

Survival_Arctic_Jungle_Desert_2004.txt

Survival, Escape, Resistance, Evasion

Introduction

I'm not sure how much I will include on resistance and escape. Maybe I will save these subjects until someone else offers to contribute the material. I will definitely cover the following subjects:

Survival Arctic Jungle Desert

Topics will include dealing with attitude, exposure, dehydration, rescue, food gathering.

Evasion

Celestial Navigation - Stars/Sun

Camouflage - Rural and populated areas

Survival

Attitude is everything. Some of you may read this and think "yeah, o.k., now get on to the good stuff". What you must realize is that without the proper mental attitude, the other topics will be of use for only a short period of time.

Depression, loneliness, feelings of abandonment, despondency, and the feeling that nobody knows where you are or cares will conspire to kill you. If you have done your homework, practiced the techniques described, there is a very good chance you will survive if you have a positive mental attitude. Tell yourself that you WILL get out of this. You WILL persevere.

I have seen some survival books talk as though collecting water is easy, catching game with snares is simple, and survival is something that can be

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taught in books. When I was very young, I would leave for the country on Friday afternoons. I would take water proof matches, a litre of water, my bow and some arrows, ground sheet/blanket, and spend the weekend making snares, fishing with equipment I made, and hunting with my bow. I used primitive fire making methods and only used matches when I had to. I can tell you that there is nothing easy about any of this. There was much I didn't know at the time, but I had read a lot of books. I probably knew more at 13 than most people ever do. I was preparing myself for a life in the wilderness as a 'mountain man'. Needless to say, I had not yet discovered girls or beer. Cable TV was unheard of, and computers were magical talking 'entities' as seen on Star Trek and 2001. For me, society was full of unnecessary trappings that only made men soft and weak.

By Sunday I was ready to return home. My parents would usually drive out to the area I was staying in and give me a ride. It was about a 18 mile trek. Fortunately my mom made sure I took along 'emergency rations', just in case I had trouble finding game. Emergency rations were about the only things I ate all weekend. I shot a few birds and snakes with my bow. Caught a few fish too. But I learned something that many people do not realize. To survive you must battle three things in this order:

Exposure
Dehydration
Food Gathering

You can die in a few hours if you cannot retain body heat. You can die of exposure in 72 degree weather!

You will develop hypothermia when your body loses heat faster than you can produce it. You need calories to generate body heat. People die of hypothermia in warm water. The water is cooler than they are, subsequently the water absorbs body heat until their body can produce no more. It is a slow death.

When you breathe your breathe causes water loss. Perspiration causes water loss.

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Evaporation from your eyes causes water loss. If you cannot replace these losses you will die. Drink water with little microbes, parasites, etc. and you will develop diaherra. This will increase your fluid loss and you will die even quicker.

Food is the last thing you will need. In moderate climates, you can survive without food for up to 30 days. You will die without water in one or two in the desert! Finding edible berries and plants are the last things you need to learn. Rescue and conserving fluids and body heat are the primary survival skills. If you can survive long enough to get real hungry you are doing a good job. In extreme cold food is more important because your body converts food to heat.

Taking Inventory

First examine what you have to work with. Seat cushions from a vehicle are insulation. Shiny glass, mirrors, or polished metal can be used to signal search aircraft. Glass with imperfections, bifocals, binoculars, etc. can be used to focus the sun's rays enough to start a fire. Thread stripped from a seat cushion and wound together can be used to lash things together, make fishing nets, sutures for stitching wounds, etc. Remember your priorities. Rescue, Shelter, Water, and food. You will have to balance these priorities and make decisions. Generally, you should stay in the area where you became stranded if there is any chance of a search for you. If you try to walk out, the search party will not find you. You will burn calories while walking, calories that will be hard to replace. You will also perspire, can you afford the water loss? If the enemy is searching for you, you will have to move to a safe location.

Exposure and Body Heat - Arctic

Time is running against you here. You must work quickly and conserve energy. After you have taken inventory, build a fire:

Hopefully you will have matches or a lighter. You must conserve these valuable items. Before you build your fire, pick a place for your shelter. (see below). Now gather combustible materials. Cones from pine trees don't burn. Bark doesn't

either. DONT waste matches trying to ignite them. Gather material in this order:

Very small match stick thickness twigs. Have at least a good double handful. They must be dry. To find dry sticks in the rain, look under the overhang of an embankment, under-side of logs, dead dry roots pulled out of an embankment, the center of a stump or dead tree (dug out with a knife).

Small sticks a little bigger than the smallest. You will need more of these, at least a quart - half gallon. Some of these may be a little wet.

Bigger sticks - Twice the thickness of the ones before, even more of these.

Keep moving up in size untill you are collecting branches/small logs. If the wood is available you will need as much as you can gather in an hour. Drift wood will work if it's dry.

Now that you have your wood it's time to build your fire. Take your time and do this right. DONT throw the fire together haphazardly. This will only waste fuel and increase the risk of the fire not lighting. Every match you have is like gold. Do not waste them. If you do this right you will only need one.

Take a medium size branch and lay it down. Now build a tiny lean-to with the smallest sticks by leaning them up against the branch. Take more and and lay them perpendicular to first layer, and parallel to the big branch. Use lots of very small sticks and leave enough gaps between them for the flames to rise up through and ignite the upper layers. If it's raining or windy cover yourself with something to protect your fire. Now add the bigger sticks to the top of the your neat little lean-to, using a teepee shape, and surrounding the little lean to on all sides. Leave a small gap up close to the big branch to get your match under the pile. If you have a small slip of paper or lint from pockets, put it under the lean-to and ignite it. As your fire grows, start adding more and more sticks to get the fire very hot. Now add the larger sticks, the heat will dry them if they are damp.(Not if they are green or soaked through.) Keep building your fire in stages. DON'T wait to long to add the next size larger sticks. The

heat generated from the rapidly burning small ones is needed to dry and ignite the larger ones. As soon as you can, put some bigger stuff on by laying them across the big branch on the ground. Once your fire is going, DONT let it go out. If you need more fuel gather more, and start building your shelter.

This is the fastest shelter I know of:

Is there a snow bank nearby? Can you build a small one? You are going to dig a cave in the snow. You want the opening to be away from the wind. The cave has to be very small. For a snow shelter to be effective it must be below freezing. If not, melting snow will saturate your clothing and you will freeze. Hollow out a place to lie in the snow. If you have something to line the floor with it will be much warmer. If you have nothing but plastic or something, try to find evergreen tree limbs to line it with. You want as much between you and the cold ground as you can. You will lose more heat by being in contact with the cold ground than you will from the air. The air in your cave will warm and retain heat. If you have a small heat source you can place a vent through the roof to allow gas to escape. You must ration your heat source. You will need it more at night when the temperature drops. Luxuries to add will be more insulation, seat cushions, etc. and a door.

A Ranger Pile is a shelter used by small parties who lack bulky camping equipment or who for tactical reasons, must not risk fire or shelter construction. First layer of men, four or five lays very close together on two ponchos snapped together. Next layer lay's on top of the others, cross ways. Another layer on top of them. Remaining ponchos are snapped together and pulled over the top and tucked in around the sides. If a quantity of DRY pine needles, leaves, etc can be quietly collected, this can be used for insulation stuffing. Just pile it on each layer before the next gets on. This is how small recon teams survive without carrying a lot of bullshit with

them. It only gets bad when one of the guys has gas!

A vehicle will block the wind but the compartment is too big to retain body heat. You will freeze if you stay in a car or aircraft. Strip cushions, carpet, floor mats, insulation, etc. from the vehicle to line your shelter with. If you have tools and can remove the hood or trunk lid you can use these for a reflector to direct heat in one direction from a fire.

If you are fortunate enough to have the materials to construct a lean-to, build one similar to the way you built your fire. Keep the openings away from the wind, and towards your fire. Use a reflector to direct the heat into your lean-to.

Clothing What do you have to work with? Thin material should be put closest to your body, as should wool. If you have extra foam from seat cushions, stuff your shirts and pants with it. It will work as insulation. Extra clothing can be stripped in to pieces of about 5" x 4' and used as wrapping for extra socks. The russian army has always used wool strips for field socks. You want to have the material that best holds in heat closest to your skin. This same concept can be used when you have the luxury of a sleeping bag. Sleeping bags are designed to hold in heat much better than clothes. When you get into a bag, remove all of your clothes and lay on them. Naked, your body heat will be trapped between your skin and the bag. Otherwise your heat escapes through the thin material of your clothing, and stays between your clothes and the bag, until it dissipates.

If you have no clothes for the environment you find yourself in, you will have to use the shelter for clothing. Keep your shelter VERY small and use insulation. This is your only chance to survive.

If there is plenty of snow/ice you will have a good water supply if you have a fire and a container to melt it in. DO NOT EAT SNOW. It will lower your body temperature and bring on hypothermia. Always melt it and get it warm first.

Do not drink alcohol of any kind. It will thin your blood and increase your

urine output. If it's strong enough, you can use it as a disinfectant, or to help start your signal fires if an aircraft approaches.

Now that you have your fire and a shelter it is time to improve the odds of rescue. The international distress signal is three(3) of anything or the letters SOS. Don't build three fires because it wastes fuel. Scrape out three large circles in the snow by dragging something around. If it snows these will fill in. If you have access to lots of branches or something that provides a good contrast to the white snow, lay them out to form 3 large X's. What looks big to you on the ground looks very small from an aircraft at 10,000 feet. Your X's should be 100 - 150 feet across and 75 feet apart. If you have the wood build three fires in the middle of each but don't light them. Keep your main fire going so that you'll be able to take a torch to the other fires in a hurry.

Smoke will be quite visible from the air also. Large piles of pine needles smoke well, as does rubber, plastic, or oil. Be careful about burning critical supplies however! I would not throw a poncho, sheet of plastic, or rubber boots on the fire in a vain attempt to signal a distant plane. You will have to use common sense. If the plane cannot land near you, and has to radio for help, you could be there a while longer anyway. With bad weather it might take a rescue party several days to get you. If the pilot is an idiot, or lacks a GPS or LORAN, he might report your location as being 20 miles away from where you actually are.

You may want to find a book named "White Dawn". It chronicles the lives of three men who were lost in their small whaling boat in the arctic back in the 1800's. It is an excellent work of fiction and provides many accurate details of how northern aboriginal peoples survive in their climate. If you are inland you will not have much opportunity to hunt for seals. In some areas of the north, the only thing you will find are lemmings, lichens, and maybe a fox or two. (if there are enough rats to feed them). Near the sea you will be able to hunt seal. That far north and you won't find much snow, it is too arid and cold. On the Ice pack you will have to build your shelter with ice, and heat it with animal fat. If you wind up on the ice pack, with no supplies, there is little I can tell you

here that will save your life. You will have to stay warm long enough to get rescued, which had better be pretty quick.

Exposure - Desert

Since there is nothing in the desert to hold in the heat, it dissipates quickly after the sun goes down. Deserts can drop to near freezing over night. During the day the temperature will soar and fry your brain, dry you out, and kill you. For this reason any movement should only be at night. For shelter you must get out of the sun. If you can, dig a hole to get in and cover it. Do not strip off your clothes. Have you ever wondered why arabic people wear those long, heavy, hot looking clothing on their heads and bodies? It is because moisture evaporation is your worst enemy in the desert. Clothing helps keep in this moisture and slows evaporation. It must be loose enough to allow heat loss. You will need to stay warm at night, refer to the arctic topic above.

Water is the most important thing to consider in the desert, it must be conserved. Long term drinking of urine can make you sick, but if it's all you have you will have to drink it. Succulent plants like cactus also contain water, as do the bodies of snakes, lizards, and other animals. Suck every drop you can from them, but avoid the poison glands in snakes (they are right behind the head in the neck). The only two parts of animals in North America that cannot be eaten are the livers of the polar bear and bearded seal. They contain toxic amounts of Vitamin A.

If you have plastic or a poncho you can collect water at night in the desert. dig a hole (or use support sticks) as wide as the plastic. Make a hole in the plastic at the center. Stretch the plastic over the hole and weight down the edges with rocks. Press down the center of the sheet or tie it to a rock to pull it down. Place a container under the hole. When dew forms on the plastic it will roll down hill through the hole and it into your container. Use your poncho during the day as shade.

Do not drink alcohol, it will increase your urine output and aid in dehydration.

Exposure - Jungle

Here, heat and sunlight are your worst enemies. Insects and water contamination are also major problems. The heat and humidity of the jungle makes for rapid bacteria growth. Any untreated wound will fester within a few hours. In a day or two a cut can become bad enough to cause gangrene. You must protect yourself by turning down sleeves, blousing your pants to keep insects out, and wearing gloves and a hat.

Water must be boiled well to kill parasites. Safe water can be found in water vines. These are very thick vines that hang down from large trees. You know, the ones that Tarzan swings from? Cut one at a 45 degree angle, move up the vine and cut it off about three feet up or sever it to release the suction. Hold your mouth under the vine and the water will flow out. This water is safe to drink without boiling. Try not to let it run along the exposed outside of the vine though, that area will have tiny creepy crawlies.

Jungle streams are usually as deep as they are wide. Diffenbachia (or 'dumb cane') can be crushed and added to water to stun fish.

Chinese Star Apples, Mangoes, bananas, coconuts, and other fruits are safe to eat if you wash them with sterile water first. The seeds of the Star apple are poisonous. Many species of tree frogs in the rainforests are highly toxic. They are recognized by their bright vivid colors. If you are very careful not to touch them, you can use their skin secretions for poisonous blow gun darts.

Blow guns are difficult to make, but I'll tell you how for the hell of it. Take a limb and split it length-wise. scrape the bore of the weapon into both halves. It must be perfect. Allow it to dry and polish the bore halves smooth. The two sides must fit perfectly. (This is harder than it sounds). Bind the two back together with bark or vine strips.

Darts are made from any wood that can be sharpened. To launch the dart a small

tuft of fiber (like cotton) from the stem of a (????) tree branch is balled around the base of the dart.

During the rainy season, grubs can be found in the center of (????) trees. I can't remember their names but I know what they look like.

Build a platform or hammock to get off of the ground when you sleep. Insects will eat you alive if you don't.
Mud can be used to keep mosquitos off.

The jungle is a garden of eden compared to the desert or the arctic. With a little common sense anyone should be able to survive.

I don't know of any poisonous plants that don't tast extremely bitter and nasty. If the leaf tastes mild it is probably OK to eat. When in doubt, try a little piece first and wait a couple of hours. If nothing bad happens try twice as much and wait again. Keep doing this until youve tried enough to have made you sick. If you are still O.K. then it's probably safe to eat. There are exceptions to this rule, most notably among berries. Some berries don't taste too bad but are poisonous.

You should educate yourself before going to a new area Pictures in books never look like the actual plant. Generally, if it crawls, walks, or slithers on it's belly it is safe to eat.

Back to HQ, More Survival -- Arctic, Desert, Jungle Go on to Evasion