

## Survival 101: Shelter

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### *How to Build a Shelter when Mother Nature Decides to Host a Surprise Party*

Hey there, survivalists! So you're out in the wild, the sun's setting, and you're starting to feel a little chilly or mother nature throws you a curveball, and suddenly you're stuck in the wild without a comfy bed, a roof over your head, or even Wi-Fi! Don't worry, we've all been there. That's why today we're talking about building a survival shelter. It's not as hard as it looks, and it could just save your life.

### Why Do You Need a Shelter?

First things first, why bother with a shelter? Well, unless you enjoy getting soaked, sunburnt, or becoming a midnight snack for curious critters, a shelter is crucial. It protects you from the elements, maintains your body temperature, and gives you a cozy spot to rest your weary, survivalist bones.

### Some Essential Elements of a Good Shelter

Before you channel your inner Bear Grylls, keep in mind these essential elements:



- **Location, Location, Location:** Choose a spot that's flat, dry, preferably out of the wind with some kind of natural over-hang and safe from falling branches or rockslides.
  - Avoid ant hills (trust me on this) and low-lying areas that could flood.
  - Bonus points if it's near a water source but not too close to invite uninvited guests like mosquitoes or, worse, bears.
- **Insulation:** Your shelter should keep you warm. Use natural materials like leaves, grass, and moss to insulate your hideout. Think of it as Mother Nature's thermal blanket.
- **Structure:** A sturdy frame is key. Use strong branches or logs to create the bones of your shelter. You don't want it to collapse in the middle of the night!
- **Weatherproofing:** Ensure your shelter can withstand rain, wind, and snow. Layer branches, leaves, and moss to seal any gaps.
  - Trust me, there's nothing worse than waking up in a puddle.

### Basic Shelter Types and How to Build Them

Now, let's dive into some basic shelter types that even a novice can whip up:

## ***The Lean-To***

This is a classic and simple yet effective shelter. Perfect for an overnight stay or when you're short on time. Here's how to build it:

- Find a long, sturdy branch: This will serve as the ridgepole and is the backbone of your shelter. It should be long enough to span the length of your body.
- Prop it up: Lean one end of the ridgepole against a tree or a sturdy rock. The other end should be resting on the ground.
- Lean on me: Gather smaller branches and lean them against the ridgepole at a 45-degree angle. These will form the walls of your shelter.
- Pack it in: Now for the fun part! Start piling leaves, pine needles, and other debris against the outside of your shelter. The thicker the layer, the better the insulation.
- Make it cozy: Once you've got a good layer of insulation, crawl inside and make yourself comfortable. You can even use some of the debris to make a soft bed.

Voilà! You have a lean-to. Just add a campfire in front, and you're golden.

## ***The A-Frame***

Need a bit more protection? The A-frame's got you covered – literally. This design is a bit more stable than the lean-to and offers better protection from the elements.

- Find two sturdy branches: These will be the main supports of your A-Frame. They should be about the same length.
- Prop them up: Lean one end of each branch against a tree or a sturdy rock, forming an "A" shape.
- Connect the dots: Find a long branch to use as a crossbar and tie it to the two main supports near the top.
  - If you don't have rope (or paracord), you can use long thin branches that are not dry and brittle to tie it together.
- Lean on me (again): Gather smaller branches and lean them against the crossbar, forming the walls of your shelter.
- Pack it in: Just like with the lean-to, pile leaves, pine needles, and other debris against the outside of your shelter for insulation.

Now you've got a solid shelter that can withstand some serious weather.

## ***The Debris Hut***

If you're feeling fancy and have some extra time, try the debris hut. It's super cozy, offers excellent protection against the elements and is great for colder climates.

- Build a frame: Start by building a simple frame out of branches. It should be large enough to accommodate your body.
- Lean on me: Lean branches against both sides of the ridgepole to form a tent-like structure.
- Pile on the debris: Pile leaves, grass, and other debris on top and around the sides for insulation. The thicker the layer, the better the insulation.
- Create an entrance: Leave a small opening at one end of the shelter for an entrance.

- Make it cozy: Once you've got a good layer of insulation, crawl inside and make yourself comfortable. You'll be amazed at how warm and comfortable this shelter can be, even on chilly nights.

## A Few Tips and Tricks:

Before you go into full survivalist mode, here are a few extra tips:

- Keep It Low: A low-profile shelter retains heat better and blends into the environment, keeping you safe from the elements and curious wildlife.
- Ventilation: Don't forget to leave a small opening for ventilation to avoid condensation buildup. You don't want to wake up in a sauna.
- Safety First: Always check your surroundings for hazards like falling branches, flooding risks, and wildlife tracks.

## Bonus Tip:

- Fire it up: If you can safely build a fire, do it! It will keep you warm and dry, and it will also help to signal for help.
- Stay hydrated: Keep a water bottle with you at all times. You can also purify water by boiling it or using water purification tablets.
- Keep your cool: Don't panic. Take a deep breath and focus on the task at hand. You've got this!

Building a survival shelter isn't just about staying alive – it's about embracing your inner adventurer and proving to yourself that you've got what it takes. So next time you find yourself lost in the wilderness, just remember these steps, and you'll be a shelter-building pro in no time.

Seriously though, remember that building a survival shelter is all about using what you have around you. Be creative, be resourceful and most importantly, be safe!