

THE WORLD IS CHANGING

This isn't the world your grandparents grew up in. And unless you have your head buried in the sand, I'm sure you see it too...

- . the devastation in New Orleans,
- . the increase in natural disasters ranging from wildfires, floods, droughts, and severe storms,
- . a growing distrust in our government,
- . an increase in lawlessness and crime, and
- . an economy on the brink of collapse

And on top of that there's this underlying feeling that most of us can't shake...a feeling that... Things are going to get worse.

We live in a time where our basic needs are met through a complex network of communications, supply lines, and relationships. The obvious benefit of this system is the ability to deliver goods and services to specific locations in a highly efficient manner.

For example:

- . water is clean and readily available through a simple twist of a faucet;
- . procuring food or drink only takes a quick drive to the grocery store to pick more up; and
- . electricity and fuel to power our appliances and run our vehicles requires one only to plug-in or fill up.

However, the truth of the matter is most of us are completely dependent on this highly integrated web to function and run without a hitch and...

It is far from bulletproof YOU ARE VULNERABLE!

All of these interdependent systems we rely on form a fragile web.

Even small disturbances can send shock waves throughout the whole system interrupting the flow of food, energy, and other essential goods and services. Hurricane Katrina, the 9/11 attacks and even small localized storms have proven this to be the case and... The future may well prove to be worse.

Here in the U.S. and globally the economy is teetering on the edge of collapse. Our government continues to live way beyond its means and as a result there is a great possibility for massive inflation and economic upheaval similar to Argentina or Weimar Republic Germany. And all the while, terrorism continues to cause uncertainty and threatens our fragile system.

THE MAJORITY ARE UNPREPARED

Despite recent events (9/11, Katrina, the economy), the majority of people are still unprepared for even minor disruptions – let alone major disasters.

I understand that we, by nature, want to avoid the unpleasant. However, blindly assuming that things will go on working tomorrow just like they did in the past is a recipe for disaster – this is often referred to as normalcy bias.

And given that the average family has only 3-days' worth of food in their pantry, if something ever happened to our system... We are literally 9 meals away from civil unrest.

WHERE DO YOU AND YOUR FAMILY STAND?

Now for the ultimate question: Where do you and your family stand? If something were to happen tomorrow where you were out of power, fuel, water, and access to food from the grocery stores, how would you survive? Do you have enough food and water set aside to ride it out? Or are you hoping to be bailed out by a government that may never come?

THE 3 LEVELS OF DISASTER

There are three levels of disaster that you need to be aware of. Knowing where you stand in relation to them is critical to knowing how much you should prepare: As the level of disaster increases, the more skill and supplies you will need to survive.

How far you decide to go in your preparations is a decision you and your family must make but what's most important is... The Time to Prepare is NOW! Disaster will not wait for you. The sooner you make your preparations the better off you'll be should disaster strike.

In the next section you'll learn the 5 most crucial components (the core principles if you will) of any effective survival plan. Miss just one of these and you and your family may not survive...

SECTION 1: THE 5 MOST CRUCIAL COMPONENTS OF ANY SERIOUS SURVIVAL PLAN

Hopefully (if you don't already) you realize the importance of "prepping" and perhaps, even before reading this, you began putting together some supplies for a possible disaster. But the question is...

Are you sure you're stocking up on the right stuff?

When it comes to prepping, there are two main scenarios you'll need to prepare for. They are:

"Sheltering-in-Place" and "Bugging Out".

"Sheltering-in-Place" is basically the process of riding out a disaster in a fixed location like your home or a survival retreat. "Bugging Out" on the other hand is surviving while on the road or in an austere location devoid of "modern" conveniences -- with the purpose of eventually reaching a shelter-in-place location.

It doesn't matter if you're putting together a specialized survival kit like a Bug-Out Bag to help you evacuate to a safer location or you're prepping your home for the end of the world, when it comes down to it there are five key components that YOU MUST account for in any survival situation or you likely will not survive.

These five components I refer to as the 5 Pillars of Survival. Here they are:

1. Personal Health & Security
2. Shelter
3. Water
4. Heat and Energy
5. Food

Here they are broken down into more detail:

PERSONAL HEALTH & SECURITY

The safety and health of you and your loved ones is paramount in any disaster-type situation. For without health and security it really doesn't matter how much food or water you have stored away. It won't do you much good if you're too sick to use it, in constant danger, or worse...dead. What you'll want to include in this category are all the items you need to provide health and security for you and your family members or group. Typically this can be broken down into the following subcategories: medical, hygiene and security.

MEDICAL AND HYGIENE

For medical items this includes items such as first-aid and trauma kits, extra prescription and over-the counter medicine. The hygiene component includes items such as soap, disinfectants, toothpaste and toilet paper.

SECURITY

The second part of this category contains those things that you would need to keep you safe and secure. For a shelter-in-place situation this could include early-warning devices such as motion detectors, guard dogs, and perimeter alarms as well as passive and active deterrents such as fences, upgraded locks, physical barriers, firearms and so forth. If you're packing a kit for bugging out, you may consider items such as firearms, pepper spray, knives etc. – basically anything portable that you feel comfortable using to protect your life and the lives of your loved ones.

SHELTER

The primary purpose of shelter is to keep your body at a steady 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit. When you are considering the shelter portion of your survival plan you must keep in mind all those things that would help you do that.

For example you need to consider staying warm in cool weather, dry during wet weather, cool in hot weather and everything in between.

Basically, whatever contingency you're planning for you'll want to include the shelter component. In other words if you are planning on riding out a storm or a disaster in your home or retreat by sheltering in-place, you'll need to think of all the things you need to do to protect yourself from the elements. This includes weatherproofing and insulating your home as well as shoring it up in preparation for disasters common in your area. (Note: A fantastic resource for preparing your home for disasters can be found on FEMA's website. It will tell you steps to do BEFORE, DURING, and AFTER various types of common disasters.)

For bugging-out, your shelter component may include winter clothing, rain gear, sleeping bags, tents, and bivy sacks.

WATER

Water is life. Without it you will not last very long. Given this fact, water is one of the most important of all preparations to make in both sheltering-in-place and bugging out. For a shelter-in-place situation, you generally want to store a minimum of 1 gallon of water per person per day for a period lasting two-weeks. So that means at minimum you'll need at least 14 gallons of water per person in your family or group. Keep in mind, this only accounts for cooking and drinking. If you require water for washing, you'll want to store more.

In addition to the actual storage of water, it's necessary to have a means of filtering it as well. Although you may have access to a water source, having a quality water filter is crucial so as to avoid drinking water that may have become contaminated.

For bugging out, large amounts of water storage may not be possible given weight and space restrictions so again, having a quality water filter for any water you may find while on the road is very important.

In general your survival plan needs to account for the storage, collection and filtering of water – again for both a fixed location or on the road.

If you're interested in getting started with water storage you can find more details in Section 2: Getting Started with Food Storage

HEAT & ENERGY

This pillar pertains to those things you would need for heat and energy. Without heat and energy you would not be able to cook your food, warm your home, or run those devices that you depend on for every-day living. This also includes your fuel and lighting needs.

Breaking it down into sheltering-in-place and bugging out you'll need to consider what types of gear you require to provide these resources.

Here are some examples:

Sheltering-in-Place Bugging Out

batteries flashlights & lanterns flashlights stove fuel

solar setup firewood matches tinder

generator off-grid cook stoves fire starters lighters

wood stove lighters/matches camp stoves

off-grid space

heaters

fuel extra batteries

FOOD

The final pillar is food.

When you're putting together your survival plan for both a fixed location and bug-out scenario you'll want to consider having enough food set aside.

How much food is enough? For a bug-out scenario – given the space and weight limitations -- it really isn't practical to have much more than a few days of food. But for a shelter-in-place scenario it really depends on how far you want to take your preparations.

If you're interested in getting started with food storage for a shelter-in-place situation you can find more details in Section 2: Getting Started with Food and Water Storage.

TOOLS

With the Five Pillars in place, you can now add additional “tools” to your plan. Tools are all those things that aren't absolutely necessary for survival but make surviving much easier. This includes support items such as survival knives, navigation equipment, communication gear, para-cord and duct tape as well as things for mental sanity like games, digital-music players, fun and inspirational literature and so on.

In addition to physical “tools”, I also like to include mental “tools” (skills) in this category as well. This is where training comes into play. After all, training trumps gear and the more you know the

less you need. When you consider training options, it helps to complement each of the five pillars. Here's an example list:

PERSONAL HEALTH & SECURITY

- . EMT/Paramedic training
- . Combat medic training
- . First-aid/CPR training
- . Herbalism
- . Firearms training
- . Martial arts training

SHELTER

- . Home repair skills
- . Primitive shelter making
- . Clothes/Shoe making
- . Knitting/Sewing/Crocheting

WATER

- . Finding it in the wild
- . Primitive filtering
- . Alternate collection methods (solar still etc)

HEAT AND ENERGY

- . Primitive fire making
- . Gassifier building
- . Solar energy setups and repair

FOOD

- . Hunting
- . Fishing
- . Trapping
- . Tracking
- . Edible plant identification and use
- . Cooking/Baking

Now that you know the foundational principles (or pillars) of any survival plan, let's go into more detail about what many people get stuck on: the food/water portion. In the next section, you'll learn a simple 5-step process for getting started with food/water storage...

SECTION 2: GETTING STARTED WITH FOOD AND WATER STORAGE

STEP 1: WATER

The first part of your preparations should be water. Water? Aren't we talking about food storage here? Well, you can have all the food in the world but if you don't have water you won't be living long enough to enjoy that food. In most cases, you'll be around for around three days. One easy way to remember this is with the 3-3-3 rule:

Generally speaking you cannot live longer than 3 minutes without air, 3 days without water, and 3 weeks without food. In an ideal world, we would all have a year's supply of water stored away. However for most people, storing a year's supply of water is not practical and in many cases not necessary. At a minimum you should store at least 2 weeks (14 days) worth of water.

Here are some pointers:

You should have at minimum one gallon per person, per day, for 14 days: One gallon per person

is just enough for cooking and drinking. This does not include water for washing (you'll need to factor more for that). 14 days acts as a buffer zone that gives you time until the infrastructure problem is fixed or at least until you can figure out other water-procurement methods. If you live in an arid area where water is hard to come by then it's absolutely important that you store as much as is practical. If you have the space, look into purchasing some 55 Gallon Water Barrels.

Store the water in a cool, dark place:

Light and heat break down plastics and can contribute to bacterial growth. Limit exposure to both. Preferably avoid moist areas where mold easily forms. Ideally PETE or food-grade plastic containers should be used; Used soda or juice bottles work great in a pinch. Just be sure to clean it out well. I wouldn't recommend used plastic milk jugs though. Milk contains a protein that doesn't easily wash out and may contribute to bacterial growth. Plastic 'water' jugs with screw-on tops can be used although they need to be rotated yearly due to becoming brittle with time.

Thoroughly wash your containers before filling them up: Wash the containers with warm, soapy water and sanitize them by putting a teaspoon of household bleach (non-scented) in a gallon of water. Pour this solution into the container and let it sit for about two minutes. Then rinse out with potable (suitable for drinking) water. Treat non-chlorinated water with bleach: Most municipal water sources are chlorinated so bottles can be filled up right from the tap. If you get your water from a well or other water source than adding bleach will prepare the water for storage. The general rule is 8 drops of non-scented liquid household chlorine bleach per gallon of water (2 drops per quart).

Rotate the water regularly: If you are not storing commercially bottled water then it's a good idea to rotate the water every six months. I find it easiest to just use the water, then when finished I'll follow the steps above putting the newly-filled water container in the back of the storage queue FIFO style (first-in first out). Storing water is an easy step. Instead of throwing out your used water jugs or soda bottles, clean them out and fill them up with water. With time the process becomes a regular habit and you'll have your minimum 2 weeks of stored water in no time. Just be sure to start now!

STEP 2: BUILDING YOUR SHORT-TERM SUPPLY

Now that you have at least 2 weeks' worth of water stored away, you are ready to move on to the next step...building a short-term supply of food. When people first decide they need food storage, they immediately get overwhelmed. They hear about getting a years' supply and don't know where to start.

It need not be so difficult As with most things, start off small and build from there. That's where the short-term supply comes into play. The short-term food supply primarily consists of non-perishable items that are part of your normal daily consumption such as pasta, canned goods, jarred sauces, frozen meats, juices and so on. Included in this list are other non-food essentials such as medicine, hygiene products (don't forget the toilet paper), diapers and other kid-related needs, cleaning supplies, and so on. What's great about this supply is that you don't have to change your daily or weekly routine in order to build it up. The best way to begin is to buy just a little-bit extra each time you go shopping.

The way I recommend is to start with building a 2-week's supply (what I call "The 2-Week Pantry"), then work towards a month's supply and then finally three months. Once you reach an amount sufficient for a three-month supply it's important that you then rotate it — replacing/purchasing those items that you use as you need them. Since our food storage is in our basement, I find it easiest to just keep a little white board with a marker down where our three-months supply is to quickly jot down whatever we take up to use. At the end of the week, this list then gets copied to my wife's i Phone

where she goes out and purchases whatever is on the list. What you're left with is a rotating supply of food that will never get older than three months, and... Let's not forget the added bonus of peace of mind.

STEP 3: LONG-TERM FOOD STORAGE

At this point, you should have 2-weeks' worth of water stored away (or more if you live in areas where natural sources of water are hard to find). You should also have a three-month supply of food and other necessities that you are continually using and replacing. Once those are all set, the next step is to now start thinking about your longer-term needs.

When I refer to 'longer-term needs', I'm talking about storing a year's worth of food or more. While the food that typically goes into a 3-months rotating supply generally needs to be eaten within a few months to a year, your 'long-term' storage will contain those items that will last much much longer — typically 10 – 30 years or more. These are foods that you will use to stay alive, such as wheat, white rice, and beans.

Before you throw your hands up in despair, don't feel you need to go out and buy a whole year's worth in one setting. Just as with the three-month supply, you'll want to gradually build up this supply of food.

Let's go through the process of how it's done...

TASK 1: PREPARE YOUR STORAGE AREA:

The first step is to determine where you want to store your long-term supply. In the three-month supply, simple shelves are all you need. But with a year's worth, you need a space that is large enough and preferably away from heat and light. If you have a basement this is the ideal place. If not then an available closet, room, or storage area will also work in a pinch.

Don't get caught up in thinking that you can't do long-term food storage because you need to have the 'ideal' spot, or that because you live in a small apartment it wouldn't work for you. Part of self-reliance is making do with what you have. Think a little bit and you'll come up with a solution.

TASK 2: DETERMINE HOW MUCH YOU NEED:

Trying to figure out just how much long-term food storage you need for your family can be a bit of a chore. To make this step easy for you, I've included a link to a food storage calculator that figures out the suggested needs based on the amount of weeks and number of people that you want to store away for. You can access the food-storage calculator [here](#).

TASK 3: GRADUALLY BUILD UP YOUR YEAR'S SUPPLY

For most people's budgets, buying a year's worth of food storage in one fell swoop is not possible. Although it is very important to have a year's supply, I wouldn't recommend going into debt to get it. Instead, start small. Just like with your 3-month supply of food you want to gradually build it up over time. You'll be surprised at how quickly this store of food builds up. My wife and I, for example, began building our year's supply by buying \$25 worth of bulk items per month (rice, wheat, beans etc). As we had a little extra money to play with, we would buy more and within a year's time we were able to build up a one-year supply of food.

As with any goal, break it up into manageable chunks. Start with a 3-month supply of long-term food items, and then move onto 6 months and finally a year's worth. Again... It's important that you start now.

TASK 4: BECOME ACQUAINTED WITH THE BASIC LONG-TERM FOODS AND HOW TO

USE AND STORE THEM

There are a ton of resources online which can teach you what foods are best for long-term storage, how you should store them, and what types of meals you can make out of them. Some of my favorite sites are (links will work in Adobe Reader): Food Storage Made Easy – Don't be dissuaded by all the pink. Julie and Jodie have a great talent for making food storage understandable and available for the masses -- lots of good resources and ideas. Every Day Food Storage – Crystal's blog is a great resource for how to use food storage in day-to-day life.

TASK 5: PRACTICE USING YOUR FOOD STORAGE NOW

Get accustomed to cooking and using your long-term food storage in your everyday life. Now is the time to find out what you like and dislike, or what you're allergic to — not in the middle of a crisis situation. The more you get used to eating and preparing your food storage now, the easier the transition will be when you have no choice. It's best to include as part of your 3-month supply a portion of your long-term storage. For example, we use as part of our 3-month storage a portion of our long-term supply such as wheat (that we grind into flour), rice, oil, salt, yeast, sugar etc. This saves a ton of money in the long term and it keeps our stock well rotated.

Remember with all of this; take it one step at a time. By starting small you will quickly get into a rhythm and build some nice momentum. Soon you'll be as obsessed with it as me and your family will be calling YOU the human squirrel.

STEP 4: NON-FOOD ITEMS

If you've followed each of the previous steps you should now have 2-weeks' worth of water, a three month supply of food and other necessities that is continually rotated, and you should be working towards a year's supply of long-term food items. This next step - Step 4 - is really just an extension of Step 3. You can do this step in tandem with procuring your year's supply of food or you can finish Step 3 first before moving on to this step. The only thing I'd recommend is that you focus on the food items first and foremost. Buy the non-food items when you see good sales, otherwise purchase your long-term food first. Remember, you can eat wheat not toilet paper. It's important that you build up a supply of items that are commonly used by your family. Here's a recommended list that should get you started:

PAPER SUPPLIES

- . Toilet Paper
- . Paper Towels
- . Diapers/Wipes
- . Tissue Paper
- . Feminine Products
- . Cotton Balls

PERSONAL HYGIENE

- . Soap
- . Deodorant
- . Shampoo
- . Shaving Cream
- . Diaper Rash Cream
- . Toothpaste/Toothbrushes

CLEANING SUPPLIES

- . All-Purpose Cleaner
- . Bleach
- . Laundry/Dish Soap
- . Trash bags

MISCELLANEOUS

- . Dog/Cat Food (Hey...Fido needs to live too, unless of course you're planning on eating Fido as part of your food storage)
- . Batteries
- . Candles
- . Light Bulbs
- . Fuel

By no means is this list exhaustive (you can find a more extensive list in the "77 Items" section later on in this document). On the other hand, don't get so caught up that you feel you need everything right away either. Build up slowly and as you have the means and resources available stock up on these items. What's great about most of the items on this list is that particular storage parameters (heat, light, etc) aren't that big of an issue. Any free space will do: your barn, shed, attic, basement, under the bed and so on.

STEP 5: THE BASICS AND BEYOND

If you've been able to accomplish all the steps before this one, let me congratulate you! Your household should now be able to survive a year without any need for grocery stores, mini-marts, food stamps, or government handouts. Feels good doesn't it? If you're only reading this though, I hope by now you have a better understanding of where you need to begin. The most important thing to get out of all of this is to (lest you get weary with me repeating myself) start small. Begin with Step 1. Once you gain confidence in storing bottles of water, take on Step 2 which is only a matter of buying a little extra of what you already eat and use each time you go shopping. Even if you are only able to accomplish the first two steps, you'll gain a huge amount of confidence and peace of mind. This should carry you over to Step 3 and 4 which is building your year's supply of food and essential non-food items. While the last two steps are more involved, you need not feel overwhelmed. Again, just begin small and build up from there (are you beginning to see a pattern here?). Soon you'll be well on your way to a year's supply. So what's next? Once you've completed the four steps, where do you go from there?

Well there's still plenty to do and learn. Since I consider food storage in the realm of survival, if you really want to go beyond just surviving and instead move onto thriving during those hard times ahead, there happens to be a plethora of skills and knowledge to gain on the subject of self-reliance and preparedness (again, this goes back to the "Tools" part previously discussed in the 5-Pillars Section above).

Here's a list of just some of the subjects that you can learn about:

- . Clothes Making and Household Crafts
- . Financial Security
- . Gardening
- . Homesteading
- . Raising Livestock (chickens, goats, rabbits etc)
- . Solar, Wind, and Other Forms of Alternate Energy
- . Primitive, Urban, and Wilderness Survival Skills

- . Self-Defense (Unarmed and Armed)
- . Local Plant Identification and Use
- . Herbal Medicine
- . Hunting
- . and More...!

What's important is that you continue to grow and develop. The more self-reliant you can become the more helpful you will be to those who are less fortunate during the hard times ahead. If you are someone who would rather have an easy reference-list of items to stock up on, in the next section you'll learn the "77 Critical Items that Disappear During a Disaster"...

SECTION 3: 77 CRITICAL ITEMS THAT DISAPPEAR DURING A DISASTER

Whenever crisis happens, the typical response of people who haven't planned ahead is a mad rush to the gas stations, food marts and hardware stores... Effectively, and quite literally, emptying the shelves. With the combination of limited supply and desperate people, violence is a common occurrence. By following the instructions I outlined in the previous sections, you will have tremendous peace-of mind and confidence knowing that you will never have to join those flocks of people.

Here is a list of 77 common items that vanish during a disaster -- organized into the 5 Pillars of Survival (+ Tools). While you're working through your survival plan, feel free to use this as a reference list of items to stock up on.

PERSONAL HEALTH & SECURITY

SECURITY

1. ammunition

HEALTH

2. vitamin supplements
3. antacids
4. antibiotics
5. rubbing alcohol & hydrogen peroxide
6. laxative and diarrhea remedies
7. antihistamine
8. Epsom salts
9. first-aid kits
10. insect repellent

HYGIENE

11. portable toilets
12. toilet paper
13. paper towels
14. diapers
15. wet wipes
16. sanitary napkins & tampons
17. bath soap
18. laundry detergent
19. waterless hand sanitizer

- 20. disinfectant
- 21. bleach
- 22. trash bags
- 23. toothpaste and toothbrushes
- 24. shampoo & conditioner
- 25. shaving equipment

SHELTER

- 26. thermal underwear
- 27. insulated coveralls
- 28. sleeping bags
- 29. tents
- 30. heavy work gloves
- 31. boots
- 32. rain gear

WATER

- 33. water
- 34. ice
- 35. water filters

HEAT & ENERGY

- 36. batteries
- 37. flashlights
- 38. candles
- 39. lighters
- 40. matches
- 41. seasoned firewood
- 42. lanterns
- 43. lantern fuel, wicks and mantles
- 44. butane igniter
- 45. charcoal grills
- 46. charcoal
- 47. camp stoves
- 48. propane for camp stoves
- 49. propane cylinders (for grill and heating)
- 50. generators
- 51. gasoline storage containers
- 52. gasoline
- 53. 2-stroke oil
- 54. solar panels

FOOD

- 55. flour
- 56. yeast
- 57. sugar
- 58. milk
- 59. rice and beans
- 60. powdered milk

- 61. canned goods
- 62. ready-made meals
- 63. bouillon cubes
- 64. cooking oil
- 65. peanut butter
- 66. baby food and formula
- 67. coffee
- 68. cast iron Dutch oven
- 69. cast iron cookware

TOOLS

- 70. resealable plastic bags
- 71. pocket and camping knives
- 72. cigarettes
- 73. 5-gallon plastic buckets
- 74. duct tape
- 75. chain-saws
- 76. bow saws, axes, wedges
- 77. hand-crank and emergency radios

Did reading through the previous sections get you a bit overwhelmed? If so, you're not alone. But there's good news. In this section, you will... "Discover How to Get Rapidly Prepared for the Coming Hard Times — No Matter What Your Income or Where You Live" Listen. I'm not gonna go all "doomsday" on you...or claim that the world is going to end in a year...or that you're nine meals away from the "mutant hordes" looking to rape, pillage, and devour whatever is in their path...just so you start prepping. Yes, prepping IS critical... You know that...and I know that. However, if this is such common knowledge among us "awake" folk, why are so many of us still unprepared? Well...it boils down to THREE "myths" that hold back those who are trying to prepare. Buy into these three falsehoods...and it will totally hamstring your prepping efforts. Learn how to overcome them...and your family will be singing your praises when the hammer drops.

Let's expose the real truth... Do You Fall for These Common Prepping Myths?

Myth #1: "I Need Lots of Money to Prep"

Myth #2: "I Need Lots of Space to Prep"

Myth #3: "Prepping is Overwhelming"

Fact: Prepping can fit most any budget.

Fact: Storage options abound IF you know where to look...

Fact: There is a step-by-step "formula" to getting prepared... You don't need to purchase multiple-thousand-dollar food storage systems or have a retreat up in the mountains to be prepared.

For example, you can get 2- weeks of food storage (at roughly 2,600 calories/day) for a single person for around \$20 if you know what and where to buy. That's under \$2 for an entire days' worth of food! The key to prepping on the cheap is to first build up what you NEED to survive and then bootstrap your way to more comfort. And if you're time rich and money short, there are a myriad of ways of putting in a little "elbow grease" to get some serious preps without breaking the bank.

Many people don't prep because they believe they don't have the space for it. "But I live in a

tiny apartment; I couldn't possibly store a year's supply of food!" Hogwash. The fact is, there are many areas (both on and off site) to store food, water, and other supplies that are completely overlooked. I don't care if you live in a small apartment in the city or a large home out in the country, there are many preppers who've discovered these "secret" storage spaces that you can use also. OK, I'll admit it. This one DOES have some truth to it. Most beginning preppers don't have a clue where to begin, stumbling around like a drunk in a trailer park.

However, there is a step-by step sequence to prepping that applies to all. By learning this "formula", you can shortcut your own path to becoming confidently prepared for the tough times ahead.

STRUGGLING WITH GETTING PREPARED?...YOU'RE NOT ALONE

First off, let me say: If you've been seduced by any of these myths...I get it. I was too. When I first started prepping, I was a wet-behind-the-ears father barely starting my career. I didn't have the resources to buy those freeze-dried, done-for-you, multiple thousand-dollar food storage supply kits — let alone a remote, fully-stocked retreat up in the mountains somewhere.

On top of that, with the GLUT OF INFORMATION out there in the form of blogs, books, YouTube videos and forums, I didn't know where to begin, how to start, and what was most important. One day I'm spending my hard earned money on firearms and ammo in preparation for the "zombies" and the next day I'm thinking I need to stock up on a 3-month' supply of high calorie emergency bars for when the shelves clear. I took a "ready, FIRE, aim" approach to prepping...and as a result, was grossly unprepared for a real disaster that came to visit... Hi, my name is rich and although I now feel confidently prepared for the tough times ahead, it wasn't always this way... "My Family Survived One Night, But Would They Last Another?..." The Night that Changed My Life It seemed like any other December night in New England. At least so I thought... But what happened that night would forever change how I felt about "prepping" and how ultimately...no matter what your circumstances...YOU can become confidently prepared for the tough times ahead. I remember that night so clearly. In fact, I remember the exact date and time. It was just after 11pm on December 11th, 2008. My wife and I had tucked our 1-year old in her crib after her last feeding and we eagerly curled up into our own bed after a long, exhausting day. Shortly after falling asleep, we both bolted upright to the explosions coming from the pitch dark outside. "What was that!?" "CRACK!" "BOOM!" Again it reverberated through the crisp, night air. At first I thought it was gunfire. But as my head cleared, the realization set in that it was the sound of huge tree limbs, straining under the weight of hundreds of pounds of ice frozen solid around them, finally splitting and breaking off — crashing to the ground with an earth-jarring tremor. Not good. Our home was encircled by large trees. Let me just say, that whole night I prayed like never before. When the long night ended and the light returned, what was left cannot be fully appreciated unless you experience it.

It's Like a Bomb Went Off Massive tree limbs had fallen down. Some onto cars (like mine) and homes. Others tearing down power lines, and many blocking the streets. Smaller branches and other debris littered the entire landscape. The limbs, branches and lines that did not fall were weighed down from the ice with such force that it looked like they were bowing in reverent awe before the One who had the power to create such awesome destruction. It was devastating, yet beautiful. Realization soon set in that we were without power. In fact the entire region was without power. Stores were closed, gas stations shut down, streets were blocked off, and in this cold I had no way of keeping my family warm; With hardly any food and supplies to last more than a couple of days, if help didn't arrive soon, things were going to get real bad, real quick. I Felt Like Such a Failure It was so cold I could see my baby's breath...in the middle of my living room. This along with watching my wife feed her cold baby food (which we had no way of heating up) further dug the nail deeper into my guilty conscience.

Luckily for them, by the end of that first day most of the main roads were cleared. I watched my

wife and daughter pack up and leave to go to my in-law's house in the southern part of the state where they still had power. That was one of the lowest moments in my life. I felt like such a failure. Here I was, the father of this young family, the one who is supposed to be their protector and provider and they were forced to leave me to find safety and shelter with my in-laws. I told my wife that I wanted to stay back to clean up, but part of the reason was so I didn't have to face my in-laws and feel more humiliation. Yes, the stores did open in a few days. Power did return after a little over a week and for most of these hardy New Englanders, life returned to normal. But not for me. I Would Never Be Caught Unprepared Again... That day haunted me. What if things were worse? What if my young family didn't have a place to go to and the power never came on or the stores didn't open for a while? Well, I certainly couldn't feed my baby all that ammo I bought and those cases of 3000-calorie emergency bars weren't worth a cup of spit in keeping my family warm when the power went out. At that moment I made a vow that I would never be caught unprepared again. Despite having only \$25 in extra income per month, and not knowing where to begin, I was determined to finally figure it out. And I did... It took a while, but even with the limited funds and time I had, I was able to shore up enough supplies to where we could comfortably survive for a year without the need of the government or the grid.

Imagine Feeling Peace in a World of Chaos... That's the ultimate benefit of being prepared. When the world around you is going to hell in a hand basket, you'll be confident knowing that you don't need to depend on anyone for your survival. Store shelves bare? Not a problem...you have your own in home mini-mart.

Power's out? That's OK...you've got backup to spare. Imagine the freedom you'll have...the confidence and peace you'll feel, knowing that if disaster did rear its ugly head, you'll be well-prepared to meet it.

And when things do go south, those that depend upon and love you will be so proud to have you as their protector and provider.

The Time to Prepare is Now... We live in uncertain times. With the rise in natural disasters, an increase in crime and civil unrest, a government that can no longer be depended upon to reach us in our time of need, and an economy on the brink of collapse... ..preparedness is no longer a luxury — it's a requirement.

If you've been struggling with getting prepared, not knowing where or how to begin, or thinking you don't have the funds, the space, or the "perfect" location to do it...I'm here to tell you, your struggle is over.