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## Week 41 of 52: Self-Reliant Skills

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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>[1]</sup> by Joseph Alton, M.D. and Amy Alton, A.R.N.P. or [When There Is No Doctor](#) <sup>[2]</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>[3]</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>[4]</sup> will mean the difference between life and death. When a disaster occurs, start some [sprouting seeds](#) <sup>[5]</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>[6]</sup> and [earthworms](#) <sup>[7]</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>[8]</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>[9]</sup>.

#### 5. Firearm Certification and Training

There are dozens of firearm courses offered through the [National Rifle Association](#)<sup>[10]</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>[11]</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>[12]</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](#)<sup>[13]</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>[14]</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>[15]</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>[16]</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>[17]</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>[18]</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>[19]</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>[20]</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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URLs in this post:

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- [2] When There Is No Doctor: [http://www.amazon.com/When-There-Doctor-Challenging-Self-reliance/dp/1934170119/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1334772870&sr=1-1](http://www.amazon.com/When-There-Doctor-Challenging-Self-reliance/dp/1934170119/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1334772870&sr=1-1)
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