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SURVIVAL ITEMS

IMPOSSIBLE

TO GET POST COLLAPSE

Dan F. Sullivan

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INTRODUCTION

It's really tough to anticipate what life will be like in the aftermath of a national or global collapse. Sure, we try to imagine it; we look to 3rd world countries who have suffered similar woes or even history books to see what we can learn from the toppling of empires past.

But, how many times in history did we get to witness an advanced civilization like ours descend into total darkness? How many of us have lived to see it or, even worse, live to be a part of such an event?

Growing up in communist Romania, I didn't have very much, and that included lack of certain liberties we all take for granted, such as freedom of speech. There were many basic staples elsewhere in the world that were relegated to luxury good status. For instance, the only times I would get to eat oranges was during Christmas! In my mind, I'll always associate the holiday with the taste of oranges and other "exotic" fruit because we had no other choice. That's just the way it was.

I realize most of you reading this never experienced what I have and that's why the coming catastrophe and dark days in the aftermath are going to be so much tougher for you than it will be for me. You see, I'm already *used* to not having much of the things the rest of the western world takes for granted. Chances are you may not be.

So much of the food, water, medicine, gadgets and gear we have at our disposal today that make our lives easier are going to be used up, worn out or just unavailable shortly after the "Big One" hits. This could happen for any number of reasons:

- The transportation systems that fuel commerce could be permanently offlined or severely degraded and as such supermarket stores will empty and supplies will be very hard to procure.
- Some items will be impossible to get because the factories that make them will cease to function or be unreachable. Considering how much of what is consumed in the West is made in China, it is easy to see how that supply chain will disintegrate nearly overnight.

- The new regime may forcibly forbid you to acquire and use certain items through rationing, reallocation or “redistribution” of raw materials.
- Your possessions could be stolen by other survivors that are desperate or just plain ruthless. Don’t keep all your eggs in one basket!

So what will you do when you’ll really need something? When you think about it, you don’t have that many practical options:

- You can barter or pay for what you need, though this may put your life in danger from interacting with desperate or dodgy people, or it may just cost you a fortune. Even if it’s something as banal as a few lids for canning.
- You can try making it yourself. But as you will see some things are pretty much impossible or at least extremely difficult to make at home and are totally reliant on modern manufacturing methods to be viable. If you cannot come up with a simpler solution, what then?
- You can go without. This means that wants will be cast aside entirely and needs may have to go unfulfilled. Depending on what you lack, you’ll have more or less time.

Or alternatively, you can do the only thing that makes sense: stockpile. A lot has been said and written about stockpiling the basics needed to sustain life- food, water and medicine- but today I want to talk about hoarding the supplies, tools, gear and gadgets that will be almost impossible (or truly impossible) for the average person to easily procure or replicate post-collapse.

It might be easier to say what items *are not* on this list. Here’s what this list is NOT:

- I won’t be discussing raw materials as is sometimes popular because then we’d have to talk about means to process them and then produce the useful items in question with them; that is an entirely different conversation!
- I won’t mention certain simple machines, either, such as wheelbarrows because those can be easily crafted as long as you have the right parts and some simple hand tools.
- This list is not about food, either, because we have all read enough on the subject. It’s not about salt, sugar or anything like that.
- This list is not about [survival skills](#) that can help you make tools, and locate goods from scratch.

The items I'm about to discuss are the ones that I hope will make you smack your forehead and say, *"Geez, I never realized that I'll have no way of getting that in a long-term survival situation! I had better stock up quick!"*

With that, let's get started, shall we?

THE LIST



#1. Duct Tape

Every prepper knows it, every prepper loves it: Duct tape! Your miracle multi-tool on a roll. Duct tape is supremely handy and convenient for all kinds of repairs, improvisational tools and a thousand other uses.

While you can DIY your own glue or scavenge some adhesives, there is no easy way to make a genuine analogue to duct tape.

Duct tape is made from embedding fiber mesh onto a polyethylene backing, and then coating those fibers with strong adhesives. This complex, multi-step process means that making your own duct tape is practically out of reach for anyone without access to a factory line.

You can use duct tape to:

- Reseal open food packages
- Patch holes in your shoes or boots
- Fix broken pipes,
- As a sling for a broken arm and or to splint a fracture.
- Dozens upon dozens of other uses (you can find a list of them [here](#))

Alternatives:

- Therapeutic or “PT” tape, provided you stored it before hand in one of your first-aid kits or in your medicine cabinet,
- Electrical tape
- Rescue tape.

These alternatives need to be stockpiled beforehand as well. In fact, you should probably snag a few rolls of each anyway because never know which ones you’ll need in a specific situation.



#2. Coffee Filters

Coffee filters are another wonderfully multi-purpose survival item that a lot of non-coffee drinkers sadly don't have in their survival stash.

They’re an obviously necessary item for brewing your favorite cup of joe using a conventional drip coffee maker, but a clever prepper can get a lot of other uses out of them. A coffee filter is, after all, a filter and an extremely fine one at that.

This means you'll commonly use it as a component in DIY water filtration systems or even on its own as a pre-filter for found water supplies . Since creating a component filter this refined is very difficult you should keep several packs on hand at all times.

Clever uses for coffee filters:

- To pre-filter water, thus prolonging the life of your water filtration system.
- To cover your pots and pans, keeping tiny flies and mosquitoes out.
- As a component in a dust mask.
- Improvised bandage: coffee filters can help stop bleeding.

- To sprouts seeds.

Alternatives:

The following items can all be used as replacements for a coffee filter in the coffee brewing process, but their efficacy at any of the other alternate uses for coffee filters varies:

- Paper towels.
- Cotton muslin.
- Other natural fiber cloth.



#3. Zipper Bags

Ziploc bags are another time-honored prepping item good for all kinds of things and all kinds of situations. Genuine Ziploc bags last forever and seal tightly (so long as you don't use those stupid slider-lock ones!) and are just as handy for holding and carrying quantities of water as they are for waterproofing gear.

You can use Ziploc bags to divide your BOB into sub-loads for easy access and organization, or cut one open and use it as a chest seal to cover a penetrating injury to the chest cavity. Cut-up Ziploc bags make good patches for bags and clothing, or stuff-sacks for gear that has gotten wet or dirty.

Creating a polymer container of this quality is completely beyond the reach of most preppers no matter how much duct tape you throw at the problem. For that reason, it is best to have a huge supply of these at all times.

Alternatives:

- With some ingenuity and a few found materials, you can use a regular plastic bag and the neck cut from a plastic water bottle to create your own "locking" plastic bag.



#4. Mylar Bags

If you keep any bulk dry goods on hand- animal feed, grains, rice, beans, corn, flour, etc.- you're going to have plenty of these crinkly bags on hand when they empty.

Keep them! These bags are reusable, durable and capable of holding quite a bit of weight without bursting.

Don't throw these gems away and you can get plenty of additional use out of them, uses like:

- Sandbags/earthbags.
- Boot or shoe covering.
- Fabric for clothing in a pinch.
- Converted to a simple duffel bag.



#5. Oxygen Absorbers

Oxygen absorbers are packets consisting of an iron powder or other material which removes oxygen from the air that contacts it. These are frequently used in conjunction with mylar and plastic bags to store long-term survival food and will be tough to find post-disaster.

They are thought to have an indefinite shelf-life so long as their protective sealing is not compromised, but you'll hear some people advocate for storing them in vacuum-sealed bags in a cool, dark places just to be sure.

Obviously, crafting such an item without exposing the active ingredient to oxygen is a pipe dream for most people. These guys are cheap, so keep a big supply on hand, ready and waiting!

Since oxygen absorbers are dirt-cheap, you might as well get an assortment of 100cc, 300cc and even 500cc sizes, depending on the sizes of the containers you plan to use them in.

Alternatives:

- None that are viable. Although hand warmers also have powdered iron oxide in them it is impossible to harvest it without activating.

#6. Manual Grain Grinder

If you plan on growing and processing crops, or simply processing stored bulk grains to ride out a major disaster you'll be grateful to have a device that will make the processing much easier than grinding it via a mortar and pestle or by hand with a heavy stone.

An old-fashioned manual grain grinder like your great-grandma used to use will make short work of even tough grain and is purpose-made for the task. While mechanically simple, the cast iron or forged steel drums, cranks and teeth that comprise a grain grinder are not something you can easily make on your own unless you have serious blacksmithing skills.

Alternatives:

- A two-step procedure using a coffee grinder and then a food chopper to grind your grains can work, but both of these items require electricity.
- A millstone like the ones used by our Neolithic and Upper Paleolithic ancestors will work well, though creating one implies you not only have the right kind of stone but also the knowledge to do so. This isn't really much of an option for many. Plus, you'll run into the same problem our ancestors did: those small bits of rock that end up in the flour will be detrimental to your teeth.

Recommendations:

- Victoria Professional Manual Grain Grinder
- KRUPS F203 Electric Spice and Coffee Grinder
- Hamilton Beach 70730 Bowl Scraper Food Processor



#7. PVC Pipes and Fittings

You don't need to live through the end times to know how big of a pain in the butt a leaky pipe can be in your home. Imagine how much worse it'll be if you can't just run down to the local "big box" hardware store and grab what you need from the plumbing aisle!

Aside from keeping the plumbing working in your home or bug-out shelter, PVC pipe has myriad other uses:

- You can use it to construct waterproof storage containers for buried caches.

- To run cable or wire through foliage or underground and keep it from fouling or snagging.
- You can even use it to construct an improvised fishing rod or blow gun, both useful for bagging dinner or supplementing your existing food stores.

Alternatives:

- Depending on the purpose, you can go with cast iron, copper or even plastic pipes, though all of these need to be stockpiled beforehand.



#8. Floss

It is a bit appalling how many preppers don't plan on taking care of their teeth in the aftermath of a major disaster. Sure, some people stock toothbrushes and toothpaste, even mouthwash for their SHTF survival stash but very few stock *floss*.

Floss is essential for getting your teeth truly clean, so you can't skimp on it, and just as importantly floss is some of the strongest thread you can get for the least amount of money and is a commonly seen item in the survival kits of old-timers that know a thing or two about this prepping business.

They know how useful this sturdy, thin cordage really is. Floss is unique in that it is very flat, like tape or ribbon, and very strong. Even if you find thin cordage it won't have the same profile as floss does. You can use floss as:

- Sewing thread.
- Shoelace.
- Fishing line.
- To keep rope ends from fraying.
- Snare line.

- Spear and arrowhead lashing.
- Belt (when braided).

Alternatives:

- There are lots of small, strong threads and cords to choose from, but none with the unique properties of floss... Especially for flossing! Some preppers think the inner core of paracord works as well in a pinch, but in my experience at least it is way too thick!



#9. Chicken Wire

Chicken wire is incredibly useful not only for keeping your chickens safely corralled inside their coop, tractor or other enclosure but it is also great for keeping dangerous predators out! The problem with most chicken wire is that the cheap stuff is prone to rusting out and breaking quickly, so make sure you spend a little more for high-quality wire.

This is one of those items that works like a charm for its intended purpose but also in the construction of all kinds of animal containers and traps and even as screens and sieves for dirt and gravel. It is, as you have probably guessed, extremely laborious and aggravating to make by hand even with a big spool of appropriate wire available.

Alternatives:

- Stucco wire (It's cheaper, too)
- Hardware cloth (a bit pricier but a lot more durable)



#10. Rubber/PVC Boots

If you're tramping through mud, muck or any other filth, you'll be glad you have a good, sturdy set of waterproof, knee-high rubber boots. You may have a great set of hiker combat boots, but when things get truly nasty, accept no substitutes.

Depending on where you live or what you are dealing with, you may be wearing boots like this every single day. Also it seems like no matter how well you take care of them, these boots will always give up all at once.

You can repair a hole in these boots easily enough with epoxy rubber, but when they start splitting up the middle or right across the sole they're done for. I don't know about you, but I don't have the injection molding machines necessary to create a solid rubber boot or even to properly rubberize an existing pair of boots effectively enough to make them waterproof.

You'll want to have these guys, and several replacement sets besides.

Alternative uses:

- Planters! Make them part of your survival garden after they wear out by filling them up with dirt and growing plants in them.

Recommendations:

- Tingley Men's PVC Steel Toe 15" Knee Boot



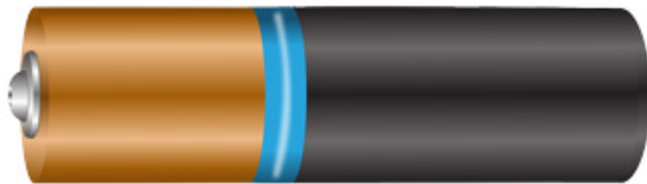
#11. Shoes

High-quality footwear is truly a blessing. Aside from protecting your feet and providing comfort, good footwear lets you work longer, go farther and faster on the same amount of energy compared to primitive shoes or going barefoot.

You can make all the cases for that barefoot lifestyle you want, but no matter how tough your feet get they are extremely vulnerable without shoes on.

It is entirely *possible* to cobble together primitive shoes to protect the feet, or keep them warm, using found materials but unless you are an honest to goodness cobbler you will never get close to the efficiency of proper shoes.

Sure, it might seem like shoes grow on trees right now, but they are definitely a consumable item. Every step you and others take with their shoes on puts them one step closer to the garbage heap. Make sure you have replacements!



#12. Batteries

Can we all just agree right here and now that, for all practical purposes, you cannot make your own batteries at home?

Yes, I know some of you contrarians and pedants are already raising your hands bringing up things like citrus juice batteries made from clay jars and reminding us about potato clocks that you put together back in middle school science class.

Those are very interesting tricks but they are practically worthless as batteries! You'll have all kinds of vital survival supplies that need power, not the least of which are flashlights. Batteries are one of those things you need to stock up on: buy them cheap and stack them deep! Because when they are gone, man, they are gone if the factories aren't churning out any more.

Alternatives:

You do have some alternate choices of power for your portable devices, thankfully, though none are as convenient as "on-demand" disposable batteries.

- Solar rechargers for mobile devices: GPS, smartphone, etc.

- Hand-crank (dynamo) powered versions of essential gadgets like radios and flashlights.
- Consider using rechargeable batteries on a charging dock if you have significant solar power resources or generator power. This can let you get far more mileage out of batteries that would otherwise be consumed.



#13. Canning Lids

If you can meat, fruits and veggies at home, or just know someone who does, you want to stock up and get a big, healthy supply of canning lids for mason jars.

Why? Well, this is to prevent a sort of hot dog - hot dog buns situation; while mason jars are reusable with a thorough cleaning, the lids absolutely *are not*! Reusing an old mason jar lid is likely to compromise the seal and you know what happens if you improperly can something.

Bingo: Botulism is a likely outcome. Botulism can kill you, and if it doesn't kill you it'll just make you *wish* you were dead, so you don't want to risk catching it from a botched canning job.

This means every time someone gets ready to make a new batch of canned goodies they will need a fresh lid. Even though they're made of metal, they are consumable items.

Creating a little metal lid with a rubberized seal that fits a mason jar precisely is just more trouble than it's worth when you can get these things so cheaply, especially during the winter time when no one else is buying.



#14. Needles

Before you protest, yes, you can fashion your own needles from a variety of materials. Useful needles at that, not just a needle in theory. But, when you can get genuine, steel sewing needles in a variety of sizes and for pennies, why wouldn't you keep a good supply on hand?

This is one of those things where you can indeed fashion a replacement item, but the genuine article is so much more effective and takes up so little room, it seems crazy to be forced into that position.

And needles are not just a prep for seamstresses and people who know how to sew on a button or stitch up their own clothes. You can use needles for all kinds of additional survival purposes, and I'll guarantee you there's a few you haven't thought of.

Aside from sewing, you can use needles for the following:

- Suturing a wound.
- Fishhook.
- Tweezers.
- Improvised pen.
- Take several and combine to make a frog gig.
- Small game trap construction.

Alternates:

It is possible as I said to fashion needles from a variety of materials, but if you need a sturdy steel needle you can shape one from stiff wire or very small trim nails.

#15. Solar Chargers

Like so many electronics, solar chargers and one of those items that your average person simply does not have the know-how (to say nothing of the capability) to create.

To be more specific, it *is* possible to create a solar charger from various electronics parts, wire and other materials but it is nearly impossible to create the solar collector cell itself. That is the keystone component of any solar charging system.

If you don't have one of these before the end comes, chances are you're not going to get one. Considering that modern units are some of the most efficient, most portable and most durable solutions that have ever been in this category, they're one of the few ways to keep your personal electronics going after the power grid goes down completely.

Recommendations:

- Creative Edge(TM) Solar-5 Solar Panel 5000mAh
- Levin Dual USB Port 5000mAh Portable Solar Panel

Alternatives:

One of your only alternatives to feeding your devices batteries constantly is to make use of compact field windmills and potentially hydroelectric “drogue” chargers. And, for the record, neither compares in efficiency or ease of use to modern solar charging systems.



#16. Gardening Tools

Who knows how long we might have to rely on our own food before things get back to some sort of normal? If you are planning like most preppers, you'll be banking on gardening as the main way to keep our families fed for the long haul.

Gardening is a surprising amount of work, and doing it all truly by hand will be exhausting and rough on your hands. Tools make the work much faster and easier, but even cheap, primitive gardening tools will not be easy to replace if they break or totally wear out.

Can you mold and beat metal into shape? How about harden it properly? What is the best way to affix the tools to a handle? Anyone can fashion a wooden handle from a branch, but crafting the metal part is altogether tougher. Better to have a

good replacement set on hand to extend your “up-time” before you have to turn to improvisation or bartering for good ones.

Stock up on the following simple tools:

- Buckets
- Hoses
- Scissors
- Hoes
- Weeders
- Saws
- Shovels
- Rakes

#17. Gloves

You can make your own clothes if you know how, and you can even make mittens to keep you warm during winter if you are skilled enough, but making an honest pair of leather or heavy cloth gloves that provide protection and dexterity is another kind of project entirely.

I can still remember the ones my grandma made me when I was a kid. You’ll want several pairs of your preferred gloves on hand as a matter of course, but it’s impossible to make certain kinds of gloves: nitrile, rubber and latex gloves spring to mind.

When things get nasty and you need to dive in and then shuck the gloves when you are finished, you don’t want to ruin your usual work or cold-weather ones. Since they’re cheap, why not add several boxes to your shopping list? Some chores that might call for constant use of gloves:

Survival uses:

- Tending a fire.
- Cooking.
- Climbing rope.
- Gathering wood.
- Handling debris.
- Trekking through brush.
- Using knives and tools.
- Handling/mixing chemicals.
- Applying first-aid.

- Sanitation duty

Types of gloves to consider stockpiling:

- Cotton gloves
- Leather work gloves
- Nitrile/latex/rubber gloves
- Cold weather gloves.

Recommendations:

- 5.11 Tactical Hard Time gloves
- Mechanix tactical gloves
- U.S. G.I. gloves intermediate cold flight gloves

#18. Chainsaw

A chainsaw is one survival tool that can make your life really easy so long as you can keep it fueled. Trees can help or hurt your survival efforts. They can help you by providing useful firewood and building materials. They can hurt you when they fall on your house, damaging it, or topple over and block roadways.

Manual tools like axes and hatchets and splitting mauls can process trees and surprisingly short order so long as you can supply the muscle., but if you aren't in great shape, you're more likely to fatigue quickly using any of those tools. A chainsaw will let you sail through the same amount of work in far less time.

The Achilles' heel of any chainsaw is the chain itself. Prone to breaking and wearing out, you'll definitely need a replacement if you only get your saw up and running again. Make sure you have several on hand to accompany your saw.

#19. Multi-tools and Survival Knives

A survival situation any kind, a good knife is often worth its weight in gold. The same goes for the modern multi-tool, those inimitably handy pocket tool chests.

If you buy quality, you'll probably get a lifetime of hard use out of any good knife or multi-tool if you give it even a little bit of care. I'm not so much worried about it wearing out, or breaking, I'm more worried about loss.

Plenty of preppers will admit to having nightmares of being trapped in the middle of a wilderness survival situation and spontaneously losing their knife, to their

terror. Indeed, that is a dreadful setback and I don't want to imagine having to get by without either.

To prevent this eventuality, make sure you have at least one high-quality back up each for your primary knife and multi-tool of choice.

- Ka-Bar Becker BK-2
- Buck Knives 119 Special Knife
- Morakniv Companion Fixed Blade Outdoor Knife
- Mora Classic 1 Bushcraft Knife
- Ontario USAF Survival knife

As for the best multi-tool, consider these choices:

- Basic Leatherman Multitool (anything from Leatherman, really)
- Victorinox Spirit
- SOG PowerLock
- Gerber Center Drive and Suspension multi-tools

Tip: Do remember that multiple, fullsize tools are always more effective than a shrimpy, pocket-sized multi-tool, but never more portable!

#20. Glasses and/or Contact Lens

If you're saddled with prescription contacts or glasses in order to see well, you'll be in a major pickle if they get broken or you lose them. In the event of major societal upheaval, you can't simply drive down to the optometrist and get your prescription adjusted or refilled. That means your prescription eyewear is absolutely precious in a prolonged emergency situation.

Obviously, it follows that you'll need extra pairs as backups. Consider having at least two extra sets of any prescription eyewear, and potentially backup pairs that are one peg "up" or "down" from your current prescription to account for changing eyesight over time.

Don't forget to account for potential bug out situations, either. You may want to stash a set at your BOL for extra insurance.

#21. Paper and Pencils

This is a basic prep, but a good one. You can use all kinds of things to write messages, heck, even a stick can let you scrawl a message on a flat, malleable

surface. But nothing is as efficient for writing as an honest pencil and a piece of paper.

Why would you risk running out of something like that? Before you write this off (sorry) as a luxury or a necessary, consider that leaving notes has serious survival utility in a grid down situation.

Additionally, paper remembers what the mind forgets; if you need to write down anything important in a hurry, it's far faster to grab a pad and pencil than try to punch it into a smartphone or engrave it into something with the tip of a knife.

Usage:

- Keeping a journal.
- Writing emergency info.
- Leaving notes for others.
- Drawing maps.
- Sketching plans

#22. Fabrics (cotton, wool etc.)

If you need to make or repair clothing, you'll want good high quality fabric to start with. Of course, you making use of this assumes that you know how to sew and repair clothing.

But if you don't, take heart: chances are someone you know does as this is a very common skill. Even among those not in your immediate network, it won't take much work to find someone who is a skilled seamstress or tailor.

A few bolts of simple, high-quality fabrics like cotton, wool and nylon can let you or someone who is skilled make what you need from scratch. If you don't have fabric on hand, you'll have to resort to scavenging it from old clothing, blankets and so forth. Certainly doable, but not ideal.

#23. Games and Diversions

Survival is serious business, but do not discount the value of recreation. This is most prevalent in long-term or unknown duration survival situations where you will simply not be working like a crazy person all the time.

While your life may not look anything like what it used to be, there will be periods of rest and inactivity when things are stabilized. Idle hands, and more importantly a wandering mind, is the devil's playground.

Keep the doldrums and cabin fever at bay with a selection of board games, a simple deck of cards and even a few choice books. A few balls to toss around or kick around are not a bad idea also.

You can of course craft what you need as long as you know the rules to a particular game, but that will require a disproportionate amount of effort, energy and resources compared to what you'll get out of it. Energy “budget” is a thing! For a little shelf space and a few bucks you can take care of the entertainment needs.

#24. Nail Clippers

Having long nails is very uncomfortable, not to mention the risk of disease from all the bacteria that just loves to gather beneath them. A good pair of nail clippers can last you a lifetime but it's always a good idea to have a few back-ups. They're cheap, too!

#25. Scissors

Scissors will be more important than you think during a disaster, if only specialized ones for certain purposes. Even if you don't use them all the time a quality pair of clean cutting scissors is extraordinarily difficult to make.

Don't even bring up those primitive shears that sometimes pop up on blacksmithing shows. Are you good enough at metalworking to make something that precise? Maybe, but I don't think so. Make sure you have a few sets of choice scissors off the list below:

- EMT Shears (should be part of your first aid kit).
- Office scissors (for cutting paper).
- Kitchen scissors.
- Pruning shears (use them to trim small branches).

#26. Steel Wool

Steel wool is another one of those everyday items that seems to be completely forgotten when discussing emergency supplies for use in the context of a disaster.

Steel wool has obvious utility for removing corrosion from metal and polishing hard surfaces to a mirror shine, but what you may not know is it works as an awesome fire-starter when combined with a 9-volt battery.

Simply pull a bundle of steel wool out into a sort of rope and touch both ends to the opposite contacts on the battery. Part of the steel wool will glow red hot and can start a fire in any kind of tinder.

When you stop to think about it, how would you actually go about making steel wool? How on Earth would you produce steel "fiber" that fine? I couldn't think of a way, either. Make sure you stock up on this handy stuff.

#27. Pots, Pans, Cutlery

Everyone's focused on survival food but some forget about the items needed to prepare and consume that food! Keep a selection of kitchen crockery and utensils handy such as:

- Pots and pans
- Cooking utensils- long handled, spoons, spatulas, tongs
- Knives, forks and spoons
- Can openers
- Lids

Alternatives:

- Plastic cookware is cheap and disposable, meaning you won't need any extra water to clean it.
- DIY pottery (this is complicated, messy and you need the right gear, such as a kiln and a wheel).
- A stainless steel water bottle can be used to cook soup and boil water for your tea on an open fire. This is a good option for mobile preppers, but make sure the bottle has no liner!

#28. Aluminum Foil

Aluminum is another hard-to-get, hard-to-fashion item post-collapse, and these shiny sheets have plenty of uses aside from covering casseroles and cakes. You can of course use it for its intended purpose, cooking, but you can also let aluminum foil do the cooking by lining inside of a container with it to make a solar oven.

Going way back to the 1940's, -50's and -60's, you can use aluminum foil attached to an antenna on a radio or television or even a modern internet router to enhance a wireless signals picked up.

Aluminum foil also works great for keeping pests at bay, because most rodents won't chew it. Its extraordinary slim profile means it can also be wadded up and stuffed into small cracks and crevices to help keep insects out.

While you may be able to fashion sheet metal after the collapse, you surely won't be able to make it as thin as aluminum foil. So if you need it, and you don't have it, you're out of luck.

#29. Whistle

I don't think I need to tell you that a whistle can get you rescued when you're in distress. If you can't whistle or you simply need something louder, a good survival whistle will do the trick.

A proper survival whistle is ear-splittingly loud, and not something you will see laying around. While it is possible to craft reasonably effective simple whistles from natural materials, there is a trick to it, and you are far better off using the effort and energy on something else.

Keep a few survival whistles on hand for signaling and rescue-assistance purposes.

#30. Topographic Maps

There's simply no way to overstate the importance and the value of high-quality topographic maps in a post-collapse survival situation.

When holding a map in our hands we hold something that, not too many centuries ago, was impossibly valuable. The human sacrifice in effort, sweat, blood and lives that was paid to make these accurate maps possible for future generations is an incalculable gift.

Don't squander it by depending on crudely scrawled hand-drawn maps of the surrounding area. Aside from not being particularly accurate, the lack of detail may make your travels a lot harder than they have to be.

You can rest assured maps will be in extremely high-demand in the aftermath of the collapse and they will disappear quickly, probably forever, if the printers don't get restarted.

#31. Electronics

Electronics are some of the most complex devices that we use every single day, And while you might have the ability to repair electronics, even cobble together

simple electronic devices from parts, can you honestly say you have the ability to make electronics components? I would say most folks don't.

Those components all come from factories scattered all over the globe. Sure, you may be a whiz with a soldering iron and can replace all those little bits and bobs that the rest of us just stare at in wonder, but I'll bet you cannot *make them* yourself.

Therefore, the supply of electronics, viable electronics, will begin dwindling immediately in the aftermath of a society toppling disaster. Just because the sky is falling is not a reason to give up on using them.

Quite the contrary, they will still have many advantages as long as you can still power them, but once they are gone they are probably gone forever, at least for the duration. Consider having the following on hand:

- AM/FM battery-powered or hand-crank radios.
- Walkie-talkies.
- Cell phones.
- E-reader with all your survival manuals and notes
- Compact digital camera (maybe you have photos of your cache locations or the wild edibles in your area).
- Solar chargers.
- GPS.

#32. Mosquito Netting

You can find all kinds of mission screen near most residential homes and even many commercial buildings, but mosquito netting is on another level. Mosquito netting is so fine and so thin it is virtually impossible to replicate outside of an industrial setting.

What I'm trying to say is just can't make this stuff yourself. Mosquito netting is useful for keeping all kinds of hateful biting insects at bay, the eponymous mosquitoes first among them, but also noseemos, gnats, fleas and stinging creatures like bees, wasps and hornets.

Beyond this eminently useful role, mosquito netting also works well as part of a water filtration system.

Recommendations:

- USGI Military Mosquito Net Bar

- Mombasa Outback Insect Shield Mosquito Net

#33. Super-Glue

There will be lots of broken things in need of repair post-disaster. When you break a glass or a plate, or just snap your handle off your favorite mug you're going to have to put it back together because getting new ones might be tough.

Tip: To prolong its shelf life, keep it in the fridge (not the freezer), then make sure you allow it to reach room temperature before you use it. The chemical reaction that makes super glue react with moisture is impeded below the freezing temp of water.

Alternatives:

- Pro-Weld
- Plastic Magic
- Epoxy
- Urethane glues (strong, yet still elastic)
- Gorilla Glue etc.

Before you make your choice as to which glue you want to purchase in large quantities, you should know that most glues have a shelf-life after they have been opened. Some even start to "go bad" over time unopened! Never count on an opened tube of glue to last more than a few months. Also take care to consider the compatibility of your glue with various surfaces. Not all glues work equally well on every substrate.

#34. Feminine Hygiene Products

The importance of feminine hygiene products cannot be overstated for the ladies. Even if you aren't a lady, and don't have a lady in your life, it pays to have these materials on hand in case neighbors or other people are in need. You can certainly use them for bartering.

While cruder, more primitive methods will work for dealing with menstruation, none are as hygienic or as convenient as the products we all know and love.

#35. Airtight Containers

Creating an airtight yourself is difficult if you aren't starting out with the right vessel. Yes, you can lay on the tape, glue or foil thickly and vacuum the air out of a

vessel, but you will have a much easier time of it starting out with the right container.

In containers will be in short supply after a major catastrophe, and if you need one you'd better have it on hand. Vacuum seal bags are now commonly available and most major department stores, so you have a little excuse for not having them in your stash.

OTHER ITEMS TO CONSIDER

The following list of items is sort of a rider to the one above; these items are either so common there will be less lack in the aftermath, or their functions can be replaced easily enough with alternative choices.

#36. Bleach

The problem with bleach is that it has a shelf life of only about 6 months, meaning you really have to be on top of your game and rotate it accordingly.

Nevertheless, bleach will be a lifesaver for water purification at least for the first few months post-collapse, at least. Be sure you get only unscented, unaugmented bleach! No additives of any kind!

Alternatives:

- Water purification tablets (these actually have a shelf life of up to 5 years)
- Emergency water filter such as the LifeStraw or a Berkey water filter

Bleach has additional helpful survival uses:

- Mold Removal.
- Disinfecting trash cans, cutting boards and tools (This is actually an excellent use for your expired bleach).
- Laundry.
- Pest deterrence.

#37. Candles

Candles are a survival item has been written about extensively, especially as a sustainable source of light and a small source of heat in survival situations. You can create your own candles from all kinds of things, including fat and natural waxes.

The only issue is that takes an awful lot of work when it is far easier, and likely cheaper, to simply stockpile a whole bunch of them in the first place. Chandlery is one of those skills where I don't see a big return on investment, though your mileage may vary.

Alternatives to candles:

- Any other light source of way to start a fire.
- Making your own (you can find recipes online) and if you intend to do it post-collapse you need to make sure you stock up on all the ingredients.
- They also can be used as a heatsource (though a small one, a few candles could make a world of difference when your family's freezing).

#38. Matches and Lighters

Any prepper worth their salt will have several fire starting methods to choose from in any given time. Ferro rods, flints and steels and other methods are reliable, highly transportable and reusable.

That being said, nine out of 10 times you're better off just reaching for a lighter or a book of matches. Either one is generally reliable, dirt cheap and easily pocketed in quantity.

I think it's a great idea to stock up on cheap disposable lighters like the ubiquitous Bic, and several boxes of grill matches is not a bad idea either. That being said, if you run out of either you shouldn't be up a creek.

You should absolutely know how to start a fire using one of the more primitive methods. Probably your best bet is to stash some lighters and matches anywhere you might need them; your car, your bug-out bag, your bug-out location and so forth.

Recommended:

- Bic lighters
- UCO Stormproof Match Kit with Waterproof Case

Alternatives

- Steel wool and a 9V battery.
- Flint and steel.
- Fresnel lens.
- Ferro Rod and striker.
- Any of the other dozen or so ways to start a fire (you can find a full list [here](#))

#39. Sunglasses

Quality sunglasses are a must in a survival situation. Aside from protecting your peepers on the bright overhead sunlight, it will also afford you some protection against glare coming off of metal surfaces, snow or water.

Just as importantly, if not more so, durable sunglasses will afford your eyes physical protection from flying debris and dust. You don't need to go crazy on cost here, but you should avoid super cheapies like gas station shades since their UV protective index is quite low and they are notoriously fragile.

Field improvised goggles and glare shields are easy enough to make that you don't have to cry if you should lose your shades, even if they looked really cool.

The alternatives for use against overhead sun are obvious, though these do nothing to help with reflected glare:

- Hats.
- Umbrellas.

#40. Toilet Paper

There's an article on my site with all the [alternatives to toilet paper](#) but, the fact of the matter is, nothing beats plain old TP. You want to be sitting on mountains of this stuff so you don't have to contemplate using anything else while sitting on the side of a mountain, if you take my meaning.

How do you store that much TP? You can get creative. For example, you can put them in 5 gallon buckets and fill the cardboard tube centers with other things such as floss. Another neat trick is to remove the cardboard and vacuum seal them. This way they'll take up a lot less space.

Other uses for survival?

- Just one: as tinder when starting a fire. TP burns hot and furiously!

#41. Straight-Edge Razor

Whether you should shave or not in a post-apocalyptic society is yet another debate with no obvious answer. On the plus side, it's more hygienic. On the other, having a beard like everyone else will make it easier for you to blend in and become a grey man.

Nevertheless, straight razors are easy to maintain with a little practice (though learning to shave with one can be a, ah, harrowing experience) and will save you the trouble of using your survival knife and possibly cutting yourself multiple times while you're at it.

Oh, you'll also want to stock up on shaving cream (which usually lasts many years) though you can always use regular soap in a pinch.

Alternatives:

- Double edge razor. A classic safety razor combines the efficiency of a straightedge with extremely compact, inexpensive disposable blades. Some versions are even made for travel and break down into a compact carry case.
- Disposable razor. You can get bags of these things for a few dollars, though nicks abound.

WHERE SHOULD YOU STORE ALL THESE ITEMS?

Since we left food and other perishable items aside, all of the items in the list above can be stored pretty much anywhere including:

- Your pantry.
- Bathroom closet or cabinets.
- In hidden compartments around the house.
- In your bedroom (under the bed, at the back of your closet, etc.).
- In the living room (inside your couch, inside a coffee table).
- Inside sealed, buried caches (such as PVC pipes).
- Safe room.
- In your vehicle's go-bag.
- Inside the seats of your car!
- In your bug-out bag or your INCH (I'm Never Coming Home) bag.
- And, of course, at your bug-out location.

Speaking of which, keep in mind that, when disaster strikes, you'll either bug in or out, meaning you'll end up either inside your home or at your bug-out location.

If you really want to be covered for all possible contingencies, when you buy items in bulk (e.g. Band-Aids), make sure you split them between your home and your BOL.

If the item you purchased was not a bulk-buy (e.g. a shovel or a multi-tool), I suggest you get two of them and take one to your rural or wilderness hide-out. If you can't afford to spend the extra money just yet, just keep the one at the location you are more likely to need it at.

One thing people are concerned with is the fact that they might look "crazy" in front of relatives and guests for storing these items. If you ask me, you shouldn't really care what others think.

Your family's safety and overall well-being should come first. If being ready for tough times that have occurred and *will inevitably occur again* makes you look

crazy to someone else, I would strongly advise them to reevaluate their priorities in life and perhaps you should remind them of that.

Floss, canning jars and lids, duct tape, paper and pencils, mosquito nets- these are just a few of the things you can store in large quantities without anyone thinking you are prepping.

Some of them will not make others suspicious. And who cares that you have 200 empty jars sitting around? Many items are really small, meaning you can squeeze a lot of in a small place. Floss and canning lids are two such examples.

But the really amazing thing about the items in this list is that you can store them where no one else will ever look: inside your attic or basement. So let's stop worrying about what others may or may not think about us and let's start stockpiling!

Well, that's it for now but there's a lot more to survival than just the list of items you read. Check out my blog at www.SurvivalSullivan.com for some of the best survival information out there and be sure to subscribe to my newsletter, too.

Stay safe,

Dan F. Sullivan