from further discomfort.
- Keep your legs straight (or with your knees slightly bent) to feel a nice stretch up and down the back sides of the legs
- Keep your arms as straight as possible to get a good stretch down your arms, torso, and upper back
- Hold for at least 30 seconds and come back up
- Repeat as much as necessary

Standing Hamstring Stretch



What It Does: Stretches tight hamstrings and lower back

How To Do It:

- Find leveled ground
- Spread your legs to a comfortable distance and point your feet slightly out

- Keep your legs straight as you bend over to the right side and reach for the toes
- If you can't reach your toes, aim for the outside of your ankle.
- If you feel stable, extend your left arm over your head (like the photo)
- Hold for 30 seconds
- From your right side, move over to the center, in between your legs, and try to touch the ground
- If you can touch the ground with ease, try placing your hands flat on the ground.
- Hold for 30 seconds
- From the center, move your hands to your left side and reach for your toes
- Extend your right arm over your head
- Hold for 30 seconds
- Go through this cycle as least twice

Standing Single Leg Hamstring Stretch



What It Does: Stretches and targets lower back and single hamstring

How To Do It:

- Find a rock or something raised above ground level (the higher the object, the deeper stretch you will get)
- Place your left heel on the object and keep your left leg straight
- Make sure your standing leg is not locked out and has a slight bend in the knee
- Draw in your core (belly button to spine) and bend at the hips
- Reach for the toes of your left leg
- If you can't reach your toes, reach for your shin
- You should feel a nice stretch down the back side of the left leg and your back
- Hold for 30 seconds
- Switch sides

Sitting Hamstring Stretch



What It Does: Stretches hamstring and lower back at ground level

How To Do It:

- Find a soft, leveled place to sit
- Spread your legs out straight
- Pull your right foot in so it is touching the inner thigh of your left leg
- Pull in your core and bend at the hips as you reach with both hands for your right foot

- If you can't reach your foot, place your hands on your shin
- Inhale and exhale and try to reach deeper into the stretch
- Hold for 30 seconds and switch sides

Cat Cow



What It Does: Stretches the back torso, neck, and abdominal muscles as well as opens the chest up

How To Do It:

- Find soft ground and get down on all fours
- Make sure your hands are under your shoulders and your knees are aligned with your hips
- Now we need a neutral spine. To do this, image your spine as a straight line connecting your hips to your shoulders
- For cow pose, inhale and arch your back by tilting your pelvis back so your butt is in the air

- Allow your chest to naturally rise with the movement
- Make sure to keep your core tight the whole time!
- Take your gaze up toward the sky slowly
- Curl your toes if this feels comfortable for you
- For cat pose, inhale and round your back by tilting your pelvis forward and tucking your tailbone
- Draw in your core!
- Drop your head and look at your stomach
- Release and return to cow pose
- Repeat this sequence as many times as needed

Child's Pose



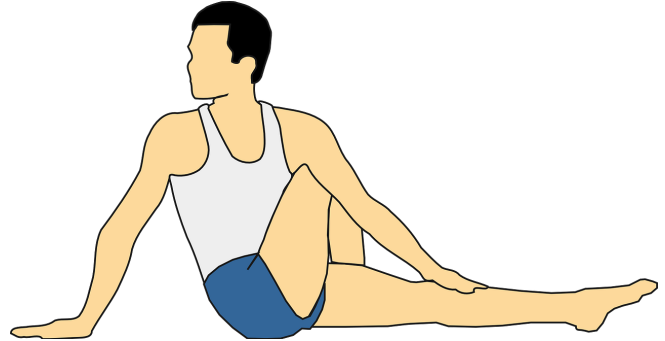
What It Does: Stretches the ankles, thighs, hips and ankles as well the back torso

How To Do It:

- Find soft ground and get down on all fours
- Point your knees slightly out so your heels are touching (or almost touching)
- Slowly and carefully sit your butt on your heels
- If needed, spread your knees more to get closer to your heels
- If you still can't touch your behind to your heels, don't worry. With more repetition, your body will slowly loosen up
- Keep your palms flat on the ground as you reach your arms as far as you can in front of you

- When you think you have reached your limit, take in a deep breath and try inching each arm a little further as you exhale
- Hold for at least 45 seconds, relax, and repeat

Seated Glute Stretch With Twist



What It Does: Stretches the glutes and hips

How To Do It:

- Sit down with your legs stretched straight out in front of you
- Bring your right knee up and over your left leg (near the left mid thigh) while keeping your left leg extended
- Hold your right knee with both arms and pull it into your chest
- Using your right arm as support on the floor behind you, place your left elbow on your right knee and slowly twist to the right
- Don't forget to breathe!
- Hold for 30 seconds
- Switch sides and repeat

Kneeling Hip Flexor Stretch

What It Does: Lengthens the hip flexor and loosens the hips

How To Do It:

- Find soft ground
- Come down in a lunge position with your right foot forward and your left knee on the ground
- Visualize your pelvis. You need to flip your pelvis up toward the sky for this stretch to make it effective



- With your pelvis pulled up, squeeze your left flute
- You should feel a tightness down your left thigh
- If you want a deeper stretch, gently push the pelvis forward
- Hold for 30 seconds
- Switch sides

Knee To Chest



What It Does: Stretches the inner thigh, hips, glutes, and hip flexor

How To Do It:

- Lie flat on your back with your legs extended and toes pointed to the sky
- Bend your right knee and slowly pull your leg to your chest
- Wrap your arms around either your thigh, shin, or knee, and bring your leg further to your chest

- Remember to breathe!
- You should feel a stretch in the glutes and hips
- Hold for 30 seconds and switch sides
- Repeat three times on each leg

Bear Hug



What It Does: Releases tension in the lower back and hips

How To Do It:

- While laying flat on your back, engage your core, and slowly bring both of your knees into your chest
- Grab a hold of your knees and pull them further into your chest as if giving yourself a huge bear hug
- Keep your core engaged!
- Slowly rock your knees from side to side
- Feels like a light massage on your lower back
- Repeat as many times as needed

T-Spine Stretch



What It Does: Stretches the spine, glutes, and lower back to releases tension while lengthening the spine

How To Do It:

- For this stretch, you will need a knee support such as a backpack or pillow if you have one
- On the floor, lay down on your right side
- Make sure your body is in a straight line
- Bring your left leg up with your knee bent, creating a 90 degree angle
- Keep your hips stacked
- Place the backpack under the knee as a support
- Extend both arms straight out on the floor in direction your left knee is facing
- While keeping your knee on the backpack and your right arm on the floor, take your left arm up and over to the opposite side and try to touch the floor behind you with the back of your hand
- If you can't touch the floor, don't worry, you will later with practice
- Return to the starting position
- Repeat for a total of 10 times before switching sides



Hanging

What It Does: Releases built up tension in the spine

How To Do It:

- Find something hang from that can support your weight. It needs be just high enough for you to reach by stepping on your tips toes
- Grab on to whatever you found and relax your body
- Let your body hang like a sack of potatoes
- Try to reach your heels to the ground
- If you feel or hear popping, don't worry, your back is just releasing
- Hold for as long as you want or until your arms give out



6

Biggest Mistakes Ruining Your Hunts



It's such a thrill when intense preparation and opportunity pay off big as a deer hunter. You've been shooting targets throughout the off-season, constructing elaborate deer stands, dreaming and scheming about how your perfect hunts will unfold. Now, all you need is that trophy buck to walk out of the mist while you're sitting in your stand, weapon at the ready.

Of course, this singular moment you've been fantasizing about is typically where the plan falls short. You have a very limited amount of time you can devote to your deer hunting efforts. The season itself has a limited number of days. The fact is, with all the effort you put into this pursuit, you really can't afford to screw up your opportunities by making simple mistakes.

If you've never tried to price your venison by the pound, including all of the relative monetary inputs, we highly suggest you avoid it. Likewise, if you

were to account for all of the time you've allocated, chances are it would add up to a dizzying amount of your so-called leisure time. Suffice to say, you have a lot of resources invested in that singular moment playing out successfully.

An interesting phenomenon we noticed time and time again is how hunters tend to undercut their own chances for success, either by doing the wrong things or failing to do the right things. They've clearly spent hundreds (if not thousands) of dollars to buy their gear, get time off from work, and head out to the field. Then they screw it up by making simple mental errors.

But you, dear reader, won't be one of these unfortunate self-sabotaging hunters. Our goal is to help you eliminate some of the simple behaviors that stymie the less conscientious. By avoiding these 6 simple mistakes, you can be sure that you're making the very most of your time in the field.



No Scent Control

According to researchers at Mississippi State University, whitetail deer have a sense of smell that is between 500 and 1,000 times more sensitive than our own. In essence, a deer's sense of smell is their super power.

It's impossible for humans to detect smells in the same way a deer might, so the best way for hunters to overcome this superpower is this: Assume you stink. Not just you, but your food, shampoo, and your car all stink. Your campfire definitely stinks.

Inevitably, deer will notice foreign smells in their habitat and will likely change their behavior as a result. Scent control sprays and clothing have proven to be effective, but especially when combined with other tactics.

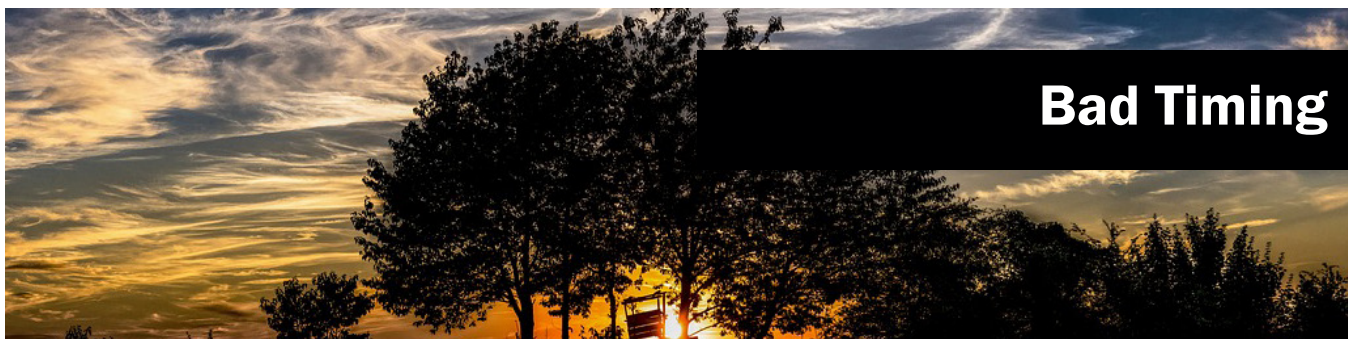


One such tactic includes selecting your stand based on prevailing winds, ensuring that your scent isn't drifting directly over the spot where the deer will be hanging out. For much of the country, the prevailing winds come out of the south/

southeast. In this example, you'd want to place your stand on the north or northwest side to keep your scent moving away from the food source you're hunting.

Winds are known to change, however, which is why you'll want at least one option for hunting when a front comes through that reverses wind direction. Sure, this is a very basic way to manage winds as a hunter, and it can get much more complicated the more you learn about a particular area. One advanced consideration is that mature bucks are known to approach from a downwind direction. Thus, if you've setup directly downwind of your hunting plot, bucks may approach from behind and possibly smell you.

Another way to win the scent game is to suit up in the field. This way, you can prevent a lot of the ambient human scents present in your camping area from infiltrating your outer layers. If possible, you can even store your camouflage in a weather proof box outdoors, suiting up only after you step out of a vehicle.



Bad Timing

We all know that deer typically move at dawn and in the evening. So, your best bet is to be still during these times, vigilantly watching their movements from your deer blind. If you hunt over an automatic feeder, then you obviously know exactly what time breakfast and dinner will be served. There are few known variables in the sport of hunting,

and controlling these variables is key to having successful hunts.

Given the level of effort you've already put into your season, it'd be a shame to oversleep or lose track of time. This is why missing those key windows is one of the most critical mistakes hunters make to sabotage their own success.

It may mean spending a little less time around the campfire the night before, or setting an afternoon alarm, but there's nothing like walking into your hunting area too late and scaring off a trophy, all because you lost track of time.

There is one other crucial point here worth examining. We'll go deeper into this discussion in the "Making an Entrance" section, but for now we want to stress that all is not lost when you spook deer off

of your food plot, even if you arrived late.

Perseverance is rewarded on occasion, particularly if the deer that spooked heard, but did not see or smell, the threat (hunter). So, be extra still, patient, and optimistic about the chance for these deer to return. Even if you showed up later than you wanted, there is still time for things to settle down and get back on track.



Sticking Out Like A Sore Thumb

There are a number of mistakes when it comes to sticking out visually to big game animals. Most hunters believe that simply wearing camouflage makes them quasi invisible. The fact is, vision isn't as overwhelmingly important in the hierarchy of deer senses as it is with humans.

In fact, whitetail deer don't see as well as humans in the daytime. They do have better night vision than us, however. Now, what does this mean for you? Here are the most common visual mistakes.

Silhouetting occurs when there's not enough concealment in front of or behind the hunter to break up the hunter's silhouette against the skyline. This happens often when a hunter has occupied the highest available ground, yet it's also common in many tree stands and even elevated box blinds. One easy way to combat this effect is to use camo netting to cover any bare patches that allow deer in your area to see your silhouette.

Another common mistake is something that camouflage makers have caught onto in recent years. Older camo patterns were, simply put, dark. Made out of blacks, dark greens, and browns, the effect was to turn the hunter into a dark blob in a tree. While this may conceal the fact that you're a human, dark blobs in trees appear threatening to deer, as they could be a hunter, cougar, bear, etc.

More recently, many popular camouflage choices incorporate lighter colors to break up the "blob" effect. Thus, consider your particular needs as you shop for camo. If you plan to archery hunt, spot and stalk, or still hunt, the right camo choice can be a make or break factor. That is, the less concealed you are, the more important your camouflage becomes.

Lastly, there are just some stand placements that the deer herd in your area may constantly be checking for danger. Every so often, a hunter sees this same spot and thinks it will be an excellent site for a stand or blind. Then, throughout the season, they are constantly getting busted by weary does and mature bucks.



In this situation, you can infer that either a past hunter overused the same spot, or perhaps something seems obviously threatening about the spot to prey species. Perhaps it's even a wind direction issue. Either way, if the data is telling you that you're sticking out like a sore thumb, you'd best adjust accordingly.



Clearly, scaring off all deer within a visual or auditory range during your approach won't do your success rate any favors. As we mentioned before, timing can be one of your greatest allies in this regard. Another ally is a carefully planned, low-profile approach.

The planning comes in various forms. Ideally, as a hunter you will scheme up several approaches based on differing prevailing wind scenarios. Your goal is to approach your stand from a downwind direction, i.e. you don't want your scent blowing out into the area you'll be hunting. The complicating factor here is that mature bucks will use this same strategy when approaching a food plot. They will use the wind to their advantage, gauging what animals are presently feeding.

While this is a difficult factor to control for, the best way to minimize the impact of your approach here is timing (avoid moving during the times you believe deer are moving) and an extremely stealthy approach. A side benefit of approaching from the same directions as your quarry is that you'll get to monitor the very trails your bucks are using.

Next, while it's important to use wind direction to your advantage, the fact is that you really can't know exactly where the deer are going to be and when. The best option is to minimize your impact as you walk through, period. This is why we recommend studying an aerial map of your hunting grounds, as well as using trail markers. You need to be able to make it to your stand as efficiently as possible. Getting lost can be very costly in terms of wasting time and spreading your scent.

Lastly, we recommend something we call the "Tic Tac Method." This involves carrying a half-full (as opposed to half-empty) box of Tic Tacs in your pocket as you walk. If you can hear the mints rattling around in your pocket, slow down. Nothing will catch the eyes of a weary doe like movement. Likewise, slow and careful movements result in less noise.

By avoiding a noisy, hasty entry to your stand, you'll be setting yourself up for the best possible hunt.



Let's face it, your success as a hunter will be defined mostly by two factors. The first is luck. The second is time spent in the field.

We probably don't need to spend much time on the concept of luck, except to understand that

randomness is very difficult for the human mind to comprehend. Many of us prefer to think of it as "luck." The challenge is maintaining a focused and opportunistic mindset in the face of boredom and doubt that a big buck will suddenly step out of the woods.

Time in the field is, of course, the variable you have more control over. This requires extra planning, like packing extra snacks and supplies to extend your hunting time that extra hour. There's a give and take involved in working to extend your time in the field for an extended hunt, but generally we find that planning helps dramatically.

Planning out your hunt both gives you a sense of changing it up and making progress. The greater advantage, however, comes in the form of intentionally making the hunt more engaging (aka less boring). This is where the give and take portion comes in.

Yes, in some wide-open terrains, your best bet is to stay stationary in heavy cover. Still, could you

increase your time in the field by varying it up a bit? For example, you could sit stationary for 2 hours in one position, then still hunt your way to a secondary stand where you'll sit another hour or two.

Still hunting is perhaps less effective at getting a clean shot at a deer, but life's full of surprises. Often, you'll sneak up on a group of deer that has become very comfortable in their surroundings and doesn't even notice you.

Sometimes, even seeing some deer spook and run can provide you a little mental boost, the confirmation that deer are out and moving. Map out a hike to the next stand that includes a couple of waypoints where you can glass a large area.



For a whole host of reasons, many hunters find themselves in the field with a rifle that hasn't been fired since last season, or a new bow they're relatively unfamiliar with. This can ultimately sabotage an otherwise very well executed and successful hunt – at the last possible moment.

We've all heard stories about the big one that got away because someone dropped a rifle and the scope was off by a few inches. Or maybe a big buck was standing like a statue out at 40 yards, but the hunter had never bothered to adjust their 40-yard sight pin and shot right over his back.

There's only one proven method for avoiding such a catastrophic error. You must practice the discipline to train with your weapon as much as possible. Sure,

it can be difficult to find time in your busy schedule to go to the rifle range or the archery range. But the fact is that it's absolutely easier than watching all of your hard work and good luck go down the drain, all because you neglected to do the most basic thing.

It's tough enough to live with missing a very makeable shot on a trophy buck when you did everything right; we can speak from experience here. But, to deal with the fallout of missing or wounding a deer on account of simple neglect, that's going to replay in your mind for a long time.

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