

Preparedness - Getting Started

Introduction

Several of my friends have asked me how to get started on “Prepping” and food storage. So this document is an attempt to put as much information about being prepared and a “Prepper” as possible into one, all purpose, get started document. I sent this to my friends after the “Food Storage” mini-book was sent. Overall my friends have liked both and I hope you will too.

The following information has been accumulated from many sites over many years. I give credit and many thanks to all these people and sites and my apologies to those from “years ago” when I didn’t have the foresight to record where I got the information from.

The appendix has a link to resources on the web, magazines and books. Many of the web sites and blogs have downloadable material for your use and I highly recommend scridb.com and that you register for a free online membership so you can search various topics and download or print the ones you wish to keep close.

I have uploaded a boatload of documents on my Weebly website to share regarding: Preparedness, Homesteading, First Aid, Survival, Food Storage and the like. You can view, print and download using the following link.

<http://FormerlyNMUrbanHomesteader.weebly.com>

I also strongly suggest you download the following either from my Google library or from the original source. These will expand on what is in this letter. Some are short, others up to 70 pages – ALL are packed with extremely great all around information to assist you in your own preparedness plan.

- FEMA_AreYouReady_full.pdf – FEMA
- Basic-Preparedness.pdf – FEMA
- Citizen Guide to Disaster Preparedness (online) – FCIC http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/cic_text/family/disaster-guide/disasterguide.htm Pick just about any type of emergency or disaster and then get really good basic information on how to prepare and be ready for it.
- DHSfamilyemergencyplan.pdf – Homeland Security. This is a checklist of important numbers, usual haunts, etc.
- FamilyDisasterSuppliesKitRedCross.pdf – American Red Cross Great start on a 72-hour go-pack.
- NFPA_GetReady_facts_all.pdf - National Fire Prevention Association www.nfpa.org/disaster Great for getting started.

Yes these are all from the government and No they do not have a lot of detailed how-to and are mostly for the short term 1-7 day type events. But they are all great at getting you started. If you start with the basics it is much easier to evaluate where you are right now and what you have right now compared to what you need to be really prepared.

Why Prepare?

Think about it: What would you do right now, this instant if the electricity goes out and stays out for the next 7 days? Where are you most likely to be? Where are the water, heat, cooling, and food? Are these items reliant on electricity? Will these items stay fresh and viable for 7 days without electricity? Can you even get to and or use them without electricity?

I don’t know a single person who wants to see or be involved in a disaster or emergency. Even the fire, rescue and safety people I know hope and pray they are never called upon. Historically, rarely a generation goes by that has not

survived some kind of emergency or disaster, be it large or small. In fact, statistically, most of us will experience some sort of emergency or disaster, sometime in our lifetimes.

As the world population spirals towards forgetting how to live on what we have, rather than on credit to get what we want and we all become “commercial driven” to use and toss, many of us have started to “sense” the self-destructive nature of our ways. We collectively start to fear the unknown and that leads us to prepare for the worst case scenario our minds can conger up. We logically know that if we survive and how well we survive depends on how prepared we and those around us are.

This is why it is wise to prepare for whatever obstacles life throws our way.

What is a Prepper?

Ask people what a “Prepper” is and for every person you ask, you will get a different answer. However there are some key characteristics that will apply. Top of this list is Independence and Self-Reliance.

Independence is being able to take care of yourself with the least amount of involvement from others. Self-Reliance is knowing you can do what needs to be done or make what you need with the least amount of help from others and at the least amount of cost. Both characteristics require you to handle any situation with what you have, rather than hiring or purchasing what you need.

So to me becoming a Prepper requires independence and self-reliance in all areas of our lives including finances, utilities, food, clothing, health, devices and furniture to name a few key areas. If you want to be a Homesteader you will need to be this way continuously in your day to day life. To be a Prepper, some of these areas will require day to day independence, self-reliance, preparation and diligence while others you need only worry about for shorter periods of emergent times.

To me a Prepper, specifically is a person who considers what can happen: while at home, on the way to work, vacation (air, land or sea), from nature, from bad luck and clumsiness, spiritual, to human caused. Kind of like an adult Boy Scout – Always prepared for anything, anywhere. A Prepper will have a contingency plan to account for the best way to not only avoid such a situation in the first place (whenever possible), but also how to live through such an event and continue to prosper and be happy and content with life.

There are various levels of Preppers and at the highest level you reach Survivalists.

Survivalists also have various levels to them. The most common perception being; the extreme Survivalist who lives in the boonies and off the land in a very “times of yore” way. Yet, you also have wilderness guides who know all kinds of skills in case the worst happens - Another type of survivalist. Military personnel are taught how to make it through being separated from the rest of their team or troupe; How to survive the worst that can happen in a war situation. Again, another type of Survivalist.

If you really stop and think about it, most people are Preppers, at least in some small way. How so? Most of us have insurance for our health, home, vehicles and major “toys” and possessions. Insurance is in case the worst happens is it not? Ha – a Prepper. Many country and northern folk have alternative energy and food stores because winter storms often take out electricity, phone service and the ability to travel safely for days and even weeks. Again – Preppers. If you have a first aid kit in your home, boat, auto or RV you are preparing for the chance you *might* need it. A Prepper. If

you live in an area that is prone to earthquakes, tornados, hurricanes, avalanches, mud slides or floods you no doubt have some kind of plan to get you through each occurrence. Another type of Prepper.

I have long been a hiker and backpacker. I love the outdoors and nature. I love the idea of being self-reliant and have been researching, learning and planning for moving to a rural area with a small, as self-reliant as possible homestead. I want to be independent from as many utilities and outside entities as possible; for my food, energy, health, water, sanitation and all the rest of my basics needs. A homesteader, a small farmer/rancher, a country/rural person – A Prepper.

Even governments worldwide have various programs and agencies to address “disasters” and “emergencies”. Take a look at the FEMA and Homeland Security “Be Prepared” and “Are You Ready” websites. The Church of Latter Day Saints has long been “prepping” for disasters and emergencies that they feel precede the Second Coming of Christ.

Bottom line is that in some small way we are all Preppers consisting of all ages, all nationalities, all faiths, and all races, rich and poor, in urban, suburban and rural areas. We are the adult Boy Scouts – Always Prepared for whatever twists and turns life throws at us from any source.

I also know that in all my years of prepping and planning for homesteading (since the 1970’s); I have never before seen such a proliferation of information and groups on the subject like I have in the last 5-8 years. Something must be up to make people worldwide feel this need.

One thing is for sure – In a disaster or wide spread emergency - **You CANNOT count on any government or emergency agency to come to your rescue in a timely fashion.** *The only things you can count on are yourself (physical, emotional & spiritual), your knowledge and skills and the supplies and tools you have on hand.*

So How Do You Become Prepared?

First you have to decide what you feel you need to be prepared for. There are several categories of disasters or emergencies you need to consider.

- **Natural** – Floods, Tornados, Hurricanes, Mud Slide, Avalanche, Drought, Severe Winter Storm, Pandemic, Extraterrestrial (sunsports, asteroid, comet), Earthquake, Volcano and the like
- **Man-Made** – Economical, Social, Ecological, Bio-toxin, Pandemic (can be natural or human induced), Nuclear, Civil Unrest, War, Riot, EMP (electromagnetic pulse), Terrorism, Blackouts, Lack of Energy, Water or Food (Yes this can occur due to nature too, but are often human induced), Toxic Spill and the like
- **Bad Luck** – Accidents, Getting Lost, General Clumsiness, Disease, Illness, Injury and the like
- **Spiritual** – Armageddon, Rapture, Revelation, Mayan Calendar, Nostradamus and like prophecies

The “Bad Luck” category is one most of us are already prepared or preparing for. As stated before, many of us have first aid kits and various insurance for ourselves and our possessions. If any of the other categories are high on your list of probabilities and priorities, then you may need to re-evaluate the contents of your first aid kits or acquire a few additional ones.

List all the possibilities in order of probability. You must decide which are most likely to occur where you reside and what you feel their probability of occurrence might be. This is as much a scientific decision as an emotional/spiritual decision for each person.

List all your priorities within the probabilities. Hugh? Try this and remember this will be different for each person.

Jane is a mid-fifties woman who lives in Rio Rancho, NM and travels for a living, usually by air for 1-2 weeks at a time. She is out of town for half of each month anywhere in the U.S. She is basically healthy and has had no major injuries since her young adult and youth years. She is spiritual but not religious and detests big government, nor does she trust it.

At home she doesn't need to worry about floods because she doesn't live near an arroyo, but the area and Albuquerque do flood from time to time causing portions of both towns to be unreachable. In the thirty years she has lived in Rio Rancho she has only seen one tornado, no hurricane, mud slides, avalanches, pandemics or threatening extraterrestrial events. Snow has yet to accumulate in town where one can't at least walk to the nearest store. Blackouts have rarely occurred and were usually related to lightning strikes or auto accidents.

There are major DOE and DOD research facilities just across the river in Albuquerque and an Air Force base. During the cold war Albuquerque was on the "first strike" list of the USSR. Trains and trucks transporting nuclear waste to the W.I.P. site do travel through the area. On the west side of town are three dormant volcanoes that have shown no activity in the 30 years she lived there. The Jemez caldera is just north and west of town and is active. The region has been in a drought for the past 10 years with some water rationing from time to time.

Although she is directionally challenged, she usually has a general idea where she is at and has never really gotten lost, not even when hiking or backpacking, which are her primary sources of leisure time activities outside of, dry desert and container gardening for fruits, vegetables and medicinal herbs. She loves the outdoors and has spent many a vacation in wilderness areas. She is a long time DIY'r, despite her size and stature and has helped to construct a straw bale home.

For home her Probability and Priority list is as follows:

Drought	Blackouts
Tornado	Civil Unrest
Earthquake	Toxic Spill
Flood	Social/Economical
Volcano	Lack of Water
Everything else falls in place here.	

When Jane travels, say to northern California, her combined probability and priority list will look like this:

- Earthquake, Flood
- Civil Unrest
- Blackout
- Accident
- Lack of Food and Water
- Mud Slide
- Social/Economical
- Everything else

As you can see by the above example, it is ok if more than one issue is ranked as the same probability and priority on your list. A hurricane, for example can also cause flooding. I used a sticky note pad and wrote each category on a separate sheet and then stuck them to the wall and moved them around until I found the ranking that I felt best described **my** attitude to these events. Try it out ... this will probably work for you too.

Take an Inventory of What You Currently Have

- List all the skills you currently have and what new skills you will need to learn and develop for each scenario.
- Make a list of all the items, supplies and tools needed for your well being under each scenario that you currently have and will need to acquire.

That sounds easy right? *Wrong*. This is probably the hardest thing to do. It requires being completely honest with yourself and what your physical and emotional limitations and strengths are. For instance, thanks to reality shows, most of us know we can survive on the protein from bugs if we eat them. Yet how many of us will actually eat bugs even if starving? If you are the leader or organizer of your family unit, this means you have to be honest about the physical and emotional capabilities of each family member. Does your partner or son really know how to use that circular saw? Can he really hunt and dress the kill, then smoke the meat? Can any of you really shoot to kill, be it animal or human?

Scenario Variables

Now that you have your probability and priority list done and you know what is already within yourself and your home, it's time to consider the major variables that can occur with each crisis.

- **Short Term** – One to 7 days
- **Long Term** – Weeks, Months, Years
- **Scope of Involvement** – Local, Regional, National, Worldwide
- **Location** – Where you are when the crisis occurs
- **Bug-out** – Relocation or Evacuation is required

When you make your preparedness plan you will need to take each of your highest probabilities and priorities and re-evaluate your “needs” list against each of these scenario variables. This will also help you to determine what items, beyond the basics, should be in your 72-hour go-bag.

Budget and Research

I have put budgeting and research here, before planning, because learning what you lack, for what you feel are the most likely threats to you, will determine what you need to learn and budget to acquire. Not only that but without financial independence, you cannot acquire what you need.

Budgeting does not necessarily mean sacrificing. It merely means *distinguishing between “Wants and Needs” or “If I don't have this can I get sick and die” from everything else*. Do you really need to eat dinner out three or more times a week? Go to a movie once a month? Buy that CD or DVD? Do you really need that new sweater? Are you actually reading and learning from all those magazine subscriptions? Do you really lack the ability and time to do that thing by yourself instead of paying someone else to do it?

The first and most important step to budgeting is separating Needs from Wants and being sure you either get out of debt or stay out of debt. For the majority of us no matter what we do we will still have at least one or both of these

outstanding debts: Mortgage/Rent; Vehicle loan. The trick is to get rid of as much outstanding debt as you can. If you can purchase a used vehicle for cash instead of a loan – do it. If you can pay your mortgage off early or downsize to a cheaper home with a lower mortgage – do it. The “Jones’s” do not pay your bills!

Budgeting however is critical and has many common traits. Each budget will be different depending on what you already have on hand and what your overall resources are. A general rule of thumb is to plan for \$15-20 each shopping week for your preparedness needs. This will include any food storage that may be a part of your preparedness plan. Be sure to read my Food Storage mini-book/letter sent previously for specifics. Also be sure to check out the budgeting and frugality documents in my shared Google directory.

Always re-visit your budget as your knowledge expands and your Probability and Priority scenarios change.

Research is an on-going thing. We all need to learn something, most of our entire life. The appendix should get you started by pointing you in the right direction without having to sift through tons of stuff. Since each of us is unique with our own knowledge, skills and state of being, this part is solely up to you and yours to perform. You may not even consider a volcano if you live in the heartland of the country. Someone in southern Arizona near the border may not worry about snow or tornados. Only you know what is important to you and what you need to learn or acquire.

Planning and being ready for a crisis

At this point you should have downloaded and at least scanned the documents I listed at the beginning of this letter. And you should have your probability and priority lists cross-referenced to the various scenarios. You should have also started your other specialized research based on what you found you needed to acquire in skills, knowledge, abilities, tools and or supplies. You should also have a basic budget ready to go to start acquiring what you need to purchase.

Step One is to start acquiring what you need in tools, supplies and skills, followed by beginning your Emergency Grab-n-Go Binder.

An **Emergency Grab-n-Go Binder** is critical. This binder should hold all important information about yourself and each of your family members, including any pets and regular family visitors or friends that could possibly be caught in this crisis while visiting you. No, you can't account for all, I am talking the ones that routinely visit or spend the night. Think “In case of emergency contact ... General ID & contact info ... Medications ... Allergies ... Insurance Info” and the like.

The documents listed at the beginning of this letter will get you started and there are additional specialized sheets listed in the appendix that will assist with most of the scenario particulars you may need.

This binder will hold your emergency food storage information, maybe even shopping lists and recipes, along with lists of tools and other supplies. In case of a bug-out or evacuation you should have a pre-formatted sheet and marker with thumb tack, that you can post in a good spot in or outside your home to tell someone where you have gone and who is with you. *Use only IF YOU feel the crisis requires notifying anyone of where y'all have gone.*

This Grab-n-Go Binder will become vital as you add to it.

Now is the time to create your 72-hour Go-Packs. Or Go Kit or bug-out bag or survival pack. This will hold the *bare minimum* of needed items to survive on the go. You should plan on one for the home or emergency shelter, vehicle, each family member and your pet. Each bag should be geared to the specific needs of your crisis probabilities and priorities. Individual bags will be lighter in weight as they are for one individual only. **Each bag should also contain a**

first aid kit. The house, emergency shelter and vehicle bags and first aid kits will be more robust, as they should account for at least two if not more individuals, depending on the size of your family.

There are downloadable lists for these bags and first aid kits in the appendix. Basically they will contain what one or more individuals will *minimally* need for 72 hours of “Holly crap I am on my own for the next 3 days with what I got with me!!!” situation.

The 72-hour bag, first aid kits and Emergency Binder can and should be accomplished at the same time.

Questions to always ask

With any crisis involving humans, several things will need to be considered and planned for no matter what. **These are the top questions that you will need to ask, answer and assess very quickly.** *These are the big ones to have a contingency plan for:*

- Food
- Water
- Clothing
- Illness or Injury needs
- Basic Tools
- Defense
- Shelter
- Bug-out or Stay Put

This is NOT a priority list as each crisis is unique and may shift the priorities around. Never the less, in a crisis, all 8 questions need to be addressed as soon as possible. These are however, the *basic bare minimum* things you will need to get thru just about any predicament.

These top eight questions will determine what you need to do, what is within your power to prevent or endure; utilizing what knowledge, skills, tools and supplies you have on hand AT THAT MOMENT. If you think you will be a little “fuddle-brained” during the immediate moments after a crisis occurs, I strongly suggest you make these questions as the first page of your Grab-n-Go Binder, keep a copy in each 72-Hour bag and a copy in your wallet, briefcase and or purse.

Your contingency plans should account for BOTH a re-location and staying put. This is another reason why you prepare more than one 72 Hour Go Bag.

If you have a plan and are prepared for just about anything, while in any location, for any length of time then you have a greater chance of coming out of it with minimal tribulation. It may still be a trial, but it won't be a true tribulation where you have nothing, to do anything with, to help yourself.

Preparing Your Home

Unless you have a “cabin in the woods” that you know you can get to quickly no matter what, or water gushing under the door, ***your first and best place to have prepared is your home.*** Home is where you have the majority of your needs

covered and in place. Or at least where you can have everything you need if you are prepared. Home is where you can find just about anything almost without thinking. So what do you need at home?

The following list is extremely basic and is to be used as a starter. Add what you need based on the types of emergencies you think you may encounter and the length of time you think each will last, along with the specific needs of where your home is located.

Your home is your shelter. **Have everything you might need on a routine basis that maintains the structural integrity of your home.** Besides the everyday “household” tools be sure you have the following for any situation of a week or more.

- Plywood for broken windows or structural holes in the roof or a wall and the like.
- Tarps of various sizes. These can cover a hole in the roof; keep you off a wet floor and a number of other things. If bugging out a good tarp can provide a pup-tent or canopy.
- Nuts, bolts, nails, screws, hinges, etc.
- Plumbing tools. Extra pipes, threader, caps, plumbing and electrical tape.
- An extra plumbing fixture or two, extra door knob and or locks and padlocks.
- Electrical wire and or baling wire. I like electrical because it can usually be used for anything that baling wire is used for as well as for electrical items. Nice and multi-functional.
- Trench shovel, pick axe, sledge hammer – even if you are urban.
- Replacement parts for any major item you may have to rely on. Camp stove, grill, portable non-electric heater, vehicle (if you are lucky enough to have extra fuel or make your own), tent patches and the like.
- Misc. Non-electric tools as well. Like a manual hand drill and saw. Always have plenty of the miracle invention – Duct Tape.

Other home considerations are anything to replace electrical machines, tools and functions in the house.

- Lighting
- Camp commode and it’s chemicals (Utility water is usually controlled by electricity in some way)
- Heat – Fireplace or Wood Stove & Fuel
- Portable Fire pit or stove – Have extra wood or pellets on hand for it.
- Bar-B-Que Grill – Have extra charcoal and or propane for it.
- Camping Equipment – If you are a camper, you probably have tents, sleeping bags, lanterns, camp stoves and the like. Be sure these are organized, in good working order and easy to reach. Be sure you have fuel for the camp stove and lanterns or camp heater.

Other Important Items for the home:

- Food Storage – Long (more than two weeks) or Short term (two weeks and under). **This includes drinking water.** Remember the rule: 1 Gallon per person per day. This is the **BARE MINIMUM** and can cover hygiene as well. This includes your pets; Dogs and cats require a little less than humans, but use the 1 gallon rule and don’t forget their food or first aid needs. If you have some other kind of pet, ask your vet what you can do in an emergency situation. Be sure to read my Food Storage mini-book/letter sent previously for specifics.
- Water for hygiene – Brushing your teeth, washing hands, arm pits and dishes, etc. I prefer to consider this a separate need since every time my family camped, at least one person had an “accident” with the water, where

water was wasted and lost. Remember you can re-use “washing” water for more washing, or waterless anti-bacterial gel for washing your hands and arm pits, thus stretching your supply.

- A small portable tub or basin or two to use for hygiene functions.
- Reference books and documents. This should be for anything that you have to stop and think about how to go about doing and includes recipe books. These too should be organized and easy to reach. DO NOT count on the internet for this. I have all my eDocuments printed out and organized in my emergency binder. Ok this is really three binders now.
- Expanded Sewing kit. This should include patches to repair clothing as well as the usual thread, needles, buttons, hooks, snaps and that other miracle invention – Velcro (the dots and various sized cut-to-fit strips).
- Expanded First Aid kit and first aid book. Again if for the long term or injury inducing situation, add splints, slings and plenty of ace bandages. See the lists in the appendix.
- Clothing and Footwear. Yes, clothing. Don't think fashion here, think functional. *This clothing should be able to assist in keeping you warm or cool and as dry as possible.* Think flannel lined denim bib overalls and shirts or sweat shirts and pants for cool to cold weather. Overalls are great as they are just about one size fits all, except for the length. For warm and hot weather, think light weight long pants and long sleeved shirts. You can roll the pant legs and sleeves up, but if you have to bug-out the legs and sleeves will protect you from insects and sunburn. Have wicking socks and undergarments (t-shirts, panties, socks). Think two sets: One for cold weather and one for hot weather. Your footwear should be multi-functional and water proof or resistant as well. The tread should be good for traction on ice, snow, etc. and insulated for winter wear. Lightweight with good traction for sand, rocks, etc. for summer wear. This is NOT the place for sandals, water shoes or fancy snow boots.
- Household 72-Hour Go Bag. This is in case your family must bug-out and can't get to your individual go-bags. If all go-bags make it with you – all the better, you have extra. The *basics*, the *minimum*, are in this bag. Here is where MRE's and food bars are your food. The household go-bag should cover food, water, shelter, first aid, duct tape and plenty of those space age emergency blankets to cover each person in your family. These blankets can replace jackets and ponchos as well as serve as shelter in a pinch. Very multi-functional.
- Individual 72-Hour Go Bags. Each one should contain what the household one does, but tailored to the individual and or pet, hence it will be smaller. Here you have the advantage of adding a jacket or poncho, extra socks and the like because you are not covering the entire household, just that one particular member. These go-bags should be lightweight and can be stored under each person's bed. For pets, store in their travel crate or if the dog is large enough have its go-bag as a dog backpack but stored in an easy to reach place. For children the bag or backpack should have plenty of handles and or wheels to facilitate the child in handling the bag by themselves.
- Waterless anti-bacterial hand washing gel. This is really optional, but if you are at home, have plenty you can use this to wash hands and arm pits and stretch your water supply. These are great in individual go bags too.
- Emergency Grab-n-Go Binder. All important information, documents and references are stored here in case of bug-out and useful during the incident when staying put at home too.

A Little More On 72-Hour Go-Bags

The goal of a 72-Hour go-bag is to sustain human life for 72-hours for one or more individuals. It is to cover the *basics*, *bare minimum*, needed for that timeframe. These are your primary survival grab and go items for when you must evacuate or are away from home.

My preparedness plan calls for four. A home go bag in case of bug-out, an auto go bag for any situation that may leave me stranded while with my vehicle, my personal go bag which is always with me and my dogs go-bag.

Your home go bag is the most extensive, followed by the auto go bag. That is because both of these will normally account for more than one individual. See the resources in the appendix to review specific checklists on these.

- **Vehicle 72-Hour Go Bag.** This will be more extensive than the individual go bags, similar to your household go bag. This will contain the same *bare minimum basics* along with an extra fan belt and tools or other small items for quick repairs to your vehicle. Consider this go bag to be for at least two individuals, or your total immediate family head count, including a pet.

Preparing for Away from Home

My personal go bag was also my laptop case because I traveled a lot with my job. Hence, it also carried a few items that were not in the go bag when I was just going to and from the office, in case the airline lost my luggage. When traveling to and from my office it also contained less than when I went to visit family, since I usually had my auto go bag to supplement my personal one.

For my personal go bag I had at least 1 liter of water; a collapsible 1 gallon water jug; water purification kit; food bars; first aid kit and flip card instructions; miniature survival flip cards guide; emergency space blanket; Light weight poncho or miracle fabric jacket; a couple of different sized freezer Ziploc bags; self contained travel toothbrush, hair comb and brush; small bottle of waterless anti-bacterial hand gel; compact package of wet wipes; compass; Swiss Army knife or Leatherman tool; ribbon saw (AKA combat saw); small hammer-hatchet-crowbar tool; small folding shovel tool; multi-functional flashlight (can be a torch or lantern or flashing beacon); rechargeable batteries and solar recharger; reflective mirror; emergency whistle; two pairs of socks – one for winter, one for summer; compact flint box (instead of waterproof matches); lighter; 100 Ft of all purpose nylon/cotton ¼" – ½" rope; along with a small portable hand crank radio. When flying I had to remove some of these items and check them, but otherwise they were always with me.

Seems like a lot, but when loaded with everything except my laptop it was only about 6-8 lbs. Even now with my advanced years, I can still carry this backpack with relative ease, as long as I forgo the laptop.

Overall this go bag is really a scaled down version of my 50 Lb pack that I used back in the day when I backpacked all over the wilderness.

My personal go-bag came in handy when I was on a contract job in LA and we had an earthquake. It wasn't one of the big ones, but it caused enough damage and wrecked enough havoc for 48 hours that I was glad I had it with me. It made surviving in an office building with no electricity or water bearable.

Then there was the time we were day hiking in Arches National Park and we were in the bottom of a canopy canyon when a flash flood hit. We were only stuck on that ledge about 12 hours, but it sure was nice to be able to use that space blanket to keep the wind, rain and next morning's sun off of us.

Or the time the kids and I were camping in Gunnison Canyon and a flash flood took out the campground and we were on the opposite side of the river from our vehicles and escape. Our go-packs were what made waiting for rescue for almost 30 hours comfortable.

Or the time my daughter was driving through the Arizona desert and her car broke down. Her cell didn't have any bars and she was able to stay with the car until another vehicle came along the next day to assist. She only had an auto go-bag back then, but she is an avid go-bagger now and rarely goes anywhere without one.

You never know just when or where a go-pack will come in handy. So a Prepper is always prepared.

You can use the information links in the appendix or search online for more specific information on the various go-bags. Just remember any list will be a guide. You may need some different items than what are on the list.

Long Term Self-Reliance

If any of the situations you are preparing for is one you think may be months or years in length, then you will need to know other skills and crafts. There are a multitude of skills and crafts that would be needed depending on the when, what, where and who of the incident.

The best thing to do is research about homesteading and off-the-grid or preparedness and survival from various web sites and in books. Attend a living Colonial or Native American village that offers hands-on instruction. Check out the various documents on my Google link and explore other resources.

There is a ton of free downloadable how-to information from Practical Technology and FAST. These two groups work with the poor and "third world" countries on everything from small village sanitation and water systems; to wind mills and wind turbines; solar panel making; gardening; fish farming; livestock; making soap, candles and fuel; medical and dental; even solar powered communications like HAM radios and satellite internet connections (assuming they are still available in the crisis) and the like.

If this is the type of Preparedness you are seeking then **remember to think NO TECHNOLOGY – NO ELECTRICITY**. No fuel unless you can make it; no electricity unless you can make it; no power tools; no water unless you have a well with a pump that utilizes wind or solar power; no public utilities; no soap; no toothpaste; no TV; no internet; no phones; no clothing or shoe factory; no pharmacy, cosmetic, fabric, grocery or hardware stores. Get the picture!

Can you garden; know how to harvest and store your own garden seeds; hunt, dress and cure or smoke the meat; raise chickens; make butter, candles, soap, vinegar; make moccasins/shoes; spin and weave; build a cabin; milk a cow or goat; cook on a wood stove or bake in a wood stove or solar oven; grow and grind your own grain – make bread? What about the lifelong medical and dental needs? Do you know herbal and "old way" medicine? Can you grow the plants needed? What will you use for cooking oil or machinery oil? Can you ride a horse or harness and drive a horse drawn cart or wagon?

These are all the things one must consider if you want to be prepared for a long term crisis. So research, learn and do and you will be prepared, if and when it actually happens. You might even find life a little more satisfactory as you become more self-reliant along the way.

For example: Since I am getting ready to move rural from my urban homestead, there is one thing right now that I am actively attempting to learn and that is HAM radio. This could prove vital if any of my top probabilities occur. I used to include a "concealed carry" permit, but after taking the class and seeing all the paperwork, I decided I didn't want that much documentation about my firearm capabilities to be in any centralized system, so I never took the test or applied.

Defense

I have mentioned defense a time or two in passing so far. Defense is a very personal choice and will depend greatly on what kind of situation you think you may find yourself in. You need to include both 2 and 4 legged intruders and dangers. I am a lifetime NRA person. I own several firearms which I fire regularly at the firing range, keep cleaned and loaded and have extra ammunition for. These are my defense tools of choice after avoidance. Yours may be different.

There are really only about 5 kinds of defense tools available to the average person:

- Avoidance, Alarms and Traps: This should always be a first defense choice. This includes good locks, good hiding places; alert and keen awareness of your surroundings and possible threats; manual and electric alarms (electric alarms may not be available in a crisis) and traps. Think non-electric or solar powered for the alarms, motion detection lighting and the like. Talking your way out of a tight spot or running away. That proverbial “Fight or Flight” option. However, *be aware that avoidance is not always possible and should be backed up with another choice.*
- Self-defense instruction and Close Combat skills: Karate, Judo, military hand-to-hand combat and the like. But remember this not only means a long time commitment to acquire sufficient skill; it also means *a face-to-face, one-on-one, close quarter confrontation. If you are female, this means this is your “hit and run” option.* Women rarely have the physique to go one on one with a male for any extended length of time.
- Knives: There are all styles and some have specific uses. All are multi-functional in some way. A knife should always be kept clean and sharp. You also need to know how to use the knife. Using a knife for defense is not the same as filleting that fish or carving the turkey. *These are also close contact weapons.*
- Bludgeon Weapon: This can be a large stick or branch or baseball bat or crowbar or golf club. Again knowing how and when to use it are keys to how effective they will be. *These also require close quarter combat* and are most often weapons of convenience.
- Firearms: Handgun, shotgun, rifle. Any firearm requires the owner to be aware of each type’s limitations and strengths besides the general safety, maintenance and use of the firearm. It is never wise to just own a firearm and not practice with it. You need to know how and when to use it, so you don’t shoot yourself in the foot; how to clean it to keep it safe and functional, so it doesn’t blow up in your face. *Depending on the type of firearm, this could be a close or long range defense tool.* If you are in or going to be living in a rural environment, I strongly recommend at least one of each firearm type. As these will need to be a defense tool, against two and four legged intruders and a hunting tool for meat.

Recap of what to Plan and Prepare For

Identify the type of Emergency/Disaster Scenario

Natural	Floods, Tornados, Hurricanes, Mud Slide, Avalanche, Drought, Severe Winter Storm, Pandemic, Extraterrestrial (sunspots, asteroid, comet), Earthquake, Volcano and the like
Man-Made	Economical, Social, Ecological, Bio-toxin, Pandemic (can be natural or human induced), Nuclear, Civil Unrest, War, Riot, EMP(electromagnetic pulse), Terrorism, Blackouts , Lack of Energy, Water or Food (Yes this can occur due to nature too, but are often human induced), Toxic Spill and the like
Bad Luck	Accidents, Getting Lost, General Clumsiness,

	Disease, Illness, Injury and the like
Spiritual	Armageddon, Rapture, Revelation, Mayan Calendar, Nostradamus and like prophecies

Identify the Scope of Involvement of Disaster/Emergency

Local	A portion to all of a city, town, or state
Regional	Northeast, Southeast, North Central, South Central, Northwest, Southwest
National	The entire country
Worldwide	More than one country

Identify the probable Duration of Disaster/Emergency

Short Term	Hours up to 7 Days
Medium Term	2 – 3 Weeks
Long Term	4 Weeks to Months or Years

Determine where everyone is: You and your family’s Location at the time the Disaster/Emergency occurs

	You	Family Members
Home		
Auto		
Away from Home (work, vacation, sports, other activities)		

Questions to always ask immediately after the Disaster/Emergency occurs then enact your preparedness plan to cover all of the above and these basic minimum necessities.

- Food
- Water
- Clothing
- Illness or Injury needs
- Basic Tools
- Defense
- Shelter
- Bug-out or Stay Put

Start Simply

- Identify the crisis’s that you feel are the most likely to occur.
- Inventory what you have in your home to survive those crisis’s.
- Inventory what skills you have that will enable you to survive those crisis’s.
- Organize what you have and start your Emergency Binder. List what you lack in this binder and add to it as you acquire what you lack.

- Budget to not only be debt free, but to be able to acquire what you lack in skills and items to survive those crisis's. Center on Needs instead of Wants to make budgeting, economic self-reliance and collecting your preparedness skills and items easier.
- Plan how to survive these crisis's. Remember although the basics for each scenario will be similar, one plan will not cover all the various scenarios.
- Accumulate what you need to survive and start with a household 72 hour survival pack.
- Add individual and auto 72 hour survival packs.
- Build food and water stores first for 72 hours, then two weeks and if you feel it is necessary, for months and years. Be sure to have a rotation plan for the food and water to keep it viable, safe, fresh and tasty.
- Gather tools, clothing, skills and other supplies you do not have in your home that you may need for any crisis, first for 72 hours, then two weeks and again if you feel the need, for months or years.

He's a Prepper, She's a Prepper, I'm a Prepper too ...

I am very lucky in that my personal experiences, hobbies and passions have given me a wealth of hands-on knowledge and skill. I have lived on a farm, milked cows, plucked and gutted chickens. I lived in a very primitive 1970's co-op for two years where we had to draw and treat our own water; among other things. I have hiked, backpacked and rustic camped all over the U.S. and Canada – including cross-country ski-packing. I am a long time alternative medicine user and companion gardener. I currently “container garden” outside and on my enclosed porch in the winter. I have helped to build a straw bale home from the ground up. And I have friends who have been homesteaders or off-gridders for over 6 years. Once I move I hope to be at least utility self-reliant.

So despite my age, I am ready, I am prepared and getting more self-reliant each day. Yes I am a Prepper and I hope this letter gets you started at Prepping too.

Keep on Prepping;-}

Appendix – Resources and Links

My favorite documents are on my Weebly web site to share regarding: Preparedness, Homesteading, First Aid, Survival, Food Storage and the like. You can view, print and download using the following link.

<http://FormerlyNMUrbanHomesteader.weebly.com>

Enjoy, have fun and always remember:

The precious things in life are hard to find and obtain; otherwise they would only be worth a dime a dozen and not so very precious.

TNT

A 50 something, no longer so urban or in NM, prepping homesteader

TNTCrazyLady
FormerlyNMUrbanHomesteader.weebly.com