

# Stuck in the Woods - Exercises

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## Can you build a fire and boil an egg in fifteen minutes?

### Materials

- 1 match
- 1 pot / tin can of at least 1 pint (16 oz) capacity
- 1 pint (16 oz) water
- 1 raw egg in shell
- knife
- various dead branches, and other flammable stuff normally found in the woods in your area

### Method

In a fire-safe spot, build a fire using only one match, hard-boil the egg and eat it (salt optional).

### Results:

- Were you able to start the fire with one match?
- How long did it take?
- Did you have trouble boiling the water?
- Did you kill the fire safely afterwards?

### Options:

1. Repeat with a butane lighter.
2. Repeat with a butane lighter that ran out of fuel (i.e. use only the spark)
3. Repeat with a fire steel / metal match
4. Repeat with a plastic Fresnel lens in the sunlight

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## Can you take an accurate bearing with a compass?

### Material

- 1 compass with a rotating bezel
- 1 helper familiar with compasses

### Method

1. Find an open area, preferably a field surrounded by trees.
2. Standing at Point A, take a bearing of an object (Point B) at least several 100 feet away and adjust the bezel accordingly.
3. Without telling your helper where Point B is, have him/her use the compass and walk toward the bearing, keeping his/her head down (so as not to see Point B).

### Results

1. Did they arrive at Point B?
2. If not, was the compass bearing correct?

### Options

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1. Reverse the roles. Have the helper take a bearing to a new object (Point C) and adjust the bezel accordingly. Then you follow the bearing with your head down until you reach Point C. Did you reach it? Why not?

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### **Can you match a map to reality and identify some landmarks?**

#### Material

Map (7.5 degree USGS map preferred) of the selected area.  
Compass with a base plate (orienteering type)

#### Method

1. Lay map on a flat surface and identify your position on the map
2. Rotate map, visually aligning map features to nearby landmarks
3. Optionally, determine North via a compass and align the map North indicator to the compass

#### Results

1. Visually, can you correlate additional landmarks with those on the map? Are they at the right bearing?
  2. Can you take a bearing to a landmark with the compass and verify the bearing with the map?
  3. In reverse, can you take a bearing from the map to a landmark and verify it with a visual sighting with the compass?
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### **Can you signal with a mirror and a whistle?**

#### Material

2 whistles  
2 signal mirrors

#### Method

Two persons required, each one has a mirror and whistle

1. Practice aiming a spot of sunlight at a distant target. for example, a tree at 100 feet
2. Stand at least several 100 feet away from each other
3. One signals the whistler with the mirror
4. Each time the whistler receives a flash, s/he blows the whistle.
5. After a time, reverse the roles

#### Result

Each person learns to flash the mirror and receives feedback

Each person uses the whistle to respond

Both verifies that a signal mirror and a whistle can attract attention at a long distance

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### Can you improvise a shelter quickly from trash bags?

#### Material

2 large plastic trash bags, lawn size or larger is better

30 feet of parachute cord or equivalent

15 feet of duct tape (optional)

Knife

#### Method

Select a grassy or wooded area with trees

Construct a shelter. Some options are:

--- cut open the trash bags and use as a tarp

--- tie the cord between trees and create an A-frame tent

--- tie the cord between trees and create a tube tent

--- any other shelter

Lie down for 10 minutes or, better yet, take a nap

#### Results

If it rains, would it protect you?

If it is windy, would it survive the night?

Is it reasonably comfortable to sleep the night?