

Here are some takeaways

I take between 10 and 12 hunting trips a year. I also spend a tremendous amount of time outdoors locally. Because of my line of work and the constant pursuit of my passion, hunting, I learn lessons continuously along the way. Not all of the lessons leave a scar either.



Tips from the Posse

By Mark Rackay

Every trip I take, no matter the duration, and especially those in an area I am not familiar with, presents a number of opportunities to try new skills and equipment. Going to new places also gives you a chance to share ideas with people you meet there. This sharing of knowledge has taught me many new tricks and tips along the way.

I am not a gear junkie but I can fill a warehouse with my outdoor equipment. I test many new items, finding most work a little or not at all. There are, however, those gadgets or ideas that really hit a home run.

Since we previously discussed mistakes, and what went wrong, it seems fitting that I share with you some of the things that went right.

It seems odd things actually go right once in awhile, considering my travel companion, Murphy. Rest easy as none of these items or ideas is particularly expensive.

A couple year's ago I purchased a new backpack. It was a lightweight model, very roomy and comfortable to wear. The manufacturer used the word "waterproof" in the advertisement in the catalog.

Such was not the case. I was in a torrential downpour for a number of hours. I took solace in the fact that my new pack contained warm and dry clothes. Later at camp, when I opened the pack, everything was as wet inside as I was on the outside. Needless to say, I was thrilled and may have said a bad word or two. If a representative from the pack company had been present, I would probably be incarcerated as I write this.

I purchased what is called a pack rain cover. It simply covers the pack and an elastic band built into it, holds it in place. They sell for 20 to 30 bucks and are worth their weight in gold. I used one during a 3-day rain while in New Foundland, and my stuff in the pack stayed dry the entire time. There are a number of manufacturers of them and some packs even come with one.

Another product I used is a locking carabiner, made by Nite Ize, called the Slide Lock. These sell for less than \$5. I clipped a couple on my pack straps in various locations.

They are great for hanging things on that you may need ready access to, such as a binocular case, a hat, gloves and just about anything else. In the past, I would just stuff the items in my pack, and then spend too much time dumping it out later trying to find it. Saves time and aggravation, but are not suitable for climbing.

I also stuck a package of nylon stick-on waterproof repair patches in my backpack. This little package saved my posterior twice last year. Once I tore my rain gear in a place where rain would just pour down my neck. This self-sticking patch fixed the problem immediately, in a matter of seconds.

The second time I used them, I had torn open the side of my Muck boots. They are made of a neoprene material, similar to a wetsuit. The patch held perfectly and kept the water out of my boots, except when it came in over the tops, but I can't blame the repair job for that.

The next little gem I started using is a small screw-top aluminum pill bottle. These sell for a couple bucks at the pharmacy. I put some ibuprofen and acetaminophen tablets, along with a couple Imodium pills (because you never know). It weighs an ounce and hangs on a clip in my pack. The small container is much better than carrying around the regular pill bottles, even the travel sizes. I just refill it when I get back home.

The last item I wanted to share is one that I never needed but felt better knowing it was along. It's called a pocket water filter. There are a number of brands out there but the one I bought is called the Aquamira Frontier Straw. Lifestraw makes one that works well also.

The human body can only last three days without water. It can be an unpleasant experience, to say the least, to be without water for a day. This little filter can put your mind at ease and hopefully, you will never need it. You can safely drink water directly from a puddle with this straw.

One filter will filter 30 gallons of water, removing 99.9 percent of bacteria, cyst and



Carol Rackay shows the pack rain cover that saved the day for the author in New Foundland this past fall. It keeps the contents of your pack dry. (Mark Rackay/Special to the Montrose Daily Press)



These are a few of the items that I used this past year with good success. (Mark Rackay/Special to the Montrose Daily Press)

parasites, and they sell for about ten bucks. Call it a cheap insurance policy that weighs an ounce or two and is about the size of a cigar.

As we head into a new year, and another outdoor season, hopefully, you will get a few takeaways of your own. It's nice to get something good like that on a trip.

Mark Rackay is a columnist for the Montrose Daily Press and an avid hunter who serves as a Director and Public Information Officer for the Montrose County Sheriff's Posse. For information about the Posse call 970-252-4033 (leave a message) or email info@mcspi.org.

Learn to trap at Montrose workshop, Jan. 17

If you've ever wanted to learn the basics of live-trapping or if you want to improve your chances of live-trapping animals, plan to attend a workshop sponsored by Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Jan. 17 in Montrose.

This is an introductory course for participants to learn the basics of successfully using cage traps. Small game and furbearer populations are healthy in western Colorado providing trappers a unique opportunity.

Officers from Colorado Parks and Wildlife will lead the presentation on cage trapping. They'll discuss animal biology, trap location, trap sets, use of lures/baits/attractants, skinning, fleshing and stretching.

The class will be held at the Colorado Parks and Wildlife office in Montrose, 2300 S. Townsend Ave, 6-8 p.m., Jan. 17. The class will be limited to 25 people, and registration is required. To register, call the Montrose Parks and Wildlife office at 970-252-6000.



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It's that time of year again...

... the dreaded New Year's Resolutions! I've decided I would rather be beat with road kill than go through that again. Seriously, I think it is because I was going at it all wrong. How about the word "purpose"? To try to do everything with purpose. Purposeful actions and hopefully, positive results, do not necessarily mean perfection every day. A smile to everyone- not too hard. Getting up way before the crack of dawn to go work out, a little tougher- the "wuss factor" starts to show up! Kind words and kind actions are good things- they just require the brain to fully engage before the mouth opens. See, living with **purpose**... we humans just make things too complicated sometimes!

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