

Survival Myths



The Top 12 Survival Myths
That Will Get You Killed
And How To Avoid Them
RONALD WILLIAMS

SURVIVAL MYTHS

***THE TOP 12 SURVIVAL MYTHS THAT WILL GET YOU
KILLED AND HOW TO AVOID THEM***

Ronald Williams

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INTRODUCTION

Hi there, first of all thank you for downloading my book “Survival Myths.” I hope you find what you are looking for and receive value from it!

I'm writing this book for one very simple reason: I want to present you with twelve very specific survival myths that could severely hinder your ability to survive, if not kill you outright, and teach you how you can avoid them.

Every year, thousands of people find themselves in unexpected outdoor survival situations. Several of those people tragically do not make it out alive, and the reason why is because they made seemingly insignificant mistakes that ended up costing them their lives.

These mistakes spawned from their belief that they knew true survival skills, but in reality, they only knew false survival skills... A.K.A, survival myths.

This book will dispel twelve of the biggest survival myths of all time so you will not make the same critical mistakes should you ever find yourself in a life-or-death survival situation.

The specific myths we are going to cover in this book include the following:

- A Shelter Means Four Walls and a Roof
- You Can Suck Poison Out Of A Snakebite
- Drinking Your Urine Will Keep You Hydrated
- Eating Snow Will Keep You Hydrated
- Food Should Be Your Top Priority
- Moss Only Grows On The North Side Of A Tree
- Rub Two Sticks Together To Create Fire
- You Can Run Away From A Bear
- You Can Drink Water From Cactus
- Boiling Water Always Makes It Safe To Drink
- You Need Water Right Now To Survive In The Desert
- You Don't Need To Bring Survival Gear With You On A Short Hike

By the end of this book, you will not only know why each of these myths are actual myths, you will know solutions that will enable you to evade each of them as well.

Let's get started!

Myth #1 – A Shelter Means Four Walls and a Roof

It's widely accepted that building an adequate shelter has to be one of your top priorities in any survival situation. The reason why should hopefully be obvious: to protect you from the elements.

In the desert, your shelter would protect you from the blistering hot sun and sand. In a winter environment, it would protect you from falling snow and ice and the freezing wind. In the woods, it would protect you from the rain and wind. You get the idea.

But this is also where we get one of the biggest survival myths at all: that your shelter will *always* protect you from the elements.

In other words, just because you build a shelter with four walls and a roof doesn't mean that you are automatically protected from any one of those natural forces that I just listed above.

This is because the goal of your shelter is not to just keep you covered. It is to keep you protected.

Let's say that you build an A-Frame shelter, or a pole between two trees with multiple smaller poles leaned against the larger pole on both sides to create the walls. Technically, you now have a shelter, and you're physically being covered. So you should be good to go, right?

Not necessarily. Ask yourself, even though this shelter is covering you, is it truly protecting you? Is it warm? Are there leaves or foliage against the walls to provide you with insulation? Is there a bedding on the ground of some kind that provides a layer between your body and the damp earth?

When building a shelter, your first instinct should never be to keep yourself covered. Rather, your first instinct needs to be to keep yourself truly warm, insulated, and protected.

This means you could build a simple lean-to shelter facing the direction of the wind with some dry vegetation on the ground under it for insulation. You could then build a fire on the open side for warmth.

While this shelter may sound simple and meaningless, the truth is it's protecting you from the wind, it's keeping you insulated from the ground, and it's keeping you warm. Even though this shelter lacks four walls and a roof, it is still ADEQUATE for this particular situation.

There would be no need to waste any more of your valuable time and resources on adding three more walls and a roof. Instead, you can spend that time on other tasks such as finding a source of drinking water or building a fire.

So the idea that your shelter must consist of four walls and a roof (essentially resembling a small makeshift cabin) is the first survival myth. Your shelter is designed to protect you and insulate you, not just to cover you.

Myth #2 – You Can Suck Poison Out Of A Snakebite

I was tempted to make this the first survival myth because it's perhaps the one myth that the general public is most familiar with. How many movies and TV shows have we seen where a character gets bitten by a venomous snake, only for them or someone else to suck the poison out and spit it out to save their life?

If you haven't seen any movie with a scene like this in it, then you definitely haven't seen a lot of movies.

The truth is that attempting to suck the venom out of a snakebite wound is one of the worst things you can do in the event of a snakebite and you will make an existing problem even worse. Why? Because trying to suck the poison out of a snakebite wound puts both the victim of the snakebite and the person trying to suck the poison out at greater risk.

It will cause the snakebite wound to get even worse, while also leading to the possibility of the other person swallowing the poison dying. At the very least, putting your mouth to a snakebite wound is going to cause damage your mouth and lips and the skin around it.

In the event that you or someone else in your group becomes the victim of a snakebite, the very best thing you can do is to seek professional medical attention. Add a cool compress to the site of the wound and the victim's forehead and have them lay down and be physically still.

Again, attempting to suck the venom out is only going to make things far worse for the both of you.

The good news here is that the overwhelming majority of rattlesnake bites in the United States are not fatal (as in literally over 99.99%). So even if someone in your group is bitten by a rattlesnake, chances are significantly high that they will pull through.

Hopefully you can avoid getting bitten by a snake in the first place by being extremely conscious about where you put your feet and hands and keeping an eye out for signs of snakes while you travel.

Myth #3 – Drinking Your Urine Will Keep You Hydrated

Here's another huge survival myth: you can drink your own urine as an alternative to water to keep you hydrated.

Okay, can you technically drink your own urine? Yes, you technically can. And is drinking your own urine going to kill you? No, it is not.

So if you're extremely thirsty and dehydrated in a survival situation and just dying for something to drink, why not drink your own urine?

The reason why is because, in a hot environment especially, drinking your own urine is only going to make you more dehydrated.

It's also going to cause your body as a whole to heat up fast and therefore make you even more thirsty because of the huge amount of stress it puts on your kidneys.

However, there is one way you can use your urine to help handle dehydration and heatstroke in a survival situation. While it's certainly not the most pleasant thought out there, you can urinate over a bandana or another piece of cloth you have and then wrap that around your forehead to help cool you down.

Meanwhile, you can then turn to other methods to find clean water, such as the solar still method (this method takes several hours to produce enough water for a drink, but it still works), or heading downhill or into a valley where you are almost guaranteed to at least find a small stream.

Myth #4 – Eating Snow Will Keep You Hydrated

Many people believe that bringing drinking water with them in a winter survival situation is not necessary because they can just eat all of the snow around them to keep them hydrated.

As with drinking your urine, this is a huge misconception and will actually work against your survival efforts.

The reality is that snow cannot only cause further dehydration, it will also lower your body temperature from the inside out and potentially lead to hypothermia.

Snow can dehydrate you because of the process your body has to go through in order to heat up the snow and then melt it after you consume it. The extremely low temperature of snow is also what will lead to hypothermia.

Before you even think about consuming snow or ice, you first need to melt it through boiling and then allow it to cool down further.

Eating snow as you travel is one of the worst things you can do to yourself in a survival situation. Much of your body's energy reserves will be completely wasted by consuming it, which is something you simply can't afford to lose in any life-or-death situation.

Keep a metal container with you in which you can melt and boil your collected snow before allowing it to cool again for you to drink.

Myth #5 – Food Should Be Your Top Priority

We all know that we need food to survive. Our bodies can only survive for three weeks without it, and it only takes a few hours without it to begin feeling extremely hungry.

So yes, food always needs to be a priority in a survival situation. You need it to sustain yourself and to give yourself a quick boost of badly needed energy. However, food should never be your TOP priority in a survival situation.

Why? The reason is because there are many other things that will kill you in less than those three weeks. For example, a lack of water will kill you in three days or less. A lack of water in less than one day will result in severe dehydration, and this will significantly impair your ability to survive both physically and cognitively.

Another example of something that can kill you before a lack of food does is the outside elements. If you find yourself stuck out in the rain on a cold and windy day, it's very easy for hypothermia to set in even if it's summer. This is why building fire and shelter have to be bigger priorities than finding food.

Something else of a bigger priority than finding food is navigation. You have to figure out where civilization is so you know where you'll be traveling, right? If you're unable to determine what direction the nearest town is in, the next best thing for you would be to walk downhill or into a

valley to find a stream, and then follow that stream to a river, and then follow that river to a civilized settlements.

I'm not trying to suggest that finding food isn't important in a survival situation. It is. It's just not as important as other priorities such as water, fire, shelter, and determining the general direction you need to head to make it out back to civilization.

So what are your options for food in a survival situation? Regardless of which environment you're in, your options usually will be the following:

- Foraging For Edible Plants
- Fishing
- Setting Traps For Small Game
- Digging Up Grubs

Out of all of these, fishing is my personal favorite because of the proteins and essential fatty acids that fish come packed in. It's also perfectly possible to improvise your own fishing equipment out of natural materials or items you already have (a branchless tree limb for the pole, a soda can tab or paperclip for the hook, and natural vine or your shoelaces for the line).

Foraging for edible plants is also an option, but you need to be **EXTREMELY CAREFUL** about the plants you choose to eat. If you're not sure if a plant is venomous or not, rub it against a small part of your skin and wait for 30 minutes.

If no rashes or discomfort have appeared, place a small piece of the plant on your tongue to taste it and then remove it. Wait 30 more minutes (some experts would say wait a full hour to three hours), and if no more swelling or discomfort have occurred, consume an extremely small piece of the plant and wait for a full twenty four hours. If you're still good (and be honest with yourself), then the plant is probably safe to eat.

If you're going to set up traps or snares (such as the deadfall trap, which is actually rather simple to set up), make sure you do so in an area with plenty of signs of small animals and directly on a game trail so you can increase

the chance of making a successful catch. You also need something to serve as bait; I can tell you from experience that pieces of candy or human food such as corn work best if you have anything like that available.

Myth #6 – Moss Only Grows On The North Side Of A Tree

Most people don't fear the idea of navigating themselves out of the wilderness because they figure they can make their own north to south line based on the moss on the tree.

The myth here is that moss only grows (or at least tends to grow) on the north side of a tree. Long story short, moss grows on ALL sides of the tree. If you make yourself reliant on this method to figure out which direction you need to head to make it out of the wilderness, you're only going to get more lost.

The good news is there are multiple other methods at your disposal to tell your direction. If you have an analog watch, and if you're in the northern hemisphere, hold the hour hand in the direction of the sun. The north to south line will be midway between the hour hand and the '12'.

If you're in the southern hemisphere, you complete this same process, only you aim the '12' towards the sun rather than the hour hand. Again, your north to south line is midway between the hour hand and the twelve.

But what if you don't have an analog watch with you? Does this mean you're out of luck? Nope. In fact, you can also tell your sense of direction with nothing more than a stick:

- Find the flattest stick you can and place it on the ground vertically
- Take note of where the end of the shadow of the stick is and mark it
- Wait for fifteen minutes and mark the new location of the end of the stick's shadow

- The line in between those two points is your east to west line

Myth #7 –Rub Two Sticks Together To Create Fire

This is another myth that we commonly see in movies: simply rubbing two sticks together and just like that, you have a fire!

If only it were that easy! While it is certainly true that you can use friction to create a fire, simply rubbing two sticks together is not going to do it no matter how hard you try or how much patience you have.

Fire is extremely critical in any survival situation, and the ability to build and maintain it has to be one of your top priorities. Fire is the only thing that can do each of the following at once:

- Boil Water
- Cook Food
- Provide Heat
- Provide Light
- Keep Hungry Predators At Bay

My personal recommendation is that you always need to have a minimum of three separate fire starting devices with you when you head out into the wilderness or any kind of outdoor adventure: a lighter, a small box or container of matches, and a magnesium flint striker.

The magnesium flint striker in particular is my favorite. It will work even when soaking wet, which is something I can't say about matches or a lighter from my personal experiences (yes, even though some matches and lighters are marketed as supposedly being 'waterproof').

In addition, carry something with you that can catch fire easily in the event that all the fuel you find in the wild is soaking wet. Cotton balls or Q-tips soaked in Vaseline are my favorite, but Chap Stick and hand sanitizer are both very flammable as well.

But let's say that the worst happens: you find yourself in a survival situation without these kinds of fire starting devices.

Does this mean that all hope is lost? On the contrary, you have more methods available to create fire. Rubbing two sticks together just isn't a viable method.

Examples of what you can do to create fire include polishing the bottom of a soda can with chocolate and then positioning the bottom of the can in between the rays of the sun and your tinder to create heat, or using a magnifying glass or your glasses to concentrate the rays of the sun on tinder.

But if neither of these methods are viable for you or if you do want to use friction, I would suggest the bow drill method.

To make the fire bow, you'll need a board with a notch cut into it. Take a branchless stick or branch and tie a string or vine between both ends.

Then, wrap that string around a spindle in the middle that has been sharpened to a point on one end. Find a rock or another handheld flat piece of wood to complete the set

Gather your kindling and fuel and keep it on standby. Kneel down and place one foot on the fireboard to secure it.

Position yourself so that one hand is holding an end of the bow and the other is using the rock or flat wood piece to apply pressure on the spindle.

Run the bow back and forth so that friction is created between the spindle and the fireboard. Keep your kindling in the notch, and when smoke starts to appear, gently blow onto it to create a flame.

I'll be the first to say, the bow drill method is extremely time consuming and exhausting. It requires much practice and patience to be successful, but it is the best method for creating fire from friction.

Myth #8 – You Can Run Away From A Bear

One of the greatest fears people have in regards to the wilderness is the fear of possibly running into a bear...specifically a brown bear or black bear.

If so, your first instinct would probably be to turn around and run, but I'm here to tell you that that is absolutely the WORST thing you can do.

You're not going to outrun a bear that intends to catch you. You just won't.

When you encounter a black bear the first thing you will want to do is to stay still and hold your position. Do everything you can to make yourself look as big and intimidating as possible, such as opening up your coat or jacket while also screaming. Chances are the black bear will become spooked and leave.

If you find a grizzly bear, however, you'll want to take a different approach. Whereas the black bear will likely run off by the above technique, the grizzly will take it as a challenge.

When you encounter a grizzly, start to back away slowly. Hopefully the bear will not pursue you. But if it does, immediately get on the ground and play dead. Keep your head down and vital organs covered. Chances are higher the bear will lose interest in you and leave, but if it doesn't, continue to hold your ground and keep your vital organs covered. If you have pepper spray, be prepared to use it.

Truth be told, neither the black bear or grizzly bear are as dangerous as you would be led to believe. If either of them attack, it will only be in defense of their cubs or because they feel very threatened. Black bears are also not nearly as aggressive as grizzlies, and black bear attacks as a whole are very rare.

Something else I would like to say is it can be easy to confuse black bears and grizzly bears because not all black bears are black. The best way to distinguish between the two is by their shape: grizzly bears have a large and noticeable hump on their shoulder, while black bears do not.

Myth #9 – You Can Drink Water From Cactus

Use a knife to cut your way into a cactus to access all of the fresh water inside, right?

Not exactly. The truth is the fluid inside cactus is not water, and it's also rather harmful and will result in you feeling nauseous and lead to vomiting.

Furthermore, the fluid within cactus will have a very similar effect on your body as drinking your own urine does like we talked about earlier. It will put extreme stress on your kidneys, which will cause you to become even more dehydrated and feel even thirstier.

If you're in a desert environment (and you likely are if you've come across a cactus), this is only going to put you at greater risk of heatstroke.

So in short, don't think you can hydrate yourself by drinking out of a cactus. Explore other methods for collecting or finding water instead.

Myth #10 – Boiling Water Always Makes It Safe To Drink

Easily the most recommended method for purifying water is to boil it for ten to fifteen minutes, and I'll be the first to say that boiling is indeed a highly effective method and should be done to any water you collect in the wilderness.

Purifying your water is critical because drinking water that is contaminated with harmful bacteria and other harmful substances could potentially be more dangerous than not drinking any water to begin with. It will cause you

to become seriously ill, which casts doubt on your ability to make it out alive.

That being said, despite how effective boiling is to purify water, it should also not be considered an 'end all' solution.

This is because boiling water is only extremely efficient at doing one thing: killing germs and dangerous organisms like bacteria. What it is not efficient at is getting rid of particulates or visible substances. This is why boiling stagnant water or water that has been chemically contaminated will not be safe for drinking purposes.

There are two principles you must follow when collecting water from the wilderness:

1. Only Collect Water From A Safe Source
2. Boil AND Filter The Water

If you're collecting water from a running stream, mark your current position and then check upstream at least a few hundred yards to confirm that there are no signs of contamination such as animal droppings in the water.

You'll also want to choose the clearest part of the stream possible; choosing a running stream of water to begin with over a lake or a pond also increases the odds that the water will be safe to collect.

After you have collected water, run it through a filter before boiling in order to get rid of the offensive substances that you can see. If you don't have a filter with you, you can easily create your own by taking a large slice of tree bark and tying both ends shut to create a rough cylindrical shape.

Then, fill it up with different layers of grass, pebbles, cloth, and charcoal. Run the water through it into a new metal pot or container for boiling.

Myth #11 – You Need Water To Survive Right Now In The Desert

Yes, water is absolutely critical in any survival situation. You will need it especially in a desert environment where suffering from heat stroke is a real possibility.

That being said, the conception that you need water IMMEDIATELY in order to survive in a desert is not entirely true.

We know this because there are multiple stories of people who have survived the desert for over forty eight hours without any water whatsoever. How did they manage to survive?

The answer is because they kept themselves cool and minimized the amount of water they lost through sweat by sticking under shade.

During the daylight hours when the heat is greatest, find a shady spot (or create your own shade from shelter) and stay there until the evening when the temperature cools down and you can begin moving again.

The morning and evening hours are the best times to travel during the desert, and getting enough shade is just as important as getting enough water.

Myth #12 – You Don't Need To Bring Survival Gear With You On A Short Hike

Last but not least, here is what I consider to easily be one of the biggest survival mistakes of all: failing to bring any gear with you when you head out into the outdoors.

Yes, even if it's only for a short hike in a location seemingly not far from civilization, you should still bring survival gear with you.

This doesn't always mean that you need to bring a full backpack filled to the brim with survival gear, but it does mean that you need to stuff your pockets with various items you can use to help you along in a survival situation.

Examples of survival items I always carry with me when I head out into the outdoors, even for only a quick fishing trip or a short hike, include the following:

- Folding Knife
- Three Fire Starters (matches, lighters, magnesium flint striker)
- Basic First Aid Kit
- Compass
- Pen and Paper
- Water Bottle (plus purification tablets and pocket water filter)
- Flashlight
- Cotton Balls with Vaseline
- Paracord Bracelet

These are all very basic and yet handy items that I can carry in the pockets of my jacket and/or cargo pants/shorts without taking up too much weight or space.

What you want to carry is entirely up to you, but make it a habit to never venture into the outdoors without at least a few survival items on your person.

CONCLUSION

Congratulations on reading this book! You now know the twelve biggest survival myths and how you can avoid each of them to make it out of the wilderness alive.

I hope that you found what you were looking for in this book and received value from it. More importantly, I also hope that you will apply what you have learned by not falling for these myths should you ever find yourself in a true survival scenario.

As a final note, I encourage you to pass on what you have learned to your friends and family. Knowledge is a very powerful thing, and it's not something that you want to keep to yourself.

So, when you learn something, share it! Give this book to those you know and encourage them to read it. I deliberately made this book short so anyone will be able to read and learn from it in a short amount of time.

Of course, there are many more survival myths out there for you to learn. Don't end your learning process with this book. Basic knowledge of survival skills is a critical life skill, and you never want to stop finding more books or resources for you to learn from.

Good luck!

THANK YOU FOR READING!

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About The Author

Ronald Williams is an accomplished outdoorsman, survivalist, and survival writer whose passion is making sure that people are equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to outlast any kind of unexpected survival or disaster situation that comes their way.

Most importantly, Ronald wants to make sure that each person understands that disaster preparedness is a major responsibility to take not only for the safety of themselves, but for their friends and families as well.

Drawing upon both his extensive knowledge and his personal experiences, Ronald's books and articles have helped thousands of men and women across the globe learn how they can properly prepare themselves and their families for whatever unexpected disaster scenario comes their way to boost their chances of survival and ensure that they make it out alive.

Ronald has ghostwritten hundreds of articles on disaster preparedness for various reputable survival publications, including Off The Grid News.com, Survival Sullivan.com, Reloader Addict.com, Urban Survival Site.com, Survival Know How.com, and Legally Concealed.com.

When Ronald's not writing, he's usually camping, hiking, hunting, fishing, teaching others about survival and disaster preparedness, and spending time with his friends and family.