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## Get Prepped Newsletter: April 20, 2012

Posted By [Tess Pennington](#)

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## MESSAGE FROM TESS

Happy Friday!

I hope that all of you are winding down from the week and are ready to put your feet up and read this week's newsletter because it's *packed* with lots of great information.

Everything that we have talked about and prepared for comes down to this week's subject: skills. Although it is important to have supplies in place to weather a storm, many are not adequately trained to handle the disasters they come face to face with. Having the proper skills and training will provide you with a diversified knowledge base that will allow you to survive during and after an emergency.

In the next newsletter, the subject of an ideal homesteading retreat will be the topic of conversation. In it, we will talk about the ideal characteristics to look for in a sustainable piece of land to support you and your family. So stay tuned!

Are you ready to make a difference in the preparedness community? Help out a new prepper by leaving your [preparedness story](#) <sup>[1]</sup> or best piece of advice at Ready Nutrition.

We want to help get you and your family on the right track to preparedness. Using a [food storage calculator](#) <sup>[2]</sup>, like the one at Ready Nutrition, can help you learn how much food you need stored for an emergency. Moreover, help out a friend and send the [52-Weeks to Preparedness](#) <sup>[3]</sup> series.

If you haven't already, follow us on [Twitter](#) <sup>[4]</sup> or [Facebook](#) <sup>[5]</sup>. I love to interact with the preparedness community, because after all, we are all in this together!

Tess Pennington

*Be the change you wish to see in the world.*

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## PREP OF THE WEEK

### Week 41 of 52: Self-Reliant Skills

I have often emphasized how important it is to understand that preparedness isn't about how many items you have stored away – it's really about learning the skills necessary to survive. Ultimately, we want to be self-reliant and able to maintain a healthy lifestyle. In order to adapt and transition more fluidly into self-reliant living, our efforts must lie in our learned skills, abilities and knowledge.

I realize the time constraints of our daily schedules can put a dent in our availability; but it is vital that you find the time to learn. When making the decision on what skills you should learn, think sustainability.

This is a basic list of skills you should learn in order to survive in a longer-term disaster.

## 1. Medical Training

Medical training should be a priority for those preparing for extended emergencies. Due to the increased use of sharp tools (and weapons for that matter), there will be more medical emergencies involving deep lacerated cuts and infections from open wounds. Additionally, there will be an increase in burns from being in closer contact to fires. These injuries can become infected very quickly, and knowing how to treat them will keep your family healthy.

There are online courses offered for basic CPR/First Aid, however, learning some advanced medical skills will give you more of the fundamental training needed to thrive during a long-term emergency. Find an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) class that is offered for paramedics to better equip you to handle emergency medical situations.

Further, invest in medical handbooks such as [The Doom and Bloom Survival Medical Handbook](#) <sup>[6]</sup> by Joseph Alton, M.D. and Amy Alton, A.R.N.P. or [When There Is No Doctor](#) <sup>[7]</sup> by Gerard S. Boyle, M.D. Both resources are will help you learn what needs to be done in an emergency medical situation. Practice these techniques now in order to perform better under pressure.

## 2. Disaster Training

Learning how to plan and prepare for a disaster, as well as understanding how your community plans to respond to emergencies (and the after effects of a disaster), will help us adapt to the situation more quickly in such an event. Disaster training is typically offered by FEMA, the American Red Cross and other disaster organizations. The American Red Cross offers extensive courses in disaster safety and training, as well as basic First Aid/CPR courses. Thanks to the Information Age, information is at the click of a mouse. [Online disaster courses](#) <sup>[8]</sup> are now offered through a variety of websites.

## 3. Gardening Skills

It's time to get your hands dirty and get back in touch with nature. In a long term survival situation, [seeds](#) <sup>[9]</sup> will mean the difference between life and death. When a disaster occurs, start some [sprouting seeds](#) <sup>[10]</sup> to ensure that you have a natural source of vitamins and nutrients until your seeds bear their fruits.

Learn necessary gardening skills such as companion plants, crop rotations, beneficial insects, natural ways to replenish soil with [compost](#) <sup>[11]</sup> and [earthworms](#) <sup>[12]</sup>, and which gardening tools will be beneficial in an extended emergency.

## 4. Medicinal Plants

Another relevant knowledge source is understanding the [medicinal value of plants and herbs](#) <sup>[13]</sup>. It is amazing how many uses there are for plants besides spicing up our entrees. Researching natural medicines is another major need in a survival situation, especially if a person in your group has a pre-existing condition.

Click here to read about the [Top 10 Medicinal Herbs](#) <sup>[14]</sup>.

## 5. Firearm Certification and Training

There are dozens of firearm courses offered through the [National Rifle Association](#) <sup>[15]</sup> as well as at self defense businesses and at some local colleges. This skill is easily lost if you do not practice regularly. Also, practicing gun safety, especially around [children](#) <sup>[16]</sup> will help them learn how important it is to be mindful around weapons.

## 6. Canning and Food Preparation

As Carla Emery, a homesteading author once said of our pioneer ancestors, "If people's labors were fruitful, they put away a long-term food supply as a matter of common sense; their food was wholesome, hearty, and healthy." Knowing how to can and preserve foods to eat during the long winter months is essential.

[Canning and food preservation measures](#) <sup>[17]</sup> will be extremely useful in a longer-term disaster. Having food preservation tools such as jars, lids, pressure cookers, and supplies to preserve foods can help you keep your harvest edible for a year or more! Check [www.craigslist.com](http://www.craigslist.com) <sup>[18]</sup>, garage sales and even at second hand stores for these essential items. Canning jars would also make an excellent bartering item.

Further, having knowledge on how long foods last will help you preserve foods when they are at their best. This convenient [food storage chart](#) <sup>[19]</sup> is a great tool to have in your kitchen to ensure your pantry foods are within expiration.

## 7. Amateur Radio Classes

Each of us have read enough survival books to know that the “comm down” scenario is a very real threat, and happens more often than not. Experts from the private and public sector warn that we are just [one major catastrophic event](#) <sup>[20]</sup> away from an incident that could take down the grid. The best way to prepare for this serious situation is to equip yourself with the knowledge and with the tools for emergency communication. Having a radio is encouraged by many disaster relief organizations. And having knowledge on how to work and maneuver a HAM radio will provide a person with an emergency communication source during a time when most communication is down. The [National Association of Amateur Radio](#) <sup>[21]</sup> provides information based on a person's location and course information on their website.

## 8. Sewing Classes

Everyone has heard stories of how their great grandmothers would sew quilts out of material harvested from worn-out clothing. Not many of us have this skill anymore. Typically fabric stores offer sewing classes and sewing events for their customers. Sewing classes will not only teach a necessary skill, but it will also help you get the survival mindset in place.

Instead of buying something, make something new out of what you have available. For instance, rather than throwing away torn jeans, salvage the non-worn areas and turn them into patches for clothing. Use other sections for pieces for a quilt, and make rags from what is left over.

## 9. Outdoor Survival Skills Courses

Learning necessary outdoor skills will provide a person with fundamental knowledge on how to better survive. The Boy Scouts offer adult classes, and you can also find relevant courses at some community colleges. Get creative and search around the internet. There are some survival courses offered online (some are even free survival courses) that a person can take from the comfort of his or her home. Look for courses on how to forage for food in the wild, essential survival skills, and wilderness medical courses. Some of these courses are offered at local colleges, the YMCA, community park and recreation facilities, etc. Additionally, finding books, and [e-books](#) <sup>[22]</sup> on survival skills is another way to gather information on this topic and practice what you learn later.

## 10. Homesteading Skills

There is a range of preparations and skills that are absolutely necessary for running a successful farm or homestead. That is why our forefathers often screwed up and starved to death. If all the pieces are not there then the potential exists for failure. Now is the time to get these skills in order. Learning about livestock care, how to fix essential machines, how to use non-electric or turn of the century tools, how to render lard, and how to make soap and candles. These are all lost art forms, in my opinion and need to be learned in order to sustain your family or group for long-term scenarios. YouTube and online websites can do wonders for helping you learn the basics of these skills.

## 11. Hunting Skills

If you plan to hunt wild game for a food source, you will need to learn how to gut the carcass, skin the fur or remove feathers and properly cut the meat. The “hunter-in-training” will also have to have a proficient knowledge on the different types of hunting tools used to prepare animal carcasses (and these tools come in different sizes based on the animal).

The [National Hunting Association](#) <sup>[23]</sup> is a portal that can take a person to their local area

hunting association in order to get more information for their specific area. Also, this [website](#) <sup>[24]</sup> offers the hunting guides for all of the states within the USA.

I'd like to conclude by offering a few pieces of advice on learning new skills – practice any chance you get and give yourself time to learn it. Like any new thing you try to do, there is a learning curve involved. Give yourself time to make the necessary mistakes and learn from them. Process of elimination is usually the way we learn best. Finding others in your area who can help guide you through these new skills can be such a blessing, and can open the door to some new mentors.

### Preps to Buy:

- Written books on skills you want to learn
- Tools or accessories needed to learn these skills
- Extra printer paper to print out any information you find online
- Binders for organizing your information (To help you organize this binder, [click here](#) <sup>[25]</sup> for tips)

### Action Items:

1. Start looking online for any online courses you can take.
2. Make a goal to start learning a new skill set.
3. Purchase written resources for your survival library.
4. Equip yourself with essential knowledge.
5. Get and stay current in any certifications.
6. Continue to educate yourself on skills you feel are pertinent to your survival.

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## WHAT WE'RE UP TO

### In the Home:

I don't know what my life would be like without plastic containers. I am one of those people who likes to compartmentalize things to create a more organized environment. I love plastic containers because they not only serve an organizational purpose, but are also see-through so I know what is inside of them. Now that I've started packing up our short-term food supply into boxes, I'm using this as an opportunity to get my preparedness pantry organized and stored in a way that is conducive to my needs. I've slowly started buying plastic shoe containers and plastic tubs to put some of our preparedness supplies and gear in. So far, I have used these containers to organize eating utensils, Jell-o packs, spices, and gravy packets. I have also used the larger plastic tubs to protect and store my toilet paper.

I am also trying to use up all our frozen foods so we do not have to give those items away. This week, I have been playing around with different recipes for homemade fruit leathers. So far, I have made strawberry fruit leathers and a tropical fruit leather. The kids love my "experiments" and the fruit roll ups are not lasting long.

Sourdough bread anyone? I started some sour dough starter with 2 cups of flour and 3/4 cups of warm water. All I did from there was let it sit for 3 days and stirred it up every few hours. On the second day, the starter was bubbly and had that amazing yeast aroma. When I use it to make fresh bread, I'll replace the used starter with more flour and water and have a constant supply of bread starter.

### Family Preps:

I found macaroni and cheese dinners for \$.33!!! I couldn't believe my luck. Those of you with kids know this boxed meal is a must have in your pantry. Because of the ease in making this

dinner, I like stocking up on mac and cheese for our preparedness pantry and also as a [comfort item](#) <sup>[26]</sup> for the kids.

## In the Garden:

I love watching the plants grow like crazy after a good rain. I think may get a nice supply of pickling cucumbers before we move. The herbs and onions that started are really growing too.

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## RECENT ARTICLES

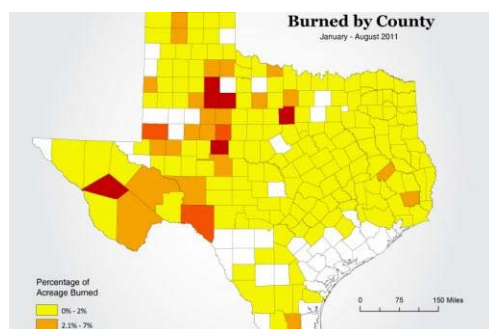
[Pardon Me, Your Food is Glowing](#) <sup>[27]</sup>

[The Prepared Child](#) <sup>[28]</sup>

[Pet Food Alternatives for Long-Term Emergencies](#) <sup>[29]</sup>

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## STATS AND FACTS



Like many of you, for 293 days, I sat and watched as a wave of wildfires scorched the state of Texas in 2011. The wildfires broke out due to the on going exceptional drought conditions in most of Texas and the high winds brought to the state by Tropical Storm Lee. As a result, fires burned 3,959,040 acres (about double the previous record), 2,862 homes (1,939 of which were destroyed in one area), and over 2,700 other structures. In 2011, 47.3% of all acreage burned in the United States in 2011 was burned in Texas.

Because fires can be devastating to a home, property, rangeland, community, or state, [click here](#) <sup>[30]</sup> to learn more about what to do to protect your home before, during and learn what to do after a wildfire threatens your area.

More information on the Texas wildfires of 2011 can be found at <http://txforestservice.tamu.edu/main/default.aspx> <sup>[31]</sup>

*As native Texan, my thanks and gratitude go out to all of you who risked your lives in battling the blazes in Texas.*

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## LETTERS TO TESS

Do you have a preparedness question? One of the perks of my job at Ready Nutrition is to address questions and/or concerns that you may have with your prepping endeavors. Feel free to ask anything that is on your mind because no question is too big or small. You can email questions to: [getprepped@readynutrition.com](mailto:getprepped@readynutrition.com) <sup>[32]</sup>

This week's question addresses the best types of seeds to start following a disaster.

*Hi Tess,*

*My question is about seeds. If an emergency happens that causes long-term catastrophic ramifications (like if the roadways were closed and trucks can't resupply our food supply), and starting a garden is your only chance of survival, what seeds would you suggest a person start?*

Sam

Answer:

Hi Sam,

That is a great question! I am a big supporter of investing in seeds. In a long-term disaster they could be worth more than gold. Many vegetable varieties (with the exception of the nightshade family) can even be used for emergency sprouting too.

First of all, you want to stock up on non-GMO or heirloom quality seeds. These are preferred by preppers because you can harvest the seeds and save them for future harvests. On the other hand, stocking up on some packets of the GMO (Genetically Modified) version is not a bad idea either. Although, GMO seeds were modified by scientists to have dependable harvests and be resistant to some diseases, they would be a trustworthy seed to sow in the case of a long-term emergency. And in times of a crisis, you want to have some dependable produce that will grow for you. This is essentially having another back up for your back up.

- Nut/Fruit Trees – Dwarf varieties will set fruit faster. To learn more about essential nut and fruit trees for a survival homestead, [click here](#) <sup>[33]</sup>.
- Squash/Zucchini
- Peas/Beans
- Kale
- Broccoli
- Peppers
- Pumpkin
- Lettuce
- Spinach
- Tomatoes

Another suggestion, would be to grow perennials such as asparagus, Jerusalem artichokes, horseradish, garlic, perennial onions, and herbs of both culinary and [medicinal](#) <sup>[14]</sup>. The survival perennials do not need to be planting every year are an efficient way to produce food and make good use of your time.

A word of advice, that my grandfather told me, "Grow your soil." Making sure that your soil is healthy is the best way to grow healthy vegetables. Composting your kitchen scraps and composting any livestock manure (rabbit, chicken, horse, cow, etc) is a great way to add nutrients back to your soil.

Start practicing your garden skills now so you can depend on them during a long-term emergency!

Best,

Tess

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[2] food storage calculator:

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