



As the weather warms up, the gear gurus, passionate campers, and outdoor enthusiasts around the country are devoting time to maintaining their camping gear and sorting the tedious tackle – so that life away from home runs smoothly.

Even the best quality equipment is susceptible to damage. We have no control over the force that can be bestowed upon us by Mother Nature – nor excited children, come to mention it!

In this blog, we address what comes before the packing process – *unpacking* the considerations around gear preparation, maintenance, and the best bits to keep in the repair kit!



In this blog, we address what comes before the packing process. Image: Oztent

Your Camp Kitchen

Most of us know how frustrating it is when you can't find the can opener, or you run out of rubbish bags (and you're in the middle of nowhere)!

Regardless of how you camp – trailer- or vehicle-based – an efficient kitchen setup is worth the effort of pulling everything out and putting it back where it should be. Create a list of what's missing, what's running low, (e.g., dishwashing detergent or fire lighters), and anything that's needs replacing.

Check that all the bowls, plates, knives, and forks you need aren't missing or broken either.



Do a stocktake of everything in your camp kitchen to sort out what's missing. Image: Coleman

Your Electrical System

Usually, over time, one accessory is added on the top of the previous, creating a bird's nest of wires and fuses! Spend time tidying up, labelling, and checking over wiring so that roadside problems are both less likely and easier to diagnose. This can also reduce the risk of an electrical fire, which can quickly become an unstoppable nightmare.

Running accessory power to a fuse block instead of keeping multiple fuses connected directly to the battery not only looks professional, but makes replacing a blown fuse easier. It also means battery terminals are less likely to come loose, thus preventing charging issues or electrical gremlins.

Your Spare Parts

In that critical moment, will you remember where the fuel tank repair putty is? Create a list of all the spare parts that you carry and where they are stashed in your vehicle, so you can easily dig them out in times of need.

Fan belts, radiator hoses, a spare fuel cap, fuses, tyre plugs, electrical wire, and tank repair putties can be stashed behind back seats, in side pockets, or in the rear drawers. Even in the space for the jack!

Having an up-to-date list will save you from pulling half the car apart, purely to search for the one item that will get you back on the road.



Spend time tidying up, labelling, and checking over wiring, so roadside problems are less likely. Image: Hardkorrr

Modifications to Your Setup

Not a Ute conversion or anything too crazy, but consider little ideas to make your camp setup tailored to your needs.

Maybe it's mounting that LED light on the back of the 4WD for your kitchen, or installing tie-down points for the fridge in your Ute or wagon.

Maybe it's making a fast, overnight awning on the camper trailer using off-the-shelf side walls for 4WD awnings, modifying the stone guard, creating under-bed storage, or a custom mount for recovery boards.

Topping Up

Charge the batteries for the camper, torches, and camera gear, so they're stored at maximum capacity. Fill up your gas bottles if they're low, and ensure tyre pressures are topped up too – especially if the trailer is going to be sitting for a while. Check the expiry of the fire extinguisher, and that it's full if in date.

Don't forget about the water tanks, too! It's recommended to keep them full to the brim to prevent mould from growing on the top of the tanks. Then, dump and replace the water before heading off, to enjoy pleasant-tasting water away from home.



Over-inflate the trailer tyres if it's being stored longterm, to prevent flat spots. Image: Adam and Lara

Change Vehicle Fluids

We're talking the types that can get missed during a minor service. Filters and engine oil replacement are usually changed during a service, but what about the power steering fluid, brake and clutch fluid, and the diff oils needed to lubricate other engine parts? These are usually time consuming to do, but not a technical job.

After a quick search on YouTube for a 'how-to', you'll be amazed at the money you can save if your vehicle no longer requires log book servicing. Check the water levels in serviceable lead acid batteries, and pump new grease into the trailer hitch and suspension.

Clean Thoroughly

Keeping a coat of polish on your vehicle's paintwork prevents staining and makes the next wash so much easier. If it's been a while since you gave your 4WD or trailer a good wash, it may need a cut and polish. Then, if you wash it regularly with a quality 'wash and wax', it's amazing how easy things like sap stains and dead bugs clean right off.

Give the inside surfaces a good wipe too, Armour-All the rubber dust seals, and don't forget about the solar panels, camp fridge, chairs, and sleeping bags.



When water beads, this indicates that there is a protective coating. Image: Adam and Lara

Your First-Aid Kit

It's a good idea to pull everything out, restock what's running low or missing, and check expiry dates. How old is your guidebook? Does it detail the most up-to-date and safe techniques? A thorough check now could avoid a disaster in the future.

Upgrade Old Equipment

With click and collect, online ordering, or dropping instore (if a quality camp store like Snowys is local!), now is the perfect time to upgrade your old, worn-out gear. Get inspired, pull out the tools, and get your gear up to scratch ahead of your next adventure to guarantee a seamless and far more relaxing getaway – even with a moment's notice!



Ensure nothing is missing from or expired in your First Aid kit – it could save a life. Image: Exped

Repairs

So – when your camping gear breaks, are you prepared for it? It's often not until we need to make a repair that we realise the tools and materials we need are still sitting on the workbench back at home!

WD40, sealer and adhesive, accessory cord, a sewing kit, cable ties, and fabric patches are just a few of the things you should keep on hand in case of breakage. After surveying the passionate campers here at Snowys, we compiled a list of the most common and useful items to make gear repairs on the go.

1. Tent Repair Kit

Tents, awnings, and tarps can take a real battering, particularly if you're caught out in bad weather. Prepare yourself for holes and tears with outdoor gear repair glue and fabric patches. Most tent repair kits come equipped with these things as well as temporary pole repair sleeves and a replacement shock cord.



Tents, awnings, and tarps can take a real battering, particularly if you're caught out in bad weather. Image: Oztent

2. Sewing Kit

Useful for tents, a sewing kit will also come in handy for clothing tears. Most kits will come with a standard needle and thread, so make sure to include needles and thread for heavyweight repairs as well.



3. Multi-Purpose Lubricant

Multi-purpose lubricant has a myriad of uses, from stiff camp table legs to dispersing water from your vehicle's distributor cap. CRC or WD-40 has many other uses too.



Be sure to include needles and thread for heavyweight repairs as well. Image: Oztent

4. Toilet Paper

Hands up if you've ever forgotten toilet paper on your camping trip?! More a handy thing to have than a repair item, toilet paper can be used as a tissue alternative, cleaning cloth, and fire starter.

5. A Multi-Tool

Cut, slice, trim, crush, file, screw... a trusty multi-tool is like a having a whole toolbox with you, without the bulk and weight! You shouldn't be without one on any camping trip.



A trusty multi-tool is like a having a whole toolbox with you, without the bulk! Image: Leatherman

6. Accessory Cord

Hoochie cord, parachute cord, climbing accessory cord – whatever you choose, look for something with a weight rating. Use it to string up emergency shelters, repair backpacks, replace broken tent loops, suspend a lantern, or even as a skipping rope. Keep between 30m and 50m in your repair kit.

7. Duct Tape and Cable Ties

These two items roll straight off the tongue of every Snowys staff member when asked what they keep in their maintenance and repair kit! We're yet to find something that these two items can't patch up, at least enough to see us through our trips. If you only have room to take two items, make it these!



An accessory cord can be used to string up emergency shelters, and more.

Tent Repairs

Some tents can be complicated. A few considerations after purchasing a new tent are:

- Practice setting up your new tent before your trip away. That way, you can be sure to have



all the pieces you need. It never hurts to double-check that nothing is missing – especially pegs! We stand by every tent we sell – but if something does go astray, we're here to help. Check to ensure you have all the parts you need by setting up the tent as you would at the campsite. Are there poles or pegs missing?

- Understand the purpose of your tent (we can help with this one). Tents are designed for varying conditions, environments, and types of people. Most tents come with a warranty, however these are always limited to manufacturing defects.
- Unfortunately, no warranty covers damage caused by weather. Make use of every guy rope and peg point to ensure your tent is as secure and stable as possible. Consider adding a groundsheet for extra protection to your tent floor, plus it will help look after the vegetation underneath.
- Consider the environment you are travelling to and what additional gear you might require. For example, are you going to the beach? You might need sand pegs!
- Cleaning your tent, drying it out, and packing it away snug is the perfect way to prepare for your next trip. Ensure every element of your tent (material, poles, pegs, etc.) are clean and dry before storing them, to avoid issues like mould and rust.
- They may all seem similar, but every tent has its differences and quirks – so you may stumble across a few surprises. Take the time to learn about your new tent, even if that's simply reading the instructions on your first crack.
- HOT TIP: Most poles can still be used, even if the elastic cord breaks.



Practice setting up your new tent before your trip away, so you can be sure to have all the pieces you need. Image: Oztent

What's your recommendation for handy items to include in your outdoor gear repair kit?