

Sword and Spirit

The Journal of Itten Dojo

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— Why Budo? —

Regardless of the times in which you live, or the circumstances of your life, success largely depends on things you can control:

- **Building a foundation of strong relationships in a community of mutual support and achievement.**
- **Forging a disciplined and positive mindset.**
- **Enhancing your physical health and capabilities.**

These are exactly the benefits membership in an authentic dojo provides.

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Preparation, Revisited Self-defense is Still More than Fighting

The following information was first presented exactly five years ago, in the October 2017 issue of this journal. If anything, there are more reasons now to prepare for adversity than there were at that time. In addition to the natural disasters that are always a threat, the potential for war, domestic political unrest, and worldwide supply chain disruptions only seems to be increasing. The time to take appropriate measures is before the bad things happen.

September was emergency preparedness month, and if anything was needed to put an exclamation point on preparedness, the country has certainly gotten that notice with hurricane Ian hitting Florida. Fresh water, food, and fuel were all in critically short supply initially, and are even now just in the process of being restored. While some people had taken significant steps to safeguard their families and consequently were in a good position to help themselves and others, many people affected have been totally at the mercy of circumstances and dependent on outside help. Preparation can be the difference between survival and death.

When I was a young child, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, I spent a lot of time on my grandparents' farm in central Pennsylvania. The farm had been in my mother's family for hundreds of years, on land that had been granted by William Penn himself (pretty sure he didn't ask the natives for their opinion). We still have the original land grant document, although we no longer have the farm. When I think of the farm I'm struck in particular by the degree of self-sufficiency that was routine at the time, especially in comparison to our dependence nowadays on infrastructure over which we as individuals have no control whatsoever.

The farm was primarily a dairy operation, although hogs were also raised, along with extensive crops. There was a vegetable garden with fruit trees beside the farmhouse that was at least the size of the backyard of my home. While some of the garden produce was consumed fresh, most was canned and stored in the basement of the farmhouse—there were multiple shelves in the



basement packed with canned fruit and vegetables. Of all my friends today, I know of only three or four families that know how to can.

Although the farmhouse was served by a well, the original spring house still existed and I remember it being used to chill watermelons. Fresh water would not have been a problem.

The smokehouse that was used in the past to preserve meat was still there, used mostly for storage, but still held a wonderful aroma. More importantly, there were plenty of people around that retained the knowledge of how to butcher a cow or hog and smoke the meat.

There were extensive woods on the property that could be a source of both firewood for fuel and small game for food. A huge, wood-fired, cast iron cook stove and oven still stood in the kitchen/dining area, used mostly for supplemental heat in the winter, but more than capable of handling all cooking and baking tasks as had been the case in the past.

It wasn't practical to drive tractors into town to get gas, so there were large, underground storage tanks kept full of gasoline. Farm equipment was refueled using a pump that was hand-cranked.

The only real vulnerability was the use of electric powered equipment for milking the cows. In the event of a long-term power outage, I don't know how many of the cows could have been milked by hand, but it definitely would have been some number greater than zero...

The bottom line is, a lot of things could have happened that would be devastating for most people today, but would have posed no more than inconvenience for the people on that farm last mid-century—because just normal, day-to-day living and the still available, lower technology appliances provided the means to sustain life indefinitely.

So what can people today do, especially if they live in urban or suburban environments? Quite a lot, actually, without great effort or expense. Maybe not enough to survive the collapse of civilization, but more than enough to mitigate the more likely circumstances of natural disasters, power outages, or transportation disruptions.

As became evident during the recent hurricane, many people seemed to assume it was necessary to purchase

bottled water, as though tap water would not be safe to store. That's certainly not the case. It's best to use storage containers designed for the purpose—usually made of a blue plastic that blocks sunlight—but with some care, tap water can be stored for a year at a time, or longer. The minimum daily need is one gallon per person, but it's much better to store at least three gallons per person per day, for whatever duration you're trying to cover.



If you know how to can you're better off than most people when it comes to food storage. The rest of us will need to rely on freeze-dried options, of which there are many sources. Freeze-dried foods can be stored up to 25 years, and need only hot water to prepare. The important thing to keep in mind is that modern grocery stores maintain a three-day inventory, and it should be a sobering reminder of vulnerability any time there's a forecast of six inches of snow and the milk and bread shelves are stripped bare. If there were to be a disruption of the supply chain, something like a truckers' strike for instance, all the shelves could be stripped bare in a matter of days.

Personally, after living through Three Mile Island, I've made certain that my car never had less than half a tank of gas. With the car I have now, with its much greater gas mileage, I keep the tank no less than three-quarters full.




This gives me a range of well over 300 miles before refueling would be needed. Under normal circumstances, I need only make a three-minute stop at the gas station on the way to the dojo, once a week.

The final, absolutely minimal requirement for preparation is emergency heat in the home, something that would be critical many places in the country during winter months. Our home has a gas fireplace, which is mostly a cosmetic feature and wouldn't provide much heat, but is better than nothing. The problem was the switch was electric, and if the power was out the fireplace could not be lit. For less than \$300, I was able to have the gas company install a remote controlled switch, both components of which are battery powered and do not interfere with the

original switch. In the event of a power failure and with the furnace inoperable, the fireplace now provides a backup.

Do you have cash on hand, in your home? If the power or the internet is out in a region, forget ATMs or even being able to use a credit or debit card. Many people no longer even have physical checks that could be used in an emergency. Some precious metals in small denominations are the ultimate backup.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recommends everyone maintains a minimum three-day supply of essentials. That's a great, but definitely minimal, starting point. I've included FEMA's basic list of recommendations. Detailed resources can be downloaded at: <https://www.ready.gov/>. 

Robert Wolfe, chief instructor of Itten Dojo, began martial arts training in 1975 while attending Bucknell University, where he earned a degree in Japanese Studies. Mr. Wolfe has taught since 1985, and founded Itten Dojo in 1992. His articles on martial arts have been featured in publications such as *The Bujin*, *Budo Shinbun*, the *Journal of Asian Martial Arts*, *Bugeisha*, *Aikido Today Magazine*, *Inside Karate*, *Martial Arts Training*, and *Martial Arts Professional*.





Additional Items to Consider Adding to an Emergency Supply Kit:

- Prescription medications and glasses
- Infant formula and diapers
- Pet food, water and supplies for your pet
- Important family documents such as copies of insurance policies, identification and bank account records in a portable waterproof container
- Cash and change
- Emergency reference material such as a first aid book or information from www.ready.gov
- Sleeping bag or warm blanket for each person. Consider additional bedding if you live in a cold-weather climate.
- Complete change of clothing including a long sleeved shirt, long pants and sturdy shoes. Consider additional clothing if you live in a cold-weather climate.
- Fire Extinguisher
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Feminine supplies, personal hygiene items and hand sanitizer
- Mess kits, Paper cups, plates and disposable utensils, paper towels
- Paper and pencil
- Books, games, puzzles or other activities for children



Ready

Prepare. Plan. Stay Informed.®



Emergency Supply List



FEMA

www.ready.gov



Recommended Items to Include in a Basic Emergency Supply Kit:

- Water and non-perishable food for several days
- Extra cell phone battery or charger
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio that can receive NOAA Weather Radio tone alerts and extra batteries
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- First aid kit
- Whistle to signal for help
- Dust mask, to help filter contaminated air and plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- Non-sparking wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- Can opener (if kit contains canned food)
- Local maps

FEMA's Ready Campaign

educates and empowers Americans to take some simple steps to prepare for and respond to potential emergencies, including those from natural hazards and man-made disasters. Ready asks individuals to do three key things: get an emergency supply kit, make a family emergency plan, and be informed about the different types of emergencies that could occur and appropriate responses. Everyone should have some basic supplies on hand in order to survive several days if an emergency occurs. This list of emergency supply kit items is only a starting point. It is important that individuals review this list and consider the unique needs of their family, including pets, for items to include. Individuals should also consider having at least two emergency supply kits, one full kit at home and smaller portable kits in their workplace, vehicle or other places they spend time.



FEMA

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