

Survival Rules of 3

I am not one of those people who put a lot of faith in lucky numbers. For example, the number 23 has always been pretty good to me. That number



Tips from the Posse

By Mark Rackay

that three minutes is a really long time. Try holding your breath and see how long you make it. Should you find yourself in a situation

served Michael Jordan of the Chicago Bulls pretty fair as well. Just how good would my lucky 23 be when I am sitting at a Vegas blackjack table?

Recently, an old friend of mine named Ken stopped by. He was talking about my column and suggested I write about the rules of three. I had forgotten about the three's and went back through my endless supply of books and reread about it. Ken was right; knowing the rules of three can be a viable survival tool.

The common theme to survival situations is that people find themselves in a place and at a time they did not expect. I can't imagine anyone taking a trip, expecting to get lost, injured, or stranded by weather. The difference is, the smart person will recognize these dangers are present, and prepare for the "just in case" scenario. That is the difference between surviving a predicament and heading off to the big tax shelter in the sky.

Three seconds without hope

In the immediate chaos of a full blown, three-alarm emergency, most people freeze. The brain tries to draw upon some past experience for a plan of action but, finding none, you become frozen and immobile. From that point, you have three seconds to find hope and move forward.

Walter B. Cannon studied case histories of sudden and unexplained deaths from around the world in 1942. His theory was the brain unleashes stress hormones that can cause fatal heart arrhythmias in individuals that have given up all hope of escape. These people were literally "scared to death."

Harness the energy from fear to push yourself forward into life-saving action. Grab the hope and make a plan for escape. Never give in to despair.

Three minutes without air

I only know of some free divers in the Cayman Islands who can hold their breath for more than three minutes. The rest of us would probably agree

where oxygen is limited, your priority is to find a place you can breathe. Three minutes is all you can survive in icy water. If you plunge through the ice, within three minutes, hypothermia will render you unconscious.

I might add that a person choking on a piece of food will die of suffocation within three minutes unless given the Heimlich maneuver. Learn this life saving technique and also learn how to give it to yourself over the edge of a chair.

Around 8,000 people die each year in the United States from not being able to breathe. These include allergies, asthma, food allergies, choking, and bee stings.

Three hours without shelter

This applies to extreme conditions and not on a pleasant and sunny afternoon. If an unexpected blizzard has set in on you when you are lost, your priority should be to find or build a shelter. Having a safe place to hole up for the night means survival.

Those who continue to walk may find themselves travelling in a circle, like so many lost people do. These are the ones who will not make it. The body suffers from hypothermia at 50 degrees, and even worse when you are wet or the wind is blowing. Protect yourself from the elements.

An average of 1,028 people die in the United States from exposure to cold or heat.

Three days without water

The human body will die after three days without water. You must find clean water, be it a water source shared by plants and animals, collecting rainwater, or melting snow. Avoid any activity that causes perspiration and heavy breathing. Stressful activity will cause your body to lose water quickly and the idea is to conserve what water your body has by working at a steady pace.

Three weeks without food

I get all out of sorts



I don't believe in lucky numbers, but the number three can make you more aware of your survival training. (Mark Rackay/Special to the Montroe Daily Press)

when I miss a meal or two. Starvation seems like a very long and merciless death. Some people can make it past three weeks, but most will not. With plenty of water, you can make it longer but tiredness and weakness will set in. The body needs protein to exist; it's as simple as that. You will want to locate a source of nourishment while you still have the strength to look for it.

Carrying some food with you is always a good idea. For most survival situations, this is usually enough to get you by until you are rescued. The long and drawn out situations will require some work on your part to find food.

Three months without companionship

Many people believe this rule is actually part of the first rule for three seconds without hope. If you are to endure a prolonged survival scenario, most people need to have a sense of purpose and belonging. You must know there is someone out there who is worried and cares about your survival.

Knowing there is a spouse or significant other or a family member waiting for your safe return home can help you continue doing what is demanded for survival when the days turn into weeks and time seems to drag. Never let despair and loneliness consume your thoughts. Stay positive that someone is waiting and needing you back home. Those people who have endured prolonged survival situations have all had strong faith in their perseverance.

Basic survival requires preparation, both in what gear we bring, and in our state of mind. The list of what you bring grows, the farther outback we head, and the longer we plan on staying. You cannot always carry enough food and water so planning and preparation is essential.

The most important thing I tell people is to leave a plan with someone back in town. This person must be responsible, know exactly where you are going, when to expect you back, and who to call when you are overdue. If the world does not know you are missing, rescuers cannot find you. After several days or weeks, a neighbor or some friend may notice you are missing. At that late a date the operation may be more of a recovery, so plan ahead and keep someone here informed of your itinerary.

I wish to again thank Ken for reminding me of the survival rules of three. It is great training for anyone who spends time in the outdoors. In the meantime, I will avoid the blackjack tables until I come up with a new lucky number.

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The ever-indomitable robin

Listen carefully — even from your bed — in the early morning for a sound that is very familiar. The cadence and pitch are similar to a squeaky windshield wiper. But the springtime call of the American robin is as reliable and comforting as nearly any other tradition that rolls around through the year.

This is the species that should be our national bird, some argue, because its range blankets North America. The robin is adaptable to dozens of habitats and microclimates. It has survived in our world over the millennia, even as human dominance has rolled over the landscape in recent centuries. As common as it is, the robin appears as humble a creature as we might find in the natural world; one usually overlooked and disregarded.

Except for very early spring and summer mornings. If they have taken up residence in your neighborhood, they might be singing their call in the wee hours of the morning. They make such a racket, and it's still dark for Pete's sake.

They sing in a high soprano voice, at a range higher than humans are able to reach. It seems that they have only a handful of songs, but have an ability to create a range of notes that emanate from their throat. We would have a hard time matching the melody, rolling an R here, and there. See if you can do it, but maybe in a private part of the house.

The robin is part of a large group of avian dwellers called songbirds (Oscines). Some of them, but not all have a special adaptation in the throat that allows for the quick succession of notes.

We humans have a larynx. It's a "box" made of cartilage. Mucous membranes line the sides of the larynx from which come two pairs of folds that project into the opening of your windpipe (trachea). Muscles contract and relax to set the tension of the folds (vocal cords) and we produce sound. The larynx, sitting at the top of the trachea (you can probably feel the cartilage) works with the mouth and tongue to produce words.

Robins, along with a number of oscines, have a double or bilateral structure for their larynx. This syrinx is a cartilage-based organ (like humans), but the two parts lie within the bronchial tubes, one in each tube directly below the trachea.

The elements of the song function through a delicate coordination of three muscle groups around the syrinx. The vocal folds work in a similar way to humans, in the way that the muscles coordinate to tighten and relax which creates a unique vibration that makes sound.

Remarkably, the bird's brain sends impulses to



Outdoors

By Paul Zaenger

the muscle groups independently. This means that the tones can sing forth at the same time or in a quick succession. If you're still trying to sing a robin's song, see if you can sing two notes at once. It's doable, but extremely rare.

And yet, even in the early morning, this bird conveys simple humility to us in our very elaborate human world. We have time to listen during the quiet of a self-quarantine, as we seek to protect our individual health in the storm of COVID-19.

The virus is a living being of microscopic proportions, but it has brought the human world to its knees. Although we may not fully understand the biology of what's going on, we can certainly see how it could affect our sense of world dominance.

It's easier to look out the window at that brown bird with the warm orange breast which could be hunting worms on the lawn. It's easier to be encouraged by an animal that was one of the first we learned by name; that gave us our first lesson on predation and hunting.

This is a species that brings us no harm, but has lived with you and me with a modesty that causes it to typically escape our notice. It dwells from the valley floor, to Black Canyon's rim, to a mountain's forest. Meek though it seems it furnishes us with great perspective in times of trouble.

So I'm going out on these quiet mornings, usually when skies are clear, to take in the refrain of robins in our neighborhood. It's a remarkable gift to listen to the warbling melodies from an indomitable spirit, each reprise resounding back from the groves of trees and homes. Sheltered in place, I miss the daily symphony at the rim of the canyon.

You should go out in the early morning, too. Lean forward to catch a robin's rhythm that can match that of your heart; that sings the song of creation. Be hushed and renewed so that you can be caught up in music that reverberates a chorus which is larger than ourselves; to be a part of our living world.

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