



All this talk of self-isolation in our homes to put the kibosh on the spread of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) has sent the world into a spin of panic buying.

Toilet paper aisles are like a deserted outback town, locating a packet of pasta is akin to winning the lottery, and you'll likely have to make do with sushi rice for your butter chicken... that is provided you can find the chicken.

It's all a bit dreary really, but let's try and stay positive! In this article we are looking at the things we can learn from campers when it comes to being isolated at home, and even in times of power or gas outages, limited food supply and if water to your home is affected.



Self-isolation is the reality of a pandemic. Image: Unsplash

Campers self-isolate all the time... for fun!

As it turns out, campers deal with the problems mentioned above all the time, for fun! Self-isolation is something many of us seek, just not in the walls of our own houses.

It, therefore, goes without saying that if we had to strip life back to basics in our own homes, anyone with a basic camping kit in their garage is likely to be well prepared to continue with life without significant barriers.

What are some of the items in a basic camping kit that will help during self-isolation?

If we are looking at this from a survival perspective, there are three elements we need to address in the following order:

> Shelter > Water > Food

These are the three things you will need for survival if you were to find yourself stranded in the middle of Woop Woop.

Given that the type of isolation we are referring to here is likely to occur within or near your home, we can assume that you already have a supply of basics that you can access such as cutlery, toiletries, blankets, etc. There are two other camping basics that I'll add in that could be worth keeping in your emergency kit:

> Lighting > Coffee

You can cover off on these things at a relatively low cost, and keep it stored away in your garage for a time of need.



Self-isolation is very similar to camping. Image: Zempire

Shelter

Hopefully, the event hasn't resulted in you losing your home, or if you have then there is likely to be an emergency shelter you can head to.

If your roof is damaged at a time when emergency resources are stretched thin, or you need a dry space to use a portable gas stove outside, then a tarp is possibly one of the most useful things in a camping kit. You can use it as a temporary roof or window repair, outdoor cooking shelter, windbreak, to protect items from the elements or as a ground cover.



A tarp can provide many forms of shelter. Image: Domain

Tarps come in many forms from the basic and affordable poly tarp to the long-lasting and durable canvas tarps.



You could take it a step further and keep a basic tent at hand. This could be handy if you need to shack up on a local football oval or reserve in the event your house is destroyed or inaccessible. In this case, you'll probably want to consider some basic sleeping options too.

You can grab yourself a tent for less than \$50, but an option like [this tent from Oztrail](#) offers sleeping and storage space as well as good ventilation. The benefit of having a tent is that you can turn self-isolation into a camping trip in your backyard with the kids.

As for sleeping, if you need to you can pick up a basic [sleeping mat for under \\$50](#). It won't be the most comfortable thing you've slept on, but is better than nothing when teamed with a [basic sleeping bag rated down to around 5 degrees](#).



A basic tent like this one provides shelter. Image: Campcraft

Water

Water is most important for drinking, but we also use it to wash and clean with. If the mains water supply is cut off then you probably need to buy water, or maybe you have a rainwater tank. If you find yourself in the very worst scenario, not having access to clean drinking water, then you'll need to treat whatever water you can find.

If the water you have access to is relatively clear, but you're still unsure as to whether it is safe for drinking, then you'll likely only need some [purification tabs](#). You can treat large volumes of water with these.



Safe drinking water is an essential. Image: GRAYL

Turbid water, however, will need to be filtered first. Many portable water filters are expensive but can easily filter enough water each day for a family, whereas the more affordable [Lifestraw](#) filter is perfect for individuals.

Check out this [article](#) for more information on making drinking water safe.

Have a think about how you might collect and store water if the mains are cut off. [Jerry cans](#) are bulky to store, but collapsible items like the [Pack Tap](#) from Sea to Summit is an affordable and packable item to keep at hand for emergencies.

You will also need to wash as hygiene is important even in the worst of situations. You can probably still use a sink at home, and a simple [gravity shower](#) should see you through. You'll need to suspend the bucket somewhere then heat the water upon your stove and pour it into the shower bucket.



You will need to keep clean for hygiene purposes. Image: Sea to Summit

Food

Warm and tasty food is going to help any self-isolation situation. There is something comforting about having a warm meal, so it goes without saying that something to heat up food with is pretty important.

You'll need a stove to cook on – the most basic [lunchbox style](#) camp stove uses disposable butane canisters that are cheap as chips, store well and are easy to find (at least they are outside of the times of a pandemic). If you have a BBQ at home, then you can use that to



cook on or you can keep a 2-burner stove at hand with a suitable adapter to attach it to your existing BBQ gas cylinder.

While we are on the topic of gas, there are many safety considerations when using these stoves. If you're not already familiar with these, then check out some gas usage and safety guidelines here.



Have a simple gas cooking solution available.

You can save yourself from having to panic-buy by keeping some essentials at hand. Campers generally take items that don't require refrigeration, have a long shelf life and are easy to prepare so as not to use up too much of your cooking fuel reserves. These include pasta, rice, oats, canned fruit and vegetables as well as long-life milk or milk powder. Products sealed in soft packaging are known as retort pouches and can be stored in the same way as canned food. Many pre-cooked soups, stews and semi-cooked rice are available in this form.

Better yet, albeit a little more expensive, freeze-dried food or dehydrated food is the perfect way to see you through emergency preparedness. This food may not have the best appearance, but it does taste pretty good, offers good nutrition and has a long shelf life. Check out the range of easy to prepare and lightweight food options with long storage life online here.



The type of food you take for camping can be used now too.

Light

You'll want to consider something to light the way should the electricity be cut from your house. It's more than likely you have a torch or two of some form lying around, but if you keep a lantern in your emergency kit then you'll know where it is at a time of need. Coleman has a Battery Lock feature in some of their lanterns which completely disengages the integrated battery from the lantern lengthening the power retention in the battery whilst in storage. There are solar lanterns that are ideal for emergencies and some basic battery-powered lanterns. Just make sure you keep a pack of fresh batteries in with your kit, not stored in the lantern.



Same as for camping, a torch or lantern will be essential. Image: Coleman Australia

Coffee (or hot chocolate)

Alright, so coffee isn't technically a survival item, but apparently, people do get by without it! I know I wouldn't be a pleasant person to be couped up with if I didn't have at least one coffee per day though.

Plus, it is comforting to have hot drinks at hand. If coffee isn't your thing then maybe hot chocolate or tea is a better option.

If you need good (emphasis on the word 'good' here) coffee before tackling anything the day throws at you, then grab yourself a portable coffee maker so you can get your coffee fix no matter what the situation.

The Aeropress is a versatile coffee maker that produces a long black style from ground beans



that sits between a french press and espresso. The Aeropress coffee maker requires little milk for a full cup, whereas the Wacaco machines produce a true espresso shot from either ground or pod coffee, but you'll need to warm the milk up also.



Have a coffee maker on hand to give you that much-needed comfort. Image: Wacaco

Consider storing some basic essentials

Toilet paper, soap, hand sanitiser, toothpaste and toothbrush as well as medication and a first aid kit can all be stored away in a tub with the items mentioned above. How much of this gear you want to keep in case of emergency is up to you, but whatever you do store will be appreciated in a time of need.

A camping kit will consist of a whole lot more gear than what is mentioned here as there is no ready access to existing belongings in a house, but these are the things that any non-camper can affordably stow away in the garage.



Basic hygiene and safety essentials are important too.

If you are lucky enough to have friends or neighbours who are avid campers, it's likely that they have more than one of everything and can lend you a few items to help you keep comfortable during times of major disaster or pandemic.

The items here should see you through the short term, but if you are creeping into more than a few weeks of living in isolation then your batteries are probably going to go flat, your gas will run out and your food supplies will dry up... in which case you'll need a plan B. Hopefully, our government would have put something in place by then.

What are your tips for self-isolation survival?