

OUTDOOR SURVIVAL HANDBOOK

SHELTER

More often than not you will be better off building a shelter from scratch. This allows you to tailor the construction precisely to your needs. Start by searching for a good location, a place that will provide all the materials you need as close to hand as possible. For the shelter site itself, the ground should be as flat as you can find — building on gradients is a complication best avoided. The ground you choose should be well drained and not subject to soaking with rain runoff. People without experience often build a roof over an existing natural depression; in most cases such hollows fill with rain. Avoid building your shelter on a major animal run and keep away from any obvious sources of insects, such as stagnant pools. Especially in woodland, beware the overhanging dead branch. This is often overlooked by those camping in tents. A strong breeze may be all that is needed to bring a large limb down on top of you. Finally, if you are likely to be staying in your location for several days, it would be wise to be reasonably close to a reliable source of water.

Before you begin construction make certain that you are building a shelter that will shield you from the prevailing conditions. Most important of all, make a mental note to build the shelter right the first time.

MAKING A SIMPLE SHELTER

There are many different types of shelter, but for speed and efficiency few can equal these simple bivouacs. In a good location they can be built without a knife or any cordage from dead materials lying around. They are small and well insulated to help retain your body-heat, and they will keep out even the worst weather. If well built they are a stronger and cosier refuge than the most modern hike tent. They block out the sound of the noisiest gale, letting you sleep.

Remember to keep the bivouac's size as small as comfort will allow. Check your measure inside the shelter as you build it.

Given a good location, an average person working steadily in bad light can build the solo 'kennel' in about two hours. Two people can build the two-person kennel in half that time — as apart from an extra ridge-pole, the shelter contains the same amount of roofing material.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

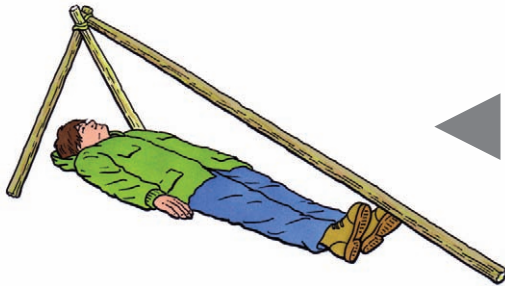
poles, plus one or two short major supports

- *Many slim pieces of dead wood for the walls*
- *Dead leaves, humus or turfs for thatching, plus light brushwood*



ONE-PERSON KENNEL

- 1 Construct a strong tripod framework. Forked supports for the two short legs will save a need for cordage.



- 2 Measure up the height and width of the shelter with your body. It should provide just enough room to turn over with all of your bedding.



- 3 Using the dead branches, wall the sides of the shelter. These rafters should be as close together as possible, and the ends must not protrude more than 4 cm (1½ in) above the ridge-pole.



- 4 Thatch with an arm's depth of leaves or humus. Anchor down with a covering of light brushwood. Don't leave rafters protruding from the top of the shelter or rain will run inside.



TWO-PERSON KENNEL

- 1 Construct a tripod from two long poles and one short pole. Again try to avoid the need for cordage.
- 2 Wall as for the one-person kennel. Close off some of the gap between ridge-poles with cross-battens. Thatch and finish as before.