When an unexpected emergency situation rears its ugly head, will you be up to the challenge? “I wasn’t prepared for that!” will no longer be a valid response with the survival-kit-building methods in this book from survival expert John McCann. According to McCann, the secret to surviving any life-threatening crisis is being prepared through careful advance planning, and that means designing, building and carrying your very own customized survival kits.

By addressing the eight essential kit components of Fire and Light, Signaling, Water and Food, Shelter and Protection, Knives and Tools, Medical, Multi-Purpose and Miscellaneous, building the perfect kit becomes a straightforward and manageable task ... no matter what your activity. The sample kits, associated “laundry lists” and numerous photos provided in the book make the entire process even easier and fun. This book covers it all and is a must for anyone who ventures outside the home. Armed with the kit-building techniques found within, YOU WILL BE PREPARED TO SURVIVE!
The Basics / Personal Kits

The Basics

When putting together a personal survival kit, keep in mind the basics. The basics are important because they identify specific functions that will have to be performed in order to endure a survival situation. By understanding the functions that must be performed, you gain insight into the type of items, or components, that should be in your kit in order for you to accomplish those goals. Therefore, we must discuss the functions you will most likely be required to perform in a survival situation. The items in a survival kit should allow you to perform the following functions:

✚ Build a fire using more than one technique
✚ Signal for help using more than one technique
✚ Gather and purify drinking water and gather food
✚ Navigate back to civilization
✚ Construct a shelter in various environments
✚ Carry out basic first aid

Personal survival kits can be broken down further into Mini and Small Kits (which can be carried on your person), Medium Kits (which can be carried in a fanny or back pack) and Large Kits (which can be carried in a vehicle, boat, plane, etc.). The size of the kit depends on what you are doing and how much you are willing to carry. Sometimes a combination of kits is desirable, such as a mini kit in your pocket, a medium kit in your pack, with a large kit in your vehicle. Even though I am an advocate of carrying items that are multi-purpose, I also believe in redundancy.

Chapter 11, “Selecting Containers for Survival Kits,” will explain how to choose a container to hold your survival kit. Chapters 12 and 13 will teach you how to build personal survival kits. They will also teach you how to pack them to make them as small as possible. Chapter 14, “Making Vehicle Kits,” will teach you how to make a kit specific to the type of vehicle you are using.

Selecting Components

Your survival kit should be made up of different components that are selected for specific purposes. These purposes should include the following:

✚ Fire and Light
✚ Signaling
✚ Navigation
✚ Water & Food Collection
✚ Shelter & Personal Protection
✚ Medical
✚ Knives & Tools
✚ Multi-Purpose Items

The Four P’s

I like to use the four P’s when starting a survival kit. They are:

1. PLAN IT: Before starting a survival kit, plan what you want it to be. Will it be a personal-carry mini kit, or a full-blown vehicle kit? Know what you want the kit to accomplish ahead of time.
Build the Perfect Survival Kit

2. **PICK IT:** Spend some time to determine the appropriate components that will fit the size of the kit you desire and fulfill the functions desired.

3. **PAY FOR IT:** Determine a budget for your kit. This will prevent your having one very expensive component, like a good quality knife, and the remainder of the items being of lesser caliber, not sufficient for the task required. Distribute your available funds in a manner that will allow all the components to be of near-equal quality.

4. **PACK IT:** Lastly, you must package your kit. This involves selecting the correct container, choosing the correctly sized items to fit in that container, and then packing the container for a finished kit.

When assembling your survival kit, you should choose at least one component from each heading. Some items can serve dual purpose and meet the requirements of more than one heading. An example would be snare wire (from the Water & Food Collection heading), which can be used to obtain food, repair broken items, make a fishing pole, etc. More examples of these types of items will be addressed in the Multi-Purpose Items chapter.

**Seasonal & Environmental Factors**

Keep in mind that survival kits can also be based on seasonal or environmental factors. Of course, we cannot always forecast in what environment a survival situation may occur. That is why the basics always remain the same. However, certain additional items may be chosen for the season or environment in which a person plans on being in.

Obviously, the type of shelter and clothes chosen for a summer hike will differ from those chosen for winter activities, such as skiing or snowmobiling. This would be a seasonal factor. The items chosen for a desert environment will differ from those chosen for a mountain wilderness or jungle environment. An example would be your choosing a machete as a tool for a jungle or tropical environment, whereas an ice ax and folding snow shovel would be necessary for a snow environment. A good knife and folding saw would be appropriate for a wilderness area. Keep these variables in mind when designing your personal survival kit.

Some items chosen for a survival kit in this area of the Adirondacks in New York would differ dramatically from those in a desert, tropical or snowy area.
FAST FACTS:

The Rule of Threes

3 Seconds  ...One must have a positive mental attitude.
3 Minutes  ...We need to breathe. Ventilate any enclosure and beware of carbon dioxide.
3 Hours  ...Warmth. We must maintain heat being lost to the cold environment through conduction, radiation, evaporation, convection and respiration.
...Shelter. Get out of wind, shielded from direct contact with rain or snow.
3 Days  ...Water must replace urine, sweat & respiration or the body and mind will cease to function at a surviving level.
...Rest from sleep. Without rest, the body becomes exhausted from shelter building, gathering firewood, anxiety.
3 Weeks  ...Food. While the healthy body may sustain itself for up to 3 weeks, snacks and enriched liquids help maintain fuel for warmth and stamina. Food and fire are psychological boosts also.

COMPONENT SELECTION IS IMPORTANT

Before jumping right in and making a survival kit, you should learn a little about the individual components that make up a kit. If you have a better understanding of the individual components, then you are more likely to choose the correct item to fulfill a specific need. The second part of this book deals with the specific types of items that relate to various activities. This is an important section and should not be ignored. Once you understand the basics, you will be ready to get started on your own survival kit.

Many individual items are discussed and reviewed in this book. I am not a representative of any of the companies who manufacture these items, and I have not received any free samples for review. Yes, I have actually purchased each item shown (and many that are not shown) and have spent innumerable hours playing with them, experimenting with them, modifying them and testing them (some people think I have too much time on my hands).

If you’re ready to build the perfect survival kit, let’s get started!