

A Basic Survival Guide

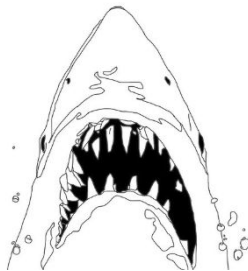
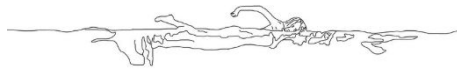
For StoneAgeMan

By Rob Nelson

This short guide book aims to give an introduction to survival in a somewhat light-hearted approach to being in nature. It's part of a book I'm writing. It's still a bit rough around the edges but I'm excited to share this intro. I hope you enjoy this short overview. Thanks for subscribing to the newsletter.

Introduction

The movie poster of *Jaws* depicts a girl swimming at the surface of the ocean, with a great white lurking below. Talk about a terrible thought to eternally take with you every time you step foot into the water!



It will be forever burned into my mind. As much as I want to tell myself (a marine biologist now), that sharks don't eat people, the fact of the matter is that... well, sometimes they do. But it doesn't mean we all have to be helpless floating meat-balls.

If you know a little bit about many potentially dangerous things nature can throw at you, maybe you'll be less scared of exploring on your own. Maybe you'll be more safe. Maybe that'll just make you the master of your domain. Who knows, maybe you'll even want to take the last step and help protect the wild places that harbor those amazing creatures.

Here is what this guide isn't. This isn't a guide about how evil or dangerous certain animals are. I won't talk about how humans interpret animals wrong either. It's not about sharks being victims. It isn't a book about how crocs are really harmless and misunderstood. I won't tell you to not fear a tornado. Instead, I'm going to be looking at nature in a very pragmatic way. What are ways we humans can get into trouble? What are the lessons to learn from past tragedies? What does science say about it?

I wrote this guide for one simple reason - that you'll learn about, and hopefully fall in love with, all those things people think are scary in nature. I do want you to see past the scary, and look at them with awe for exactly what they are. We're working in what I think is the best space - the space of science. This is where you'll find your own truth in nature.

That way, you can interpret scenes from the movies in your own way. Take the scene in the *Revenant* where Leonardo Decaprio gets attacked by a giant brown bear. Hopefully, you can contrast it with the scientists and filmmakers that often walk right up to these bears in the wild. You'll have a bit of insight in the middle! So take these facts, make up your own mind, and judge your own risk.

The first section is what I feel everyone should know - the bare basics of outdoor survival. If you're a boy scout, glance through this and make sure you're up to speed with the knots, the knives, and the shelter building. Don't worry, it's nothing too high-tech.

The rest of the guide is coming in the book, which I hope you buy at some point in the future.

I have more resources and videos on most of these topics through videos I make on my sites StoneAgeMan.com and UntamedScience.com. I don't expect you to look them up there, but if you were so keen, you'd know where to look.

Best of luck on your own personal journey to explore this planet of ours! I wish you luck!

The Basic Survival Guide

Your Directive

Life on Earth depends on people with brains just like you to make good decisions. That means, I'm talking to you, Earth wandering brainiac.

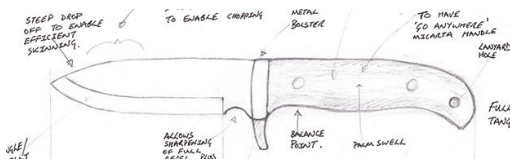
You have one mission here, and that's to never stop learning about this wonderful thing we call nature. Not only is your survival dependent on that, but through the knowledge you gain here, you may be able to help squash the bad rumors and life advice that comes with the animals, plants and situations that we'll discuss here. Heck, your very survival in nature depends on it.

More specifically I'm directing you to take up the forgotten ways of the adventurer. Learn to explore without google maps, a car, or a smartphone. Take a basic kit outside and start learning. I'll give you here some of the basics you'll need - a kit that will keep you alive if you know how to use it. I'll also give you some basic knowledge of the dangers you may face. With that in mind, you should feel free to experiment and explore your surroundings.

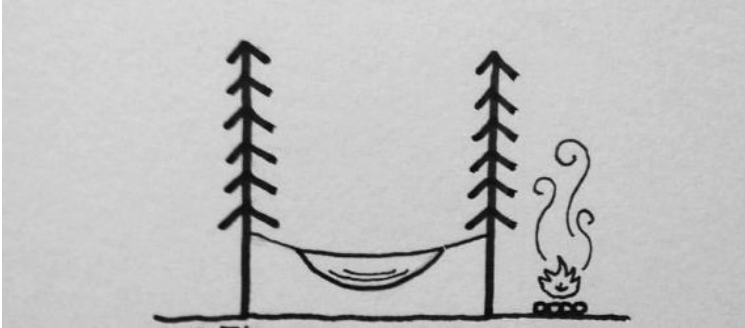
Your Basic Kit

Your kit doesn't have to be elaborate. In fact, I always try to emphasize that you don't need much to get out and start exploring. However, I would recommend you bring these basic things when you go tromping off the grid.

A cutting tool: It could be as simply as a razor blade or complex like a swiss-army knife, complete with saws and knives and screwdrivers. However, I'll be recommending here the ultimate bushcrafter's tool, a fixed blade knife (that means you don't fold it up). It'll help you cut wood if you so wish, whittle a spear, or cut your apple. I'll go into more detail on blades in the main book!



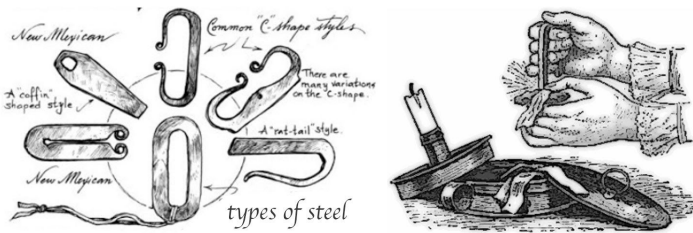
Shelter: Remember that old saying that you only need food, water, and shelter to survive? Well, if you're not building your shelter every night, I'd recommend taking a shelter with you. That could be a tent with sleeping bags and a rainfly. It could also be more simple - maybe a tarp and a hammock. Whatever it is, you need to spend a bit of time thinking about what you're going to do at night to stay dry and warm. Without a good night sleep, you're not going to enjoy the rest of your exploring.



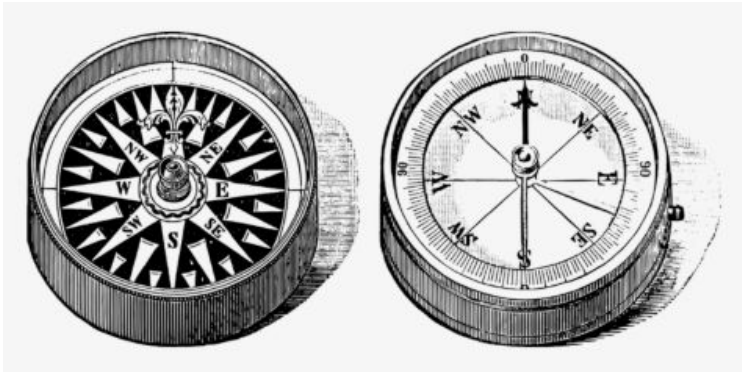
Rope: People in the industry usually refer to this category as your cordage. I think telling people you have cordage in your bag sounds a bit funny, so let's just call it rope. You need this! In a pinch you can use it to make your own shelter, make a trap, or lower yourself off a cliff. You don't have to start by bringing 100 meters of high strength repealing gear. Most of the time you just need some as backup incase of emergencies. I recommend at least having paracord. That's the stuff they use to make those survival bracelets out of. You can store it in your bag or wear it via that fancy bracelet on your arm. I'll go into the important knots to learn with your rope (cordage) in the main book as well.



Firestarter: Much like your rope, a fire-starter is incase you get into a pinch. I like to have a lighter and a set of waterproof matches in the bag. But you might also want to have a small piece of flint and steel that you can create sparks with. It takes some practice to light a fire with this technique, but if you do get stuck, you'll have a lot of time to practice! Actually, that's probably a bad time to figure it out. Learn it first, then bring it as a backup!



Navigation: Plain and simple, you need to know where you're going. It doesn't matter whether you're walking down a path, or crossing a mountain. Never just rely on a map saved on your phone. A nice waterproof map with a compass could really save your life.



First aid: There is no point in bringing a full first aid kit, if you don't know how to use it. However, a first aid kit can really save you in an emergency. Bare minimum, you should have something to wrap around a wound if you do accidentally get a large cut. A bandage works wonders in the field for that. Sure, you could cut your shirt, but then you don't have a shirt anymore!



Backpack: I can't imagine you'd take all your supplies in your pockets, so this probably seems pretty obvious. You need a pack. But, with so many bags out there to bring, where do you start? This is where you get to wander down to the local outfitter and figure out what suits your style, and needs. Just don't get hung up on all the fancy (and often pricey) gear. When you're starting, go simple. Find something that fits the basic kit above and head out!

It may happen one day - It happened to me!

Yes, it may happen to you. If it does, let's hope you're prepared. You see, you can't control the chaos that happens in the world, but you can be somewhat prepared, should a handful of things occur. If you've read this guide and later the full book, you'll at least have some advanced knowledge of what to do in a few situations!

I'm writing this because I've known a lot of people who've somehow survived when it seems like they should have died. I was on a tour once in Alaska when the bus driver got a report that a hiker had been attacked by a bear. Oddly enough, that hiker was my future roommate in Hawaii. My fiancée has scars across her chest from a crocodile attack. I have a buddy who lost an arm and a leg because a bull shark was hungry. I've known other friends too that haven't been as lucky. I'll highlight many of these in the individual chapters where they relate.

I've also had my own near death experiences. One in particular happened to me that changed the course of my life, and how I see adventure. I was 23 years old and living on a sailboat in Hawaii. I was studying to get my Ph.D in marine biology and to save money thought it was a good idea to buy an old sailboat and learn how to sail it. The problem was, I couldn't afford an instructor, so I got "*Sailing for Dummies*" and would read it below deck, so the other boat owners didn't know I was so clueless.

One morning, my girlfriend asked if we could go sailing. I was frightfully unprepared but said yes. (My first mistake). We took off that morning in strong winds and what seemed like really big waves. What I didn't realize is that we were sailing into the storm of the decade - and I hadn't even checked the weather.



In Hawaii, there are bays that protect you from the full force of open ocean waves. That's where I started. I was in a small bay, called Kaneohe bay. Outside of that, 2000 miles of Pacific ocean before you hit the next land mass.

As we exited the protection of the bay through the channel that cut between the reefs, the waves were much bigger than I was expecting. So, we decided pretty quickly that we should return. The problem was that the channel had closed out just as we exited. That meant, the massive waves were now breaking in the channel! I didn't have a way back!

Looking back at the island, there was nothing but white foam as far as the eye could see in either direction. I didn't know my way back (my navigation skills were weak at this point). I also hadn't sailed much, so I wasn't quite prepared for re-entering a channel like this. But, I knew that I could be out here for much longer if I didn't retry that channel quickly.

I tried to sail back into the channel, turning the boat with each wave to hit it head-on. That worked for a few waves. Then, one fateful wave swept me off of the boat. Now, I was 2 miles offshore in a storm, looking at my boat sailing away as my girlfriend held onto the rigging on the side. I screamed and swam with all my energy but I couldn't get to the boat.



Fortunately she was finally able to climb back on. Unfortunately, she didn't know how to sail. So, the boat kept sailing out of the channel, towards the 15-20' breaking waves on the sides of the channel.

Then, the unthinkable happened. As I floated there, I watched my 20' sailboat, with girlfriend on the bow, get tossed end over end in the breaking waves. I knew inside my soul there was no way anyone could survive that. One second it was there and the next, the boat had snapped in two and sunk. Everyone and everything was gone.

I tried to swim towards the boat, now 1/4 mile away, but it doesn't take many 15' waves to realize you're going to drown if you keep going. I turned and started swimming back to the relative safety of the channel. I was a competitive open water swimmer at that stage in my life, so I knew I could swim the 2 miles to shore if I had to. So I put my head down, took off the rest of my clothes (minus my boxers which I tied around my ankle) and started swimming.

Forty-five minutes into my swim though, I realized that the buoys that I should have been passing were doing something funny. Mind you, I'm in a torrential downpour and it was hard to see the shore. The funny thing is that I think I had been looking at the same bouy this whole time!

When I stopped and observed what was happening, I realized I was actually heading out to sea. At that point, I noticed there was one bouy left before I would probably be a deadman floating in a storm in the middle of the ocean. Not good.

It took another 20 minutes to get to the bouy, a massive 20' beast of a marker. Somehow I got on it and held on for another 2 hours as the wind and rain pelted my naked body. I pounded SOS in morse code on the channel marker, hoping the Navy station nearby might hear it. They didn't.

But, as luck would have it, a buddy of mine, who knew how unprepared I was, saw us going out. He was an amazing outrigger-canoeist and jumped in his boat to get in a workout despite the storm. As he paddled out, he found my girlfriend, floating in, holding a lifejacket that popped out of the boat when it was smashed to pieces. Then they flagged down the only other boat on the channel. They had a cell phone! (Did I mention I didn't have one) They used it to call the coast guard!

That meant boats and helicopters were deployed! We really were saved by chance!

After that day, I looked at adventure differently. I still did it, but I tried to weigh the risk a bit more. I tried to go out with others that were prepared and I definitely looked at the weather!

Some might say that the ocean was out to get me that day. I don't think it was. I just didn't know what I was doing, and was frightfully unprepared.

What I'm outlining in this book, are things I wish I knew as a 23 year old kid. They're also things I've learned that I think could be really useful to the next would-be adventurer.

The rule of 3's

Trivia time, what is the most important thing to do in a survival situation? I'll give you a hint, I'm not talking about using your cell phone - but boy or boy would that save you if you had some cell reception.

I'm talking about basic survival 101 here. Deciding what you can and should do often comes down to priorities. The rule of 3's is something that is taught by instructors around the world and is a good way to start thinking about what's really important if you're stranded in the woods. It goes something like this.

You can live about 3 minutes without oxygen:

You can last 3 hours without proper warmth and shelter.

You can survive only about 3 days without water

You can survive three weeks without food

3 months without rescue or human interaction

Then again, let's just remember this is more of a guideline than a rule. Anyone who's ever looked up the world record breath hold will know it's far longer than 3 minutes. Plus, if you're walking around a nice fall day somewhere, you can go way more than 3-4 hours without a shelter.

The point of this is that it makes you prioritize what you're going to do first. First thing is to always make some shelter and a warm place to be. Then look for water. Only after that is taken care of, should you start finding food. Believe it or not, but that is one of the last things you should worry about.

Now that we've got that out of the way, maybe you're ready to start an adventure. Or maybe you want to wait for the book. Hmm.

Now What

This is a really simple survival guide. Probably too short. I am writing the full guide thought and I encourage you to stick with me in the near future.

I'll have a lot of fun tidbits in the videos, and in the upcoming text. Thanks again and maybe I'll see you on the trail one day!