

The Pocket Survival Kit

By John D. McCann

Fitting inside an altoids tin, this kit is easy to keep on hand at all times

This is ideal for anyone who wants to have the essential survival gear along each time they head into the field. Everything fits in the Altoids tin. It fulfills all the component groups (see "Make Your Own," -- last slide) except for shelter and protection, but add a survival blanket to your pocket and you'll be covered.



Fire and Light

From left to right:

Steel striker with Mini-Match magnesium fire starter. One side of the starter is magnesium and the other is flint. You scrape shavings off the former and then light them with a spark from the latter.

Waterproof-windproof matches with a **striker**, placed in a mini zip-seal bag, then rolled and taped.

5 Tinder-Quik fire tabs, which light even when wet. They're great for stuffing in all the extra spaces of a survival tin to eliminate rattling.

Candle. I cut a 1/2-inch-diameter emergency candle down to the height of the Altoids tin, so it fits in one corner.

Photon Micro-Light II, a bright LED flashlight.



Water and Food

From left to right:

Water bag. A Reynolds Oven Bag does the trick, cut down to fit in the tin, with a 1-quart marking as a guide for using iodine tablets.

20 Potable Aqua water purification tablets, repackaged in a mini glass vial.

50 feet of braided fishing line wound on a round sewing-machine bobbin.

Fishing tackle kit in a plastic tube. Inside are assorted **hooks**, **swivels**, and **split shot**.

10 feet of 24-gauge snare wire.



Signaling and Navigation

From left to right:

Custom-made signal mirror. Commercial versions are all too thick to fit in this kit. I used a durable, ultrathin piece of plastic called mica (locksmiths slide this between a door and jamb to push the lock back). I glued on a piece of Mylar film, rounded the corners, and made a sighting hole.

20mm AA liquid-filled button compass. It's the best-quality instrument that will fit in the tin.



Tools and Medical Supplies

From left to right:

Commando Wire Saw, a small survival cable saw.

2X-Acto knife blades, without the handle. You should always have a real knife on your person; these blades are for backup.

Small packet of antibiotic ointment.

2 butterfly closures.



Multipurpose

From left to right: Several yards of **nylon string**. **2 magnetized sewing needles** for sewing or making an emergency compass (floated in water on a leaf, the needle will face north). **Small piece of glue**, cut off a glue-gun stick. Small laminated card with **instructions for water purification tablets and fishing knots**. **Fresnel magnifier.** This lens can start a fire by magnifying the sun's rays to a point on your tinder, causing combustion. **Safety pin**, for repairing clothes and straps. **2 feet of aluminum foil** for making a cup, signaling, cooking fish, etc.

