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MEMBERS UPDATE

October 2022

SPORT SHOOTING VS SELF DEFENSE

Don't Let Your Great Hike Go Bad

What To Take For Survival When You Fly

Keeping Safe In An Active Shooter Situation

NEXT ISSUE: Home Invasion: How to Prepare For The Worst

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It's important to be aware of the potential dangers that you might face while on a hike. In the mountains, forests, and deserts of the United States, there are many hazards that can ruin your hike - or even kill you. Be prepared.

Next Issue: Home Invasion: How to Prepare For The Worst



I think we can all agree that this world has been spiraling down these past few years. We have seen a sharp uptick of individuals that think, to decide to pick up a firearm and take their aggressions out on others is their only option. When that happens, we are left with nothing but the memories of those who died, not to mention the shattered lives of those left behind seeking answers to questions that may never be had. One could point fingers at a myriad of circumstances that lead to these fatal outcomes, but ultimately it comes down to mental health problems and the failure to mitigate it in any way, shape, or form. Because of this increased hidden danger gallivanting around our society, concealed carriers and cops have had to make sure the head swivel is well oiled and in constant operation when mingling with the public at large. The potentiality of this danger will also increase the chances of both of these parties to make a mistake and ventilate the wrong person when an active shooter starts blasting away. We will have a look at a very recent incident that went sideways and what you can do as an EDC adherent from becoming a casualty from friendly fire.

NO GOOD DEED GOES UNPUNISHED

Back in June of last year, there occurred an active shooter incident where everything and anything that could possibly go wrong did. It is unfortunate that these events happened, however it serves as an instructive reminder of the kinds of things you will need to factor into your decision whether you

engage a deranged individual bent on destruction or shelter in place.



Our tragedy unfolded in the town of Arvada, just outside of Denver. An Arvada police officer was sent to a residence to perform a welfare check on an individual who had earlier made suicidal comments to friends and family, and then went silent. After receiving no answer at the door, the officer was dispatched to Olde Town Arvada, a short distance away from the welfare check, for a report of a suspicious party. The officer responded, exited his patrol vehicle, and began to casually stroll around the area trying to get a visual on the subject. He didn't have long to wait for that contact as the man he was looking for ran up and ambushed him from behind with a shotgun. The perp managed to fire off 9 shells in total, hitting the officer, business windows, and two Arvada cop cars in the process. That's when the Jefferson County 911 call

center was inundated with calls from all manners of terrified citizens, many giving contradictory information as to what the shooter looked like and what kind of artillery he was carrying.

When the first shots were heard, 3 officers of the P.D's Community Outreach Resource and Enforcement team were in their unmarked office building 100 feet from where their fellow officer lay on the ground bleeding out. They collectively watched from the window of their front door as a man dressed all in black, sporting a ski mask and floppy hat, and carrying what they thought was a rifle walking through the parking lot. The thought had occurred to them to try and take the guy down, however they reasoned that they would be vulnerable if they missed, and that the man had a tactical advantage with a rifle to their handguns, not to mention the fear they had that their vests and the walls of the building wouldn't stop a rifle round. One of the officers estimated the distance to be about 40 yards between them and the shooter. They all hesitated in engaging because they were worried they would miss and then would be in deep ditch because of it. Another officer went to the second floor of the building to gain a better vantage point to take out the shooter, but the shotgunner had moved out of the officer's line of vision, denying him a clear shot. By this time, the bushwacker had finished popping off shotgun shells, trading that in for what was described as an "AR-15 black carbine style rifle".



A BONA FIDE GOOD GUY WITH A GUN

Before the cop murderer had a chance to squeeze off any rifle rounds, a shopper at the local Army/Navy surplus sprinted out the door, pulled his

concealed carry, and rushed towards the shots. He positioned himself behind a retaining wall, peered around it, and saw the shooter approaching the town square. The shopper then proceeded to pump six rounds into the scumbag. Officers hiding in the CORE office, heard the shots, and observed a man dressed in red step into view holding a rifle and a handgun. They thought that he was reloading the rifle and considering yelling commands at him, but decided not to because it would ruin their advantage. Instead, one of the officers fired three rounds at the man in red, with one round hitting him. After a minute or so, the 3 officers came out of their office, discovering the bodies of both their brother officer and the man that ambushed him.

That's about the time the entire world showed up, converging on both the man in red and the actual shooter, quickly finding out that one was dead and the other in critical condition. He was transported to the hospital for possible internal bleeding due to a decided lack of bleeding from his gunshot wound; he would eventually succumb to his wound. The police ended up securing the scene only to have a bomb sniffing dog pick up a scent off the shooters vehicle, indicating either ammunition or explosive materials. Luckily, in this case, it was only ammo. A little less than 2 hours later, the family who had earlier called for the welfare check followed up with police, prompting another visit to the apartment. Finding no one at home, the responding officers questioned a couple of neighbors about the tenant. The tenants volunteered that they knew nothing of the man that lived there, but saw his truck on the news as being connected to the recent shooting. SWAT was notified to evacuate the building and then breach the door with explosives to gain entry. They found nothing but spartan living conditions, a few greeting cards from concerned family members, and handwritten anti-police screeds with a tone of outright hatred and advocacy for violence against the same.

AFTERMATH

As is standard procedure after all shootings, press conferences were held praising the two fallen good guys and vilifying the shooter. Ghoulish news cameras were shoved in the faces of grieving families. The cops were pointing the finger, passing the blame, and trying to cover their collective

keisters, and, of course, an investigation began. The investigation took at least 5-6 months to complete which included conducting interviews of all eyewitnesses, reviewing tapes from surveillance cameras around the square, and body cam footage from all responding officers. To say that this was a complete Charlie Foxtrot is a gross understatement.

Surveillance footage was shown to be unreliable in trying to nail down certain angles of where everyone was as the shooting ran its course; some body cams were not activated during crucial moments after things quieted down. I should also note that Arvada P.D. officers were not equipped with body cams, so significant evidence and answers to questions about the shooting will remain unknown due to this short sightedness. The autopsy on the concealed shooter showed that the officer's bullet penetrated his hip, fracturing his pelvis, probably nicked the iliac artery, and punched a hole in the intestines. Even after this mountain of evidence was put into a coherent narrative, questions about the event still remain. Another thing that still remains is the anger from the general public towards the Arvada P.D. in regards to the way in which they dealt with their officer that killed the concealed carrier, and from what you have just read, it is truly a righteous indignation.



SO, WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THIS GOD AWFUL MESS?

Well, as you can see, there is a whole lot to unpack with this incident, so we will kind of breeze through the analysis of what to and what not to expect when you find yourself in the vicinity of shots fired. I want to prepare you by saying that there will be a fair amount of criticism heaped towards law

enforcement right in the thick of it. I don't do this because I harbor some sort of animosity towards law enforcement, quite the contrary, it is only because I am a free and critical thinking individual who doesn't subscribe to blindly heaping praise on individuals or institutions that don't deserve it, even if it is an authoritative agency. The idea that three trained police officers didn't swing into action as soon as they heard the shots is absolutely ludicrous. I found their reasons for not engaging the shooter as nothing more than poor excuses for self preservation, an attitude that is anathema to the very job description of a police officer's duty.

That is not to say a modicum of caution should not be exercised in all situations they face, but clearly they had the numbers and rounds behind them to be able to distract the shooter enough to take him down. As trained police officers, I find it difficult to believe that they were unable to differentiate between a rifle and shotgun, even at a distance. Most gunners I know have no problem in identifying a firearm larger than a handgun out to 200 feet. I can not make an assessment of their ballistics conclusions as it is unknown what level of body armor the department carries, and yes there are vests out there that do stop a rifle round. As to the distance of 40 yards, it has been recently shown by a brave 22 year old civilian in Indiana how an individual, whose only training in firearms was going out shooting with his grandad, dropped a repugnant sack of garbage with 8 out of 10 rounds at the very same distance between the cowering cops and the shooter.

Now, I have a question. Does anyone out there believe that someone who has committed themselves to wholesale homicide takes any time to doff or change clothing right in the middle of it all, never mind the person is already gone in the head. I just don't believe that a wardrobe change would be going on after the shooting had commenced. So how did it go from the guy clad all in black, with ski mask and hat, mind you, being the identified perp, to shooting the guy in red who was wearing none of that attire, but holding both a handgun and rifle? Had the officers yelled at the man in red, he most likely would still be breathing today, no doubt complying with law enforcement due to his being a law-abiding citizen and to keep from getting

killed. In total, this gunfight lasted 2 minutes. That's it. Had law enforcement engaged the shooter at the distance of 40 yards like the young man from Indiana, that gunfight would have lasted seconds. Instead it went on longer than it needed to, and in the end 2 good guys lay dead, one bad guy received justice, and only 20 rounds were expended. These situations are nothing like what Hollywood would have you believe, they are fast and dirty, leaving one to rapidly review their options as if their lives were flashing before their eyes. Given the length of this incident, the cops already on scene in the CORE office spent too much time on what if's and not on letting their training govern their actions as it is supposed to do. But this life is full of what if's and sadly this shooting has only added more to its ever expanding coffers.

PREPARING FOR THE WORST, BUT HOPING FOR THE BEST

As a concealed carrier, one has the luxury to decide whether or not they want to engage someone out to cause as much death as possible, unlike a police officer, who would be derelict in their duty if they were to weigh options in an untimely manner when lives are on the line. However, I do believe that if one has made the decision to carry open or concealed, one has already committed to the responsibility of protecting themselves and their fellow man from destruction wrought by people who don't give one whit about human life.

I would like to point out that a police officer has a duty to respond to shooters. CCW holders do not and should escape to safety if possible, however they need to identify a lethal threat to themselves or loved ones when employing deadly force. Which brings us to how you keep your hide intact when an active shooter comes calling. I would recommend a training course catering to mitigating an active shooter situation. These courses will include instruction on handling firearms safely, but they differ from other courses as you will learn how to engage active shooters in an ever changing environment by doing move, shoot, and cover drills with a combination of bad guy targets partly covered by good guy targets. This will teach you how to keep your eyes on the threat and looking out for other targets, reloading on the move, and how not to appear from cover in the same place. Low

light drill will also be of great importance as it will help to train you to differentiate between hostiles and innocents if a shooting happens around dusk or after.

This is a perfect opportunity to get some use out of that snazzy flashlight or laser mounted on your iron. When doing these drills, throw in as many variables that could possibly happen during a mass shooting, the more chaos, noise, and confusion you can throw into a training session the better, it will hopefully prevent you from being surprised by anything that's going on around you when the shooting starts. Another drill you can run is setting up multiple targets of the good and bad guys in various situations and prioritizing which threats to neutralize while protecting bystanders. I would recommend taking courses that offer advanced training in active shooter situations because one should never lack in knowledge when it comes to life and death. Your best bet on coming through a shooting alive is to simply get the hell out of Dodge, however if that avenue is closed and you have the tactical advantage to take out the threat, let the training kick in and take care of business. If you have come through the shooting unscathed and have determined the threat to be neutralized, kick the shooter's weapon away from them, holster yours, and if you have a CCW permit, retrieve it, if you are able and have time to do so, and put up your hands with the permit visible.

The cops will already be on edge when they show up, so don't make any sudden moves and comply with all of their commands, making sure you loudly identify yourself as a concealed carrier and not the suspect. By this point you shouldn't have any extra holes in your person and will most likely be deluged with a tidal wave of questions. Don't say one word until you have conferred with council on the matter, you stayed alive through the shooting, I'm pretty sure prison is going to crimp anyone's style. On the subject of lawyers, I would encourage all manner of carriers to check out U.S. Law Shield and what they can do for you. These legal eagles can be retained for a yearly subscription which gets you on-call lawyers that will immediately come to the location of the shooting to provide representation plus a whole host of services to protect you. This is truly a group that is 100% by and for the 2A and those that exercise that right.



Sport Shooting Vs. Self Defense

By Eric Austgen

To most it would seem that both events are virtually identical, you use a firearm for both, so what possible difference could there be between the two. Quite a bit of difference as a matter of fact. So in order to demystify things for new gunners and maybe illuminate some veterans out there, we will have a look at each of these events, the pros and cons, and that one important common denominator.

The “Gamers” Of The Shooting World

Usually when most people hear about sport shooting, their thoughts conjure images of endless clay pigeons being destroyed on a leisurely weekend out with the guys or gals, or they can hear the bugling horn of an English fox hunt ready to commence. These two events only scratch the surface of what lies beneath the nuanced and highly competitive world of sport shooting. Those interested in participating in this form of shooting can choose between events designed to test your precision, accuracy, and speed in the discipline of rifle, pistol, or shotgun shooting.

Shotgun competitions are divided up into three categories consisting of trap, skeet, and sporting clay. Trap involves launching the clay pigeon in cross or opposite directions, which helps to improve or display profile shooting ability. When shooting skeet, the clay targets are thrown at various trajectories in the direction the shooter is looking, thereby making the targets harder to

hit, and forcing the shooter to make immediate decisions when faced with multiple targets. The most exciting competition for shotgunners is the sporting clay event due to its chaotic simulation of hunting fowl and other small game in the wild. In this event, the targets are sent into the sky at various speeds, heights, and angles. I remember going out a couple of times as a kid with my uncle and some of his shooting buddies to try out each of these events at an easy pace, a bit apprehensive about the recoil my shoulder was going to absorb, but was surprised to find that it would become one of my favorite forms of shooting because I didn't need to wait to see the results of my shooting, I was seeing it everytime I squeezed the trigger. The good natured ribbing I would receive when I missed was also a part of the fun as well, great experiences filed away in the rainy day book of memories.

Aficionados of the pistol will usually compete in a bullseye shooting event or may choose to enter into the International Defensive Pistol Association's (IDPA) shooting event. The bullseye contest consists of shooting a pistol at a long range target, in this instance the target is set out to 50 yards. There are contests for slow and fast shooters, with the intensity of the shoot being ratcheted up by timed and one handed events. It may seem that 50 yards is quite a distance when it comes to pistols, however I seem to recall a certain feller nicknamed “Wild Bill” drilling Dave Tutt center mass at 75 yards with one of his brace of cap and ball 1851 Colt Navy revolvers back in 1865, a few years before

he had them converted to accept metallic cartridges, so it can be done.

The IDPA is an event that is geared more towards international guns and rules, while providing the closest simulation of real world self defense shooting within the sphere of sport shooting. The United States Practical Shooting Organization (USPSO) is, of course, the American counterpart to the international shoot, with rules tweaked to suit the citizenry.

Rifle devotees can test their marksmanship mettle with bench rest and silhouette target shooting. Smaller caliber rifles are used in silhouette shooting to engage steel targets at varying distances from 50 - 100 yards, sitting at different heights and angles in a stationary position or in motion. Competitions involving high powered rifles have targets set up out to a range of 1000 yards. As with pistol events, these may be timed in order to increase difficulty. Bench rest involves more precise shooting with modified or customized rifles which will provide the most stable shot possible. Variables that a sniper would use to calculate a perfect shot are used here, an event where just a millimeter will be the determining factor between winning and losing.



And for all of you out there that like to go out to the hills for the weekend, dressed as your favorite western character, and looking to feed your jones for blasting off all three types of firearms categories, then cowboy action shooting will be just the ticket. These competitions usually will blend the events found along the entire sport shooting spectrum, in one form or another, and roll it all into a fun afternoon of shooting and immersion in the history of the old west.

SELF DEFENSE



Remaining Vigilant In An Ever Changing Society

If the sporting world is populated with “gamers”, as the self defense crowd likes to label them, then the defense shooting guys and gals would be the “snobs”, if only because of their express disapproval of some of the tactical mistakes made in the sport arena, and their preference for running drills instead of competitions. Oh my, I may need to have James bring the car around to take me to the spa to sweat out the thought of all this sport shooting. I kid, of course, I love all my gunners out there. Since this is defensive shooting, drills will be more real world scenario driven and focus on survival while in the midst of an active shooter situation. These are by no means a leisurely pursuit, each drill driving home the reality that coming through a shoot unscathed will be your trophy for continued oxygen blood exchange. Defensive gunners will always train how they fight, for them this is life and death, not a game. Many of these shooters follow standard drills or come up with their own to simulate situations that may be rare or crop up whenever Murphy decides to show his punchable face. The defensive drills commonly practiced can be called different things but basically revolve around quick draw, Mozambique or failure to stop, and clearing a jam.

The quick draw is the most essential of all drills and should be mastered if you are to be successful in a defensive encounter. It teaches one how to quickly draw and sight a target in one fluid motion. This drill is extremely helpful in determining proper holster placement, stance, and incorporating the grab, grip, drawing, and sighting of the weapon into a natural instinct on the shooter's part. When

one has the quick draw down pat, they can now concentrate on gradually bringing the failure to stop the drill, into the fold. This drill spotlights what happens when an individual is acting as a one man stampede right at you and a single shot and/or a non-lethal hit aren't effective enough to neutralize the threat; this includes people on some sort of chemistry that dulls any systemic shock. This is where shot placement will be paramount, as this drill trains us to place two rounds center mass and one in the bean, two areas which will drop people every single time, no matter what level of sobriety they are operating.

Some of you may remember this advice given by Gordon Liddy on his radio program some thirty odd years ago, although it was in reference to federal agents showing up in the middle of the night unannounced, but still good advice for all the other criminals still roaming about unchecked. Clearing a weapons jam will be the last of the basic drills needed to graduate on to bigger, more intensive training. This drill is not generally a live fire exercise, as you can practice it at home or in other safe areas, so snap caps or spent shell casings will be needed, however you can run hot at the range to simulate clearing and then firing the weapon. Like the other drills, it helps to start off at an easy pace, working your way up to speed and precision, before final mastery. Once a shooter has ingrained themselves with this training, they can move onto more advanced training to sharpen their skills, thus having a better tactical advantage when confronted with a lethal situation. Some of these drills may include instruction in how to safely move, shoot, cover, and reload in all manners of scenarios that could possibly occur when gunshots interrupt your immediate sphere of influence.

Oh Boy, Cake! And I Can Eat It, Too!

Now that you have a fairly good idea as to the difference between these types of shooters, let's have a look at the good and bad habits each one offers. For many people, sport shooting was their introduction into the world of firearms. No matter where they learned how to shoot, they were sure to receive instruction in proper handling and safety when around any gun. Also it instills a sense of healthy competition among friends and family, not

to mention the lasting memories and bragging rights for years to come.



But a dark cloud began hanging over the landscape, one that parked itself over severely gun restricted or lawless areas across the fruited plain. So serious was this impending storm, people began hedging their bets when it came to personal or familial protection, and developed an interest in defensive, tactical training. Those taking this kind of training had already learned the valuable fundamentals of shooting such as drawing, target sighting, trigger control, and safety. They also brought with them the speed and ability to mitigate multiple targets, with some having competed in events that consisted of timed tactical situations such as movement, mag and weapons swaps, and jamming drills. That is about as close as these two styles of shooting will get.

Sport shooting is regulated by rules and goals which define winning. Because of this shooters are more focused on satisfying the requirements for landing the big trophy, and not concerning themselves with the possibility of any surprises being thrown into the mix. The good thing about sport shooting is that they teach good skills, while touching on tactical training, so it would only seem natural that there should be an easy transition between both. The sport shooter learns how to engage a variety of targets and setups, while moving in and out of positions. Defensive shooters, on the other hand, must identify, move to and from positions of cover making use of walls, doors, halls, and anything else that can be used as a barrier, all without breaking eye contact on immediate threats. Although, it would seem that the concept of efficiently drawing and having your weapon ready to fire before or at your cover positions would be applicable for both shooting disciplines. Another thing that chagrins the

defensive bunch is how competition shooters will clear their weapons after every event, a big no-no in the real world when having a loaded weapon will be important if you expect to be breathing when all is said and done.



One of the most noticable differences is the general mindset of the participants. Sport shooting is comparable to most athletic events in that the player will train, practice, and rest up to clear their head and get it ready for the main event. They then hustle out to the field and give it their all, while having to deal with concentrating on what's going on and filtering out unnecessary distractions around them. Unlike defensive shooters who are consistently parked in the yellow zone of the situational awareness chart. These folks are cool, calm, alert, and aware of all their surroundings, ready to bump up to the next level when your gut and brains are desperately seeking your attention. Active shooters are not going to take out an ad in the local fish wrapper to announce when and where the intended homicide will occur, so these nutbags will come out of the woodwork anytime, anywhere, and this is why the defensive mindset will be keyed up all the time.

This Denominator Has Nothing To Do With Math

As you may have figured out, the one common denominator to all of this is you, the individual. One might point to the firearms as well, however the firearms you use will always change, as will the drills or competitions you may enter. Since I have never known any firearm to suddenly grow a brain and appendages to learn how to shoot right along with its owner, it will therefore be imperative to put in the time and effort for training and practice to become a well rounded shooter. Your shooting performance

will be the ultimate testimony to whether or not you effectively flex that muscle memory in a split second. The only way to attain true harmony and inner peace with regards to confidence in your shooting performance is to get as much training as possible. You may be surprised to learn that at one time in history, competitive shooters were found to be outshooting G.I. special ops guys. The reason, I suspect, is that difference in mindset, one guy is shooting for fun at targets that aren't slinging lead back at him, and the other guy is praying there hasn't been a bullet made with his name on it.

So, because the government doesn't brook to competition well, they decided to hire civilian competition shooters that achieved master shooter levels, and put them to work making sure that the U.S. military would have a sniper and special ops corp that would be unrivaled. There is really no reason that shooters of both disciplines can not transcend their differences, instead blending their respective training to achieve improvement in their overall performance with a firearm. Knowledge is power and the more you know about and train with the tools that will keep you alive in all situations that call for it, the better off you will be. If after having completed every training course offered under the sun, leaving you to slake a thirst for self improvement, expand your search areas for these events or trainings, even if it means traveling a distance to do so. You can also gather friends and family who enjoy firearms and brainstorm ideas for new drills or competitive events that will keep you from getting rusty and build on your current skills.

I would be remiss in my duties in reporting to you all things firearms to forget mentioning our cousins in the non-lethal sporting arena. Yes, the brave folks who are willing to take paintball, airsoft, and even copper and steel BB body hits, I salute you all, shine on you crazy diamonds. I would also be remiss if I didn't state that these activities are very excellent training scenarios as well. It's almost akin to the MILES gear training the military employs when on tactical maneuvers. Point being, never turn up your nose at training opportunities when it concerns firearms and their operation, even if it may come from unconventional sources such as paintballing or doing historical reenacting. The more you know, the longer you just may stay alive, So, until next time, dear reader, stay safe and let's be careful out there.

What to Take for Survival When You Fly?



If you've been to an airport lately, you know how much it can feel like getting ready to fight. Tons of people are pushed through security, then they're herded into a waiting area. Eventually, everyone is called for boarding, and this process is strikingly similar to loading up a can with sardines.

Despite the fact that TSA's mask mandate is over, there is still some brewing anger over this contentious issue. When you combine this with possibly spending hours on a plane before it even takes off, you've got the perfect powder keg situation. Therefore, it's very important to be aware of the following tips for surviving a flight.

Pack Like an Emergency Will Happen

It has currently never been safer to fly on commercial airlines. When we consider that airline passenger fatalities have fallen significantly compared to the previous decade, it makes the chances of being involved in a fatal plane crash exceptionally low. How do the chances of a plane crashing compare to being involved in a car crash, and how likely are you to survive a plane crash?

According to the NSC (National Safety Council), the odds of dying in a car crash as a driver are 1 in 114, and 1 in 654 as a passenger. Comparatively, the odds of dying in a plane crash are 1 in 9,821, that includes small planes, and commercial aviation.

Despite the total number of passengers worldwide having increased from 2.7 billion in 2010 to 4.5 billion in 2019, the chances of a plane crashing are the lowest it has ever been in the history of commercial aviation. Since 1970, taking into account all airlines, there have been 76 plane crashes in the USA. This accounts for 14% of all plane crashes worldwide.

Still, take back some of your power by preparing to fly appropriately. That way, if an unforeseen incident should occur, you'll be in the best possible position.



Airplane Survival EDC Kit

A survival kit is a package of tools and supplies prepared as an aid to survival in an emergency. Kits such as the A+Alertoa Survival Kit Emergency Gears + First Aid, are ready stocked, compact and

light with popular survival and first aid supplies. Or, you can create your own personalized kit with as few of or as many items as you want, packed into as small as a 4"x6" bag, up to a backpack size. For air travel a very secure, yet non-tactical looking bag will attract less attention. Use a TSA approved lock to secure your pack.

TSA Currently Approved Items

Here are items to consider, all TSA approved (at this publication date) in 5 basic categories: water/food, shelter, medical, tools, communication. Note: Anything you carry that requires batteries should use AA, as they are the most readily available battery size.

Essential Small Kit

- Mylar emergency blanket
- Extra glasses in sturdy case, extra contacts
- Sharpie, notepad
- Schrade tactical pen - doubles as self defense
- Mini first aid kit - don't forget prescriptions
- Beeswax lip balm
- Griffin Pocket tool or 2.25-inch Midnite Minichamp Swiss army knife
- Matches - One book of safety (non-strike anywhere) in carry-on
- 8 feet Gorilla brand Duct tape wrapped around a card
- 20 feet Titan Survivorcord
- Streamlight Protac 1AA flashlight – with low/high/strobe
- Micro USB, small charge cord, external battery pack, earphones
- Emergency compass/signal mirror/whistle
- Energy bar(s)
- Water bottle - purchased after checkpoint - outside of pack
- Cash



Comprehensive - Backpack Size

- Trauma shears - under 4" blade
- Combat gauze
- IFAC - comprehensive kit - wound card, pain reliever, etc.
- CAT tourniquet
- Israeli bandage
- S.R.T. Survival Rescue Tool - 14 function or Leatherman PS multi-tool
- 4 good zip ties
- Reinforced gloves, fire rated
- Bivy sack sleeping bag - useful in airports during layovers
- 20 feet of webbing + 2 carabiners
- Small ferro rod - TSA approved but could be called into question
- Water purification tablets
- Nuun hydration tablets
- 32 oz Nalgene water bottle - fill after passing checkpoint
- Cell phone mapping app that does not require a signal - GAIA will connect to GPS satellites without cellular network

- Broadcast radio receiver - for land-based radio signals - good quality, Panasonic or Sony recommended - AA battery powered
- Bandana - smoke, water filter, etc.
- Complete change of clothes
- 6 extra AA batteries taped together securely
- Fisher space pen
- Earplugs
- N95 mask
- Titanium cup
- Gore-Tex parka with hood
- Space blanket
- 1-gallon heavy duty Ziploc freezer bags
- 3-6 shop towels
- Body cleansing towels
- TSA approved lighter
- Shrunken washcloth
- Battery powered hand crank radio
- Anker solar panel + batteries
- Power brick with related cords
- North x North neck kerchief - large, lightweight



Emergency Landings

The best way to deal with an emergency landing is to mentally prepare yourself for the possibility ahead of time. Be sure to watch the in-flight video announcements and pay close attention when the flight crew speaks.

Your most critical task will be to make sure that your seat has a lifejacket, just in case. If it doesn't, alert a member of the flight crew. Be prepared in case you have to perform an emergency evacuation. Make certain the emergency slide is in the right place before activating it. These slides can become fully inflated within 10 seconds, so you do not want to begin inflating it until it's properly attached.

In the event of a water landing, you should put on extra clothes before exiting the plane. This will give you a better chance at surviving frigid temperatures. Make sure you have a lifejacket on before you exit the plane. Inflate your lifejacket as soon as you exit the plane. Do not inflate it while you're still on board the aircraft.

Another reason you want to pay attention during the pre-flight boarding check is to make sure you count the rows between your seat and the closest emergency exit. This will make it easier to reach if a fire makes it difficult to see.

Health Concerns

With nearly 3 million Americans flying every day, it's vital to consider your health before you get onboard. The best way you can keep the germs of your seatmates from infecting you is by wearing a mask. Of course, masks have been heavily politicized and may not be something you wish to wear. Fortunately, there are several other ways to reach your destination without getting sick.

- Pack disinfectant wipes, vitamin C, and hand sanitizer.
- Choose the window seat. You might still get sick but being in the window seat reduces the likelihood of that happening.
- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds several times throughout the flight.
- Keep the air vent turned on. It creates an air barrier around your seat that may prevent infection.
- Bring lots of water to ensure you stay hydrated.

- Avoid the restroom whenever possible. Huge quantities of germs gather in the commonly touched places. If you must use the restroom, be sure to wash and sanitize your hands after.
- Use your disinfectant to wipe down your arm rests, tray table, seatbelt, and seat.

Although none of these tips provide a guarantee against getting sick, they all make you much less likely to deal with this scenario.



Dealing with Unruly Passengers

Passengers have become increasingly unruly. In 2021, more than 85% of flight attendants reported dealing with air rage. Additionally, 17% ended up in a physical altercation with a passenger. With numbers like these, it's wise to pay attention to others around you on a flight.

Drunk passengers typically run the biggest risk of becoming unruly. Ground staff and the cabin crew will, of course, also keep an eye on passengers to make sure that no one becomes really intoxicated. If you notice that someone is getting belligerent, discreetly let a flight attendant know. If a flight attendant asks you to move to another seat, do so. This will help them take care of the situation.

There are a few specific things that flight attendants wish every passenger would do when someone gets unruly such as:

- Defer to the flight attendant. It's not your job to calm down passengers.

- Follow all directions given to you by a flight attendant. Failure to do so could cause you to be given a fine.
- Do not inflame the situation. If a passenger sitting next to you gets agitated, you can use a calm, rational voice to help defuse them.
- Make sure you don't drink too much.

In rare cases, the passenger in question may need to be physically restrained by flight attendants. Although this may be awkward for you and the other passengers, don't say anything that will make it any worse.

Very, very rarely, you may have to decide about whether or not to get involved. This isn't a choice you should make lightly, as it most likely means that things have spiraled way out of control. And be aware that if you do decide to help, you may be injured or even killed. For the most part, however, your job is going to be ignoring unruly passengers.

Final Thoughts

Safety is a concern of everyone who flies, but commercial aviation is the most scrutinized, investigated & monitored form of transportation. Statistically, you are more likely to die from a bee sting than from a commercial flight.





Don't Let Your Great Hike Go Bad

Before you set out on your hike, there are a few things you need to keep in mind. First and foremost, it's important to have a plan. Know where you're going and how long you'll be gone for. It's also a good idea to share your plan with someone else - that way, if something happens, they'll know where to look for you.

It's also important to be aware of the potential dangers that you might face while on your hike. In the mountains, forests, and deserts of the United States, there are many hazards that can ruin your hike - or even kill you. These include things like flash floods, lightning strikes, and getting lost or separated from your group.

What follows are a few more things to keep in mind.

It's Best to Train for Hiking Beforehand

Experienced campers and hikers can make light work of a multi-day backpacking trip in rugged terrain. They know how to read maps, use a compass, purify water and build shelter; in other words, they make things look deceptively easy.

But for the novice venturing into the backcountry, all of those things can be daunting challenges. The good news is that with a little bit of training and practice, anyone can learn the skills needed to safely enjoy the outdoors.

One of the best ways to gain experience is to go on short hikes and overnight camping trips with experienced friends or family members close to home. They can teach you the basics and help you get comfortable in a variety of outdoor settings. You can also take classes offered by local parks

departments, REI stores and other outdoor retailers.

You Need to be in Shape

Before you head out on your first big adventure, make sure you're physically prepared for the challenges ahead. This means training your body so that you can handle long days of walking and climbing. If you're not used to hiking, start by going on shorter hikes close to home. Then, gradually work your way up to longer and more challenging hikes.

As you train, pay attention to how your body feels. If you start to experience pain or fatigue, take a break and rest. It's important to listen to your body and not push yourself too hard.

You'll also need to be prepared mentally, meaning preparing yourself to focus on the task at hand and not getting overwhelmed by the challenges ahead. One way to do this is to break down your hike into smaller goals. For example, if you're hiking to the top of a mountain, don't think about the entire hike all at once. Instead, focus on making it to the next rest stop or the next checkpoint.

Another way to stay mentally focused is to practice positive visualization. This means picturing yourself successfully completing the hike and reaching your goal. This will help you stay motivated and prevent you from getting discouraged.

Learn Basic Camping and Hiking Skills

In addition to physical training, it's also important to learn some basic camping and hiking skills. If

you're new to camping, start by pitching a tent in your backyard. Then, once you're confident in your ability to put up a tent and build a fire, you can start planning overnight hikes. With practice you're able to pitch quickly, in different conditions such as varying wind, light, and other obstacles.



There are plenty of resources available to help you learn these skills, so make sure to take a class or do some extensive research before heading out on your hike. YouTube has more videos on “How To” hike certain terrains than you can imagine. You can also head out with an experienced friend or guide to get some first-hand experience.



What You Need to Bring on Your Hike

It's extremely important to gather the proper supplies before heading out on your hike. This includes everything from food and water to first-aid supplies and navigation tools. The specific items you'll need will depend on the length and difficulty of your hike, but there are a few essentials that everyone should bring:

- **A map of the area:** even if you're familiar with the area, it's always a good idea to have a map on hand. If you get lost, or your phone dies, a map can help you find your way back to the trail.
- **A compass:** a compass can be helpful in orienting yourself if you get turned around. A GPS is also a good idea, as it can help rescuers find you if you get lost.
- **A first-aid kit:** a first-aid kit is essential for any hike, as it can help treat minor injuries like blisters or scrapes, and deal with snake bites or other more serious emergencies.
- **A flashlight or headlamp:** if you're hiking in an area with limited daylight, a flashlight can help you find your way in the dark. Also, if you get lost or injured, a flashlight can help signal for help. A headlamp is another good option, as it frees up your hands to carry other supplies. Remember you don't always anticipate being out past dark, so a torch is helpful emergency prep for any hike.
- **Extra food and water:** it's always better to have more food and water than you think you'll need. If you think you may run out, you can always ration your supplies until you're able to find more.
- **A whistle:** a whistle can be used to signal for help if you get lost.
- **Clothing protection for all weather conditions:** the weather can change quickly, so it's important to be prepared for anything. Make sure to pack extra layers in case it gets cold. High SPF sun guards help avoid sun poisoning or burns, too.
- **Hiking boots:** comfortable, sturdy hiking boots are a must.
- **A backpack:** you'll need a backpack to carry all of your supplies.
- **Water purification tablets:** if you're hiking in an area with limited water resources, water purification tablets can help you make sure your water is safe to drink.

In addition to these items, you might also want to bring binoculars, sunscreen, insect repellent, matches or a lighter, and a camera. Again, the specific items you'll need will depend on where you are hiking and the length and difficulty of your hike.

Also, batteries and other power sources can be unreliable, so consider taking along a solar charger, especially if you plan on taking a lengthy backpacking trip. Even if you will only be using it in cases of emergencies, you can never be too prepared. At some point, you will always get access to the sun to charge your devices if you really need to.

Let Someone Know Where You're Going and When You'll be Back

Before you head out on your hike, it's important to let someone know where you're going and when you'll be back. This way, if something happens to you, rescuers will have a better chance of finding you.

There are a few different ways to do this. If you have a cell phone, you can call or text someone to let them know your plans. You can also leave a note at your campsite or car.

If you're hiking in a remote area, you might want to consider carrying a GPS locator or personal locator beacon (PLB). These devices can help rescuers find you if you get lost.



Mind the Weather

Take into account the weather before you start your hike. It will determine a lot of things, including the type of clothes and weather protection you'll need to bring along. Make sure to

check the weather forecast before heading out, and be prepared for changing conditions. Also, know how to use any safety equipment you're carrying and always hike with a partner.

Here are a few environmental hazards to look out for.

Storms

Storms can roll in quickly, so it's important to be aware of the forecast before you head out. If there's a chance of storms, make sure to pack extra food and water in case you get stranded.

If you hear thunder, that means lightning is very close, maybe even within striking distance. If you are close to the exit, complete your hike immediately, or otherwise find shelter when you hear thunder. Take cover in a low-lying area and stay away from metal objects. Also, don't stand under tall trees and avoid open areas or you can be struck by a lightning bolt.

Flash floods are also a concern in many areas. If you're caught in a flash flood, move to higher ground as quickly as possible. Do not try to cross a flowing stream, instead wait for the water to subside. It's often a more rapid current under the surface than it looks from the sidelines.

Know the warning signs of tornados, such as yellowish or greenish skies, hail, large and dark low-lying clouds and a loud roar that some describe as sounding like a train. If you see any of these signs, take cover immediately, preferably in a ditch. States that are prone to tornados include, but are not limited to, Alabama, Florida, Kentucky, Georgia, Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, Iowa, Missouri, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi.

The Heat

If you're hiking in a hot climate, make sure to stay hydrated and take breaks often to avoid heat exhaustion. Also, consider your age and health since these can also play a role in your endurance and how your body reacts to the heat. If you have any medical conditions, make sure to pack any medications you might need. It's also a good idea to bring along an emergency flare or mirror in case you need to signal for help.

The Cold

Frigid temps can be just as dangerous as the heat, so, again, make sure to pack extra layers of clothing if you're hiking in a cold climate. Hiking in snow and ice can be treacherous. Make sure you have the proper footwear to prevent slips and falls. Snowshoes or crampons can help you hike safely in snowy or icy conditions.

Mind the Terrain

The terrain can also be a hazard, so make sure you know what you're getting into before starting your hike. If you are hiking in rugged terrain and wilderness, think about bringing a small aerial drone along since it can see further distances from a bird's-eye view. Also consider the level of difficulty of the trail you are hiking, as well as your own level of experience and fitness.

The Desert

The desert can be very beautiful with its purple mountains and flat terrain that showcase wildflowers in the spring and brilliant sunsets year-round. Unfortunately, it can also be a treacherous, unforgiving hike if you don't know what you're doing.

When it comes to hiking in the desert, it's important to stay hydrated and to avoid hiking during the hottest part of the day. If possible, hike in the early morning or evening when it's cooler.

Death Valley is a popular desert hiking route. However, it requires an expert at survival and knowledge of the conditions to navigate things safely in the summer. If you decide to brave a hike at the hottest place on the earth, go from November through March when it's cooler. Most hiking opportunities in Death Valley National Park are along constructed trails whose routes run up canyons and along cross-country and ridges.

Mountainous Regions

If you're hiking in the mountains, be aware of the potential for avalanches, flash floods and other dangers. Trails can cave in, too, so make sure you're aware of your surroundings and don't get too close

to the edge when there are ravines, drop-offs and cliff edges.

Some mountain trails have a high elevation, so lack of oxygen can be an issue. If you start to feel lightheaded, stop and rest. The trail to scale Mount Whitney in the Sierra Nevada Mountain is one example of this. It is the tallest summit in the contiguous United States, so you'll need advanced hiking skills to see its snowy wonders. Although the trail is long, its summit can be conquered through non-technical hiking.

Forests

The forests as they say are lovely, dark and deep. On the other hand, it's easy to be overconfident and get hurt there. In the forest, be aware of potential flash floods or landslides. Also, take extra care to avoid getting lost. Be wary of dangerous footing on slippery and wet ground, and always be aware of your surroundings for potential hazards like hunters shooting game, swarming insects, steep drops and other things the forest environment can offer.

In the U.S., three of the most popular forested areas to hike are the Adirondacks in upstate New York, the Catskills in southeastern New York and the Appalachian Trail, which goes through 14 states from Georgia to Maine.

Watch out for Dangerous Wildlife & Plants

In addition to the weather and dangerous terrain, you also need to be prepared for any dangerous wildlife and plants you might encounter.

Some animals to be aware of include:

- Bear and Mountain Lions
- Moose and Buffalo
- Small Animals
- Deer
- Wolves and Coyotes
- Feral Dogs and Stray Dogs
- Bad Players

Some dangerous plants include:

- Poison Ivy and Poison Oak
- Cactus
- Poisonous mushrooms

Bear and Mountain Lions

Bears are often the biggest concern for hikers, but mountain lions and other large animals can also pose a threat. If you're hiking in an area with large predators, make sure to take precautions like packing bear spray or carrying a gun (if you're allowed to in the area you're hiking).

You should also make sure to avoid hiking alone, as there won't be someone there to help if something happens. In addition, make sure to clean up any food or garbage so that you're not attracting animals to your campsite.



Moose and Buffalo

Buffalo are typically encountered in national parks and moose are found in the northern regions of the U.S. These animals are generally docile but can be dangerous if they feel threatened. When they

attack, it's not pretty since they can weigh up to 2000 pounds. If you see one of these animals, make sure to give them a wide berth. Whatever you do, don't approach them closely and don't try to take any pictures or videos too close up.

Small Animals

Encounters with small animals like raccoons, skunks, squirrels and possums are usually benign. However, getting sprayed by a skunk is no fun, and all of them are capable of giving you a nasty bite if you get too close, touch them or handle them. As with basically any wild creature, it's generally best to just admire these animals from a distance and not try to interact with them.

Diseases like rabies are also a concern, so make sure you know how to identify animals that might be infected. If you're bitten by an animal, seek medical attention immediately.

Watch out for scorpions and snakes, too. They might not be as big as some of the other animals on this list, but they can still pose a threat. Some of the small scorpions in the Southwest like the Arizona Bark Scorpion are extremely venomous, and their sting is fatal to humans in rare cases. Even if it isn't a fatal sting, the swelling they can cause can make your great hike go bad in a hurry.

Moreover, snakes and scorpions tend to want to get in your tent or even in your sleeping bag at night for the warmth it offers on a cold night in the desert. Be sure to get the right kind of sleeping bags (mummy-style sleeping bags are good) if you are hiking and overnighting in the southwest and be sure to check your gear before turning in for the night. Also, don't put your hand somewhere you can't see when it comes to your bags and pouches.

Deer

About deer: Bambi can't do much damage, right? Wrong. Deer are beautiful creatures, but they can also be a hazard while you're hiking. They tend to be more active at dawn and dusk, so be extra careful during those times. If you see a deer, make sure to give it plenty of space and don't approach it too closely.

Deer are often carriers of ticks, which can transmit Lyme disease. If you're hiking in an area with deer, make sure to do a tick check after your hike and remove any ticks that you find.

Wolves and Coywolves

Wolves and coyotes are pretty shy, and although attacks from them are rare, they do happen. If you're hiking in an area where wolves are known to live, make sure to take precautions like carrying bear spray or hiking with a group. Coyotes usually won't mess with you, but watch small children and pets closely if you've brought them along.

Coywolves, which are coyote/wolf/dog hybrids, now number in the millions. They aren't shy at all and have been known to attack people. Like with other animals, make sure to give them plenty of space and don't approach them.

If you are hiking with a dog, be aware that they may attract coyotes as well as other predators. Make sure your dog is leashed and under control at all times, and consider keeping them close to you rather than letting them roam free.

Feral Dogs and Stray Dogs

Packs of feral dogs and stray dogs are sometimes encountered during hikes and can be dangerous. If you run across a pack or a stray dog, don't approach them. If they show aggression, try to make yourself as big as possible and make a lot of noise to scare them away. If that doesn't work, throw rocks or sticks at the dog until it goes away. Teach your children not to approach strange dogs, also.

In general, it's also a good idea to make noise while you're hiking so that you don't startle any animals. This includes things like talking loudly, singing, or clapping your hands.

Bad Players

The most dangerous predators in the world are humans. Most of the people you encounter during a hike will be friendly, but there are always exceptions. Always be aware of your surroundings. If you encounter someone who makes you feel uncomfortable, trust your instincts and get away from them as quickly as possible.

There are a few things you can do to avoid dangerous situations:

- Stay on well-traveled trails
- Hike with a group if possible
- Let someone know where you're going
- Carry a whistle or other alarm
- Trust your gut

If you're feeling unsafe, you can always call the police or park ranger. However, if you have a cell phone with you, it's always a good idea to call 911 first so that they can dispatch help to your location.

Poison Ivy and Poison Oak

Poison ivy and poison oak can grow just about anywhere in the United States, and they can cause a nasty rash if you come into contact with them. The best way to avoid getting this rash is to learn how to identify these plants and steer clear of them.

If you do come into contact with poison ivy or poison oak, you'll need to wash the affected area with soap and water as soon as possible. You can also use a commercial product like Tecnu to remove the oil from your skin. Be sure to avoid touching your eyes after coming into contact with these plants, as this can cause severe irritation.

Cactus

Cactus needles can be painful, and they're also very difficult to remove. If you come into contact with a cactus, try to avoid touching it with your bare skin. If you do get poked by a cactus needle, use tweezers to carefully remove it. Be sure to wash the affected area with soap and water as soon as possible.

Poisonous Mushrooms

There are many different kinds of poisonous mushrooms, and they can be found just about anywhere in the world. Some of these mushrooms only cause mild symptoms like vomiting and diarrhea, while others can be fatal. If you're not sure whether a mushroom is safe to eat, it's best to err on the side of caution and avoid it altogether. Watch small children around mushrooms, too; some of the most poisonous mushrooms like the fire engine red-colored Fly Agaric are gorgeous and may attract curious little hands and mouths.

Dangers of Getting Off Trail

Trails are there to keep you safe. They are typically well-marked and easy to follow. However, sometimes people get off trail and end up in danger. Getting off trail can mean anything from taking a wrong turn to leaving the trail entirely to go exploring. Either way, it can be dangerous. If you're not paying attention, it's easy to take a wrong turn. Once you're off the trail, it can be difficult to find your way back.

There are plenty of dangers that come with getting off the trail, including getting lost, injuries, and even death. It's important to stay on the trail at all times, especially if you're hiking in an unfamiliar area. If you do find yourself off the trail, stop and assess the situation. If you have a map and compass with you, try to orient yourself and figure out where you are. If not, don't panic. Make a call to your local enforcement, then stay where you are and wait for help to arrive.

Prepare for the Unexpected

No matter how well you prepare, there's always a chance that something could go wrong on your hike. That's why it's important to have a plan for dealing with emergencies.

If you get lost, the first thing you should do is stay calm and think about where you are. If you have a map, try to orient yourself and figure out where you are in relation to the trail. If you can't find your way back to the trail, stay in one place and wait for rescuers to find you.

If you get injured, it's important to assess the situation and decide whether you can make it back to the trail and exit on your own, or if you need help. If you can't make it back on your own, call for help with your phone, emergency whistle or signals, then stay in place while you wait for rescuers to find you.

In any emergency situation, it's important to remain calm and think about your options. By being prepared mentally and physically, you can increase your chances of making it back safely from your hike.

The Takeaways

Hiking can be a great way to get exercise and enjoy the outdoors, but it's important to be prepared before heading out. By following these safety tips, you can ensure that your hike is a great experience.



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