

FACING DISASTER

When facing a disaster it is easy to let yourself go, to collapse and be consumed in self-pity. But it is no use giving up or burying your head in the sand and hoping that this is a bad dream that will soon pass. It won't, and with that kind of attitude it will rapidly become much worse. Only positive action can save you.

A healthy, well-nourished person can physically tolerate a great deal, provided that he or she has self-confidence. Even if sick or injured, a determined person can win through and recover from seemingly impossible situations. To do so there are many stresses that must be overcome.

SURVIVAL smssss

The survival situation will put you under pressure, both physical and mental. You will have to overcome some or all of the following stresses:

- Fear and anxiety
- Pain, illness and injury
- Cold and/or heat
- Thirst, hunger and fatigue
- Sleep deprivation
- Boredom

- Loneliness and isolation

Can you cope? You have to.

Self-confidence is a product of good training and sound knowledge. These must be acquired before you have to face up to a survival situation.

Physical fitness plays an important part. The fitter you are the better you will survive. Initially you may have to go without sleep to ensure that you are in a safe location, or make a long march in dangerous conditions. Do not wait until you are forced to go without sleep to see whether you are capable of doing so. Prove it to yourself now by getting into training. Develop the resources to cope with fatigue and loss of sleep.

You will be working hard to procure food and water. They will relieve hunger and thirst. But finding them will tire you and you will need an adequate shelter to enable you to rest and recover from your efforts. Don't overdo it. Rest frequently and assess the situation.

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Pain and fever are warning signals that call attention to an injury or physical condition. They are not in themselves dangerous, however distressing and discomforting. Pain can be controlled and overcome. Its biological function is to protect an injured part, to prevent you using it, but this warning may have to be ignored to avoid the risk of further injury or death.

SURVIVAL SCENARIO _____

How long can the body cope without the essentials?

In general the human body can survive for 3 minutes without air:
3 days without water: 3 weeks without food. There are always exceptions to this and there are examples of people pushing these boundaries and surviving for longer periods. It is amazing what the human body can endure but such a survivor's health can suffer in the long term due to such trauma. For example a person surviving for more than 9 days without water will undoubtedly suffer kidney damage or failure.