

# THE JUST IN CASE PACK

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## TIPS FROM THE POSSE

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BY MARK RACKAY



**CARRY EXTRA  
AMMUNITION FOR YOUR  
FIREARM. I HAVE SEEN  
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**FOR ME,** hunting season begins the day after the last season of the year closes. I need all this time to get ready and do it over again next year. Between choosing an outfitter, applying for tags, sighting in your rifle or bow, and preparing your gear, there is barely enough time.

Everyone should spend some time getting into shape for the hiking in the mountains. More importantly, we would be wise to spend a little time thinking about what may happen if things don't go as planned. You just never know when Murphy is going to pay you a visit.

Altitude can go from 5400 feet to over 14,000. With that come the weather changes. We can have summer like temperatures in the morning followed by snow and subfreezing temperatures in a matter of hours. This is what the wise hunter will expect to see and prepare for, the unexpected.

When a fast moving cold front comes through, a blinding snow can follow, making it impossible to find your way. What happens if you take a fall and sprain an ankle, or worse, and are no longer able to walk? Having the things necessary for such an emergency in a small pack can not only make things easier, but potentially could save your life.

I have spent many years in search and rescue. Each year, we respond to a stranded, lost or hurt hunter. It never ceases to amaze me to find how unprepared for an emergency most folks are. Many of these searches turn into recoveries, and

most, could have been prevented if the hunter had some survival items along.

Start with a pack that is comfortable. A small fanny type pack, a larger fanny pack with shoulder straps or a full backpack are your best choices. Try them on over heavy clothing and see which is the most comfortable. Spend some time before the trip getting used to wearing a pack for extended periods. Taking a walk around the neighborhood with the pack will benefit you physically, as well as test out the pack for fit and comfort.

When placing items in your pack, try to keep to the essentials. If your pack is too heavy, you may talk yourself out of carrying it. The pack does little good if it is sitting in the cab of the truck when you need it afield. I can go overboard with what I want to bring. Just remember that you are the guy who has to lug it around all day.

#### **HERE ARE A FEW OF THE THINGS THAT I CARRY IN MY PERSONAL PACK:**

**COMPASS AND GPS** - It is most important to take a waypoint for your starting place on the GPS. This way, you always have a Lat/Lon number to head home to.

**SIGNAL MIRROR AND WHISTLE** - these are great for helping searchers locate you in the event of an emergency



## **KNIFE AND LEATHERMAN TOOL**

## **FLASHLIGHT AND EXTRA BATTERIES**

**WATERPROOF MATCHES, LIGHTER, FIRE STARTER** - fire can be used for signaling and warmth

**DRINKING WATER** - some packs come with a hydration bladder built in.

**FOOD** - power bars, trail mix, jerky etc. High energy snacks with protein.

**CELL PHONE** - keep power off to save battery. The battery power will run out quickly searching for service. Carry a portable battery pack to recharge the phone.

**SMALL FIRST AID KIT** - carry only essential items, such as a tourniquet, Israeli Bandage, couple band-aids, etc. keeping weight in mind. Be sure that you have any essential prescription drugs you may require.

## **SOME OTHER ITEMS YOU MAY CONSIDER IF SPACE ALLOWS:**

■ **RAIN PONCHO**

■ **SOLAR BIVY.**

**YOU CAN CRAWL IN ONE OF THESE TO KEEP WARM.**

■ **TOILET PAPER, A MUST**

■ **DUCT TAPE - FOR FIRST AID AND REPAIRS**

■ **PENCIL AND PAPER**

Carry extra ammunition for your firearm. I have seen many cases where a hunter was able to signal for help firing the universal three well-spaced shots, and we were able to respond. Having enough ammunition for this can be a lifesaver.

One other item that you should carry is extra warm clothing. In the mountains, the temperature can drop 30 or more degrees in a matter of minutes. Having some dry clothes along will help in case you get wet.

All of these items can be carried in a pack. I prefer to have a waterproof pack. I once learned the hard way that all packs are not waterproof. I blamed Murphy, but it was my fault for not checking before I used the pack. There are sprays on the market that you can apply to your pack before the trip that provide a temporary waterproofing. It does no good for you if the contents of the pack are a soggy mess when you need them.

All of this just requires a little thought and preparation. A little advance planning will make your hunt more enjoyable and just might save your life. Have a great unt and keep Murphy out of your camp.

*Mark Rackay is a columnist for the Montrose Daily Press and avid hunter who travels across North and South America in search of adventure and serves as a Director for the Montrose County Sheriff's Posse. For information about the Posse call 970-252-4033 (leave a message) or email [info@mcspi.org](mailto:info@mcspi.org).*

