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6 things that will keep you alive when the world ends

3554 Words



The Covid-19 Corona Virus has once again got us thinking how fragile we are here on our beautiful blue planet, how many things can come along and threaten us and how equally capable we are of threatening ourselves.

Social media has probably saved the sanity of many a lonely soul. Conversations don't stop during lockdown. It's given us time to speculate, maybe make sure we're ready for whatever it might be next time. Our family's lives may depend on it.

It could be another virus, especially if it was airborne. There's no doubt some of us would be immune, some of us would avoid contact with it, but a huge percentage of us would succumb.

A full nuclear exchange would also leave most of life on Earth all but extinguished. But it would leave a more lasting legacy than a virus.

The movies might suggest that you could hole up somewhere for a couple of years and then come out into the sunshine and see if life can restart. But it won't be like that.

Radioactive elements like Uranium take a long time to stop being radioactive. Uranium 238 takes 4.47 billion years before it's even down to half its levels of radiation. That's as old as planet Earth. In small or greater doses, we will be living with radiation for the rest of our lives.

As with viruses, most of us will avoid the immediate ground zero chaos of the conflict. Some of us will be lucky enough to live in a remote enough place to avoid full radiation exposure and more so if the winds remain favourable.

Then, there are the ever-present threats from space. I'm not talking about aliens, that's another conversation, but if a nasty breed of aliens showed up and took a fancy to our world they'd probably make quick work of taking it over.

There are comets and asteroids, some of which have missed us by very little in cosmological terms in recent times. An impact of sufficient size would kick up enough dust to block out the sun for years. Plants would die, then the animals that feed off them, then the animals that feed off those animals, and finally the top of the food chain, humans.

And there is our own star, the Sun. The Earth's magnetic field creates a buffer against its regular bursts of radiation but scientists have always warned that a Coronal Mass Ejection (CME) would be capable of overcoming our magnetic field. The magnetic field would return but we would be subjected to a decent toasting and residual radiation. And a CME of that magnitude is apparently long overdue for planet Earth.

So, the people left behind from any of these catastrophic events would live in a totally new world. There would be very few other people, no services like water, electricity, gas supply and no law and order. Just us. And it's every person for themselves.

These are the things you need to know if you're going to survive.

First, you need to understand this.

You will need to change your whole perspective on what it is to be human. It may conflict on various levels with your current beliefs and philosophies, but the decision is a simple one. Change and survive or reject change and die.

1 > Your Home

Find a remote south-facing location where there are fewer people competing for any natural resources and food. The property should sit on at least 5 acres if you're to have the

best chance of raising livestock and growing food. I know, 5 acres is beyond most of us but remember there will be a lot of abandoned properties when the world ends. Try and locate yourself at an elevated level but just up from a river.

Inside your home must have enough space to store a lot of food and water and other tools you will need. And remember, one of the first things you will need to do is ensure it's watertight and has walls of enough thickness to guard against any radiation. In the absence of lead sheets, three feet of concrete is a minimum and make sure you can quickly lock down any weaker structures like windows and doors with sheet steel if needs be.

You need to plan for long-term storage. A family of four may consume 2000 lbs of food in a two-year period.

Don't rely on the river. Get large storage butts and have them catch any water that comes off your house.

The food you eat has to maintain the right amount of calories and vitamins and bear in mind it might increase from your current daily intake as there will be a lot more manual work to do on a regular basis.

The full list of foods is below but dried beans, grain, powdered milk, oil, salt and sugar are key. It's likely that more than half your home will be set aside for food storage and add 50% to that space if you start growing your own food.

Make sure you fully map out the perimeter of your property, not just any legal boundaries. Natural boundaries. Woodland, mountains, rivers. Establish a manageable boundary.

Build a secure fence along your boundary and if possible set up motion detectors or traps to warn you of any intrusion. If you have the materials, add multiple fence lines.

Your primary route in and out of the property will need to be double-fortified at least and allow you plenty of visibility to enter and exit safely. Establish an emergency escape route off your property and fortify that in the same way.

Power sources are vital. There will be nothing coming through the walls.

For as long as the gasoline supplies last, which won't be long, store fuel and get a generator. Invest in solar panels.

If the end of the world has come via any radiation-lingering means, buy sunflower seeds and a lot of them. It will be important to grow your own food and so you need soil that is well-drained and already supporting growth like fruit trees.

You also need that soil to be radiation-free and that's where the sunflowers come in. Sunflowers are incredible plants. They have the ability to filter radiation from the soil they inhabit. After the nuclear disaster at Chernobyl in 1986, they planted sunflowers to purify the soil.

If you can interplant what you need with sunflowers, you will have a better chance at clean soil.

2 > Tools and Supplies

We've discussed the fundamentals of your property above and the facilities you need to have. Now it's time to get all the essentials. Transport, clothing, tools, safety equipment and general supplies.

Transport

It depends what sort of end-of-the-world scenario you end up in. There will be supplies of gasoline up to a point and obviously watered down by how many people have to access it.

You may not have to stick with the little hybrid that served you so well before. Just as some properties will be deserted, so will vehicles.

You need something tough and resilient, made of sheet steel, not plastic. Something capable of pulling a felled tree up the slope closer to your woodshed and something capable of ramming things at speed and powering on through

There 's only one thing I can recommend here if at all possible.

You need a Land Rover.

And ideally one or two 250cc trail bikes.

First Aid Kit

An untreated injury can make survival more difficult. This is not an item to scrimp and save on.

A good first aid kit will contain:

- Bandages in assorted sizes
- Ibuprofen or Aspirin
- Antibiotic cream
- Wet wipes
- Hand sanitizer
- Gauze
- Sterilisation Strips
- Hypoallergenic nitrile gloves
- Alcohol pads
- Antiseptics
- Different sized safety pins
- Thermometer
- Snakebite kit
- Baking soda

- Hydrogen peroxide
- Eyewash
- Eye pads
- Vaseline
- Bandage scissors

Survival Clothing

You will be glad you chose the right clothing for the situation. You need to deal with extremes of heat and cold.

- Good Boots
- Warm weather clothing
- Cold weather clothing
- Waterproof clothing such as a poncho or waterproof jacket
- Sunglasses
- Bandannas (can also be used as a tourniquet or a bandage)
- Sleeping bag or a wool blanket
- Heavy Duty Work Gloves

Survival Tools and Equipment

It is always best to buy quality. If you receive a poor quality product from an online retailer now, you send it back or throw it away. It's not the end of the world. But when it is the end of the world, it could mean life or death.

- Fixed blade knife
- Pocket knife
- Multi-tool
- Axe or hatchet
- Machete
- Map & Compass
- Saw
- Strike-anywhere matches and a Magnifying Glass
- Manual can openers. Definitely more than one. With half a houseful, off canned food, this is essential
- Cooking Utensils
- Spade
- Buckets, wheelbarrow or large plastic sheet
- Batteries. As many as you can. And when the time comes, see if you can commandeer any 12-volt batteries from abandoned cars. And remember, a car hood is a great example of a steel sheet defence for your home's doors and windows.
- Firewood. Initially, gather what you can but ultimately, you will need to cut trees down. Once you have, and you've cut it up, you need to get it dried properly.
- Chainsaw
- Rope
- Duct tape

- Fishing line
- Flashlight (LED preferred) or better still and headlamp
- Candles
- Oil lanterns and clean oil
- Propane lantern and 1lb propane tanks
- Water filter
- Water purifying tablets
- Pet supplies (collar, leash, ID, food, carrier, bowl)
- Paint. Not to decorate with. Different colours to signify different things. Things only you and your family know about. Leave signals so you can be found or direct people to something

And don't forget some of the more exotic items:

- Geiger Counter to check radiation levels
- Radiation suits and masks
- An anemometer. Something to detect wind direction and speed.

Personal Hygiene

Although you may not feel like maintaining your usual standards it's important to boost morale and maintain personal hygiene.

- Soap
- Toothpaste
- Extra toothbrushes
- Compact Mirror
- Dental Floss
- Toilet Paper

Kids and Leisure

As with ensuring the best personal hygiene, you might not think that leisure time is an option in a post-apocalyptic world. For adults, piecing off time for relaxation is vital. For kids, it's essential.

- Deck of cards
- Some books to teach the kids. Don't worry, kids, not Latin. Skills and techniques we're discussing here first of all, then as close as you can get to a normal school curriculum. Kids are kids. They want stimulation. They want fun. They don't understand all of this. For a harmonious home and survival-smart kids, you need to think of games and activities for them
- Paper and pens and pencils. Start by writing about what has happened and what you are going through. Get the kids to do the same and draw it as well

3 > Food and Water

Foods with low natural moisture and fat levels are the easiest to store if done right. When archaeologists opened an Egyptian tomb, they discovered 4,000-year-old wheat inside. And it was still edible!

You can extend your food's lifetime by years with the right storage vessels and environment.

We can split food up into two components:

The initial food you bring into the house

Every year, each of you will need:

300 pounds of grains per person (a pound of grain is between 2 1/4 - 2 1/2 cups).

75 pounds of legumes (pinto, black, red, lima, kidney, turtle, garbanzo, etc.)

75 pounds of milk (powdered, evaporated, etc.)

65 pounds of sweeteners (sugar, molasses, honey, etc.)

4 pounds of shortening

2 gallons of oil

2.5 pounds of leavening agents (yeast, baking soda, baking powder, etc.)

5 pounds of salt

45 gallons of water

In general, the right foods to eat are:

- Dried beans
- White rice
- Honey
- Peanut butter
- Pasta
- Oats
- Freeze-dried foods
- Couscous
- Canned vegetables
- Canned meat
- Canned fish
- Canned fruit
- Spaghetti
- Lentils

- Multi-Vitamins and Multi-Vit sports bars
- Ramen noodles. Cheap as chips and good for 10 years
- Peanut butter. This is a bit of a treat and we will all need a treat every so often to appease the monotony of digging and logging readings. Peanut Butter can last between 3-5 years
- Cheese is a nutritional powerhouse too. The waxed cheese that is. It fills you up, there are so many ways you can have it, and provided that it's kept at mild to cool temperatures, it has a shelf life of up to 25 years
- Sugar
- Salt
- Baking Powder
- Dried Apples
- Potato Flakes

And don't forget to secure a decent supply of Multivitamins.

The food that you grow yourself

First of all, well done for surviving till the first harvest season.

You are now capable of supporting life beyond your initial survival period. Let's call that the 'canned age'.

Now you can supplement what you already have in your food store with fresh produce.

And what's more, it's likely that you won't be able to consume or store all of it yourself so you will have a commodity that a lot of people won't have.

So, you can trade. Trading is a great way to establish potential friends and detect likely enemies. But most importantly, if you can trade food for batteries or additional containers for food and water, everybody's happy.

4 > Communication

Without the ability to guide satellites in a geo-synchronous orbit or power cell phone towers and landline phone systems, you will need to rely on Backup Communications.

If you live on a plot big enough to farm, two-way radios are a must.

- AM/FM radio (Battery-powered or hand-crank) to pick up any news or announcements
- CB radio. These are lower power output devices, capable of reaching maybe ten miles. Power equals distance.
- Portable HAM radio. This can cover a far greater range. Make sure you log some key frequencies so when you pick up a signal you know where it's from
- Solar charger for your radio or HAM radio

- And don't forget the compact Mirror you brought for personal hygiene. Very useful to signal morse code across a distance.

5 > Defence

In the planning stage at least, here in the normal world, this is where most people will have a problem. Potentially deadly conflict with other people.

But, once you've been immersed in an end of the world scenario for long enough, that position will likely change.

If you've been keeping and consuming livestock, or if you have to go out and hunt prey, you will have already overcome the notion of killing.

Unfortunately, you may also have to accommodate the notion of killing other people to protect yourself and your family.

As someone with children, I can tell you, taking a life to keep your babies safe becomes automated. It will be less of a dilemma than you first imagined.

So how do you provide the best defence, and if necessary, offence for your family?

The first thing you need to do, way ahead of the end of the world, is to learn about hand-to-hand combat. Don't bother about the golf lesson or wine tasting class. Get professionally trained to enhance your chances of survival if it all comes down to close range situations.

If you can overcome a situation without the need to discharge firearms, and showing that you possess firearms in the first place, you will have achieved a valuable win.

Here are the things you need to defend your family against all-comers:

- Diplomacy. You have to start with it but learn to spot the signs and only engage in dialogue if you don't feel vulnerable. Do they have you at a disadvantage? Are there more of them? What's their general demeanour? You can apparently spot a potential lie if they blink more than normal or their eyes can't stay focussed on a single spot. If they look up and to the right when they are recalling something, it's a tell that they're making it up.
- A quick psychology course to complement your self-defence training is a good idea.
- If YOU consider diplomacy has failed, be the first to act. Never be afraid to react quickly to something that doesn't make sense. It's them or you after all
- Pepper spray
- Firearms and lots of ammo. This is part of your new curriculum training for kids.
- Knives. Not just tools for everyday things or preparing food. Learn how to hold a knife, conceal it and access it quickly.
- Taser

- Try and keep antennas and other signs of life hidden. If someone detects you are there, and they will, they may assume you have something they want.
- Try not to emit too much light. After dark, lock the place down. Close up the steel shutters and keep noise to a minimum. As with the motion detectors on your fence line, see if you can rig up infrared cameras to cover your perimeter.
- Try not to emit too much smell. If it's freezing cold and you need the fire lit, there's not much you can do about the smell of burning wood. But otherwise, make sure smells of cooking and anything else remains locked inside the house. Disable any extractor fans.
- Part of your home setup should be to get out on reconnaissance patrols so you can see how close other people are to your property. Assess the collateral they have at their disposal, how many of them, vehicles, smoke from a fire, light, smells. All the things you try not to reveal yourself. Dig in for long enough to get a good assessment. From that, you can figure out if they're up to your standard of defence and what they might not already have. It's possible if they find that thing at your place, they're going to try and take it.
- Make it clear at your outer boundary fence line and your main entry point that any entry onto your property is not on. Don't mention how you will combat it, just provide fair warning. From there, it's up to them.

If you learn what you need to learn and keep a cool head on you, all of this will be enough to keep you a step ahead. The best thing to do is form alliances with people you trust but never trust them too much.

And remember, you're not a green beret. Know your limits. Know when to stay and fight and when to run for the hills. And always instinctively run away from your home to throw them off.

There will be green beret survivors who will take you over and bury you as quick as look at you. The only advice we can offer is to avoid them like the plague. If you encounter such folk in the new world, appreciate they are better prepared than you and hope they see a use in you.

They also tend to have an inbuilt moral decency. So, there's the potential that they will show some more humanistic qualities. And what an asset to get on board if you can accommodate each other.

6 > Emergency Relocation (Bug Out)

Pretty much as soon as you've established your primary home base, you will need to start thinking about a secondary location. If you find yourself outnumbered and outgunned, you need to prepare to abandon your home and almost everything in it to stay alive.

This is obviously a last resort but you've done it once. Maybe you now need to find another location and do it again. It could be a cave or an abandoned industrial unit, the same principles apply.

Once you've found your reserve location, make sure you do regular trips to it and check it's still safe.

If and when you are forced to evacuate your home, make sure you take the basic essentials to survive until you can occupy and secure your reserve location.

You will need to travel fast and light so pack the following essentials. Take a backpack (called a "bug out bag") and stow it all ready to abandon ship:

- Tent
- Waterproof Tarp
- Poncho
- Emergency blanket
- Large Trash bags (when filled with leaves, can also be used as bedding)
- Small stove like a Primus
- Individual first aid kit
- 32 oz potable water stored in a hard canteen
- Collapsible canteen/vessel
- Water filter
- Water purification tablets
- Food that's ready to eat like energy bars or freeze-dried foods
- Matches
- Flashlight
- Field knife
- Multitool
- Condensed soap
- Toilet paper
- Three days of spare clothing
- One or two-way radio
- Batteries

Conclusion

How well you adapt to your new world all depends on whether you're going to organise it now or wait till it all goes down.

Doing it now will give you access to an almost endless supply of essentials to stock up on beforehand. Waiting for times to start looking dangerous will undoubtedly bring supply problems and waiting any longer than that will prove very difficult indeed, apart from being able to acquire items that will be abandoned in the future.

And what it all comes down to is your mindset and the reality that nothing will be the same again.

Prepare as well as you can but ultimately, it all gets back to the simple truth.

We will be men and women with guns defending our lives.