

10 ESSENTIAL ITEMS

As listed in the Eleventh Edition of the [Boy Scout Handbook](#), the 10 Essential Items are:

- A **pocket knife** (presumably more than just a [knife](#), a [Swiss Army knife](#) for example) can come in handy in a wide variety of situations. It is useful for tasks as large as building an emergency [shelter](#) or lighting a [campfire](#) with poor [fuel](#), or as small as repairing a damaged [backpack](#).
- A **first aid kit** can be a lifesaver. A basic kit for [first aid](#) might include [adhesive bandages](#), [medical tape](#), sterile [gauze](#), [moleskin](#), [soap](#), [antiseptic](#), a mouth-barrier device for [CPR](#), and scissors.
- **Extra clothing** to match the weather. Multiple layers are superior to a single massive [jacket](#), because [layered clothing](#) is adaptable to a wide range of temperatures.
- **Rain gear** is very important. Being wet from rain may result in [hypothermia](#), a potentially fatal condition.
- A **flashlight** is, of course, important for finding one's way at night.
- **Trail food** is good for maintaining your energy. However, the human body can reportedly survive for weeks without food, so [starving](#) to death should be the least of your worries if you become lost in the wilderness.
- **Water** is probably the most important of the Essentials. [Dehydration](#) may develop into [heat exhaustion](#) and [heatstroke](#). The human body may only survive for a few days without water. Portable [water purifiers](#) and [water stills](#) may be used to obtain potable water from virtually any source. If a water-source is unavailable the use of a [dromedary bag](#) should be considered.
- **Matches and/or a firestarter** may be used to light [fires](#) for heat, or for signalling purposes. (Publicly owned forests in the United States often have lookout stations for forest fires and signal fires.)
- **Sun protection** may include [sunblock](#), [sunglasses](#), [lip balm](#) and a wide-brimmed [hat](#). Used properly, it will prevent [sunburn](#) and possibly [heat exhaustion](#).
- **Trail maps and compass** are probably the most important tools one can carry in case of getting lost, but they won't be of any use to someone who does not know how to use them. In knowledgeable hands, they can be used to determine one's location and the best route to reach another location. (Tip: get a compass with a built in whistle for helping to find lost hikers!)

REI also has a great webpage on the 10 essentials with a video. The concept for 10 Essential Items isn't just for scouts - it's for anyone who spends time in the great outdoors. <http://www.rei.com/learn/expert-advice/ten-essentials.html>