

The original file for these low-cost equipment/ideas/fixes for Scouting and camping in general was originally found on a F-Net Scouting board and was reposted on Fidonet on Nov 11/92 by Steve Simmons. The file evidently originated with BSA Troop 886 in the USA.

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Channel lock pliers make good pot holders.

Make an oven by lining a moving box with aluminum foil and pushing coat hangers through both sides about half way up the box to form your grill. Put coals in a pan and put the pan on three stones on the bottom of the box. Close the doors (lid) and bake away.

Canning rings can be use to cook your eggs in for egg sandwiches. (Works well for English Muffins or Hamburger buns).

Nylon rope can be used as shoe laces.

Use a large zip lock plastic bag, filled with air, as a pillow.

Plastic butter tubs make good storage containers for your camp kitchen. (Not a good idea to use in a backpack).

A plastic bottle makes a good latrine for cold weather camping. (You don't have to 'go' very far from your sleeping bag). Keep it just out side the tent flap.

An old closed cell foam exercise pad will make a passable sleeping pad.

Plastic bottles can be used for canteens. Make sure the lid does not leak before using in a backpack.

The pins which hold the backpack and shoulder straps to the frame can be replaced with a small piece of coat hanger threaded through the hole and twisted around itself.

Twist ties can be used to hold up another tarp from your dining fly to form a wind screen.

A small automotive water hose clamp can be used as a stop for your dining fly's upright poles.

Drill a hole in the bottom of nested poles and put a screw in to stop inner poles from sliding out.

Short lengths of coat hanger or wire can be threaded through the holes and springs of the summer camp cots to replace the missing springs.

Carry several pieces of lumber cut into 2 inch squares to summer camp and use these to level platform, tent and cot.

If for health reasons you must sleep on a cot in cold weather insulate yourself from the cold air under the cot with several layers of newspaper.

Old shower curtains make great ground clothes.

Make a double boiler for melting paraffin from a 1 lb. coffee can and a 2 lb. coffee can. Bend a coat hanger so it will support the 1 lb. coffee can inside the 2 lb. can. Pour some water in the 2 lb. can and put the paraffin in the 1 lb. can.

Waterproof matches by dipping in melted paraffin.

Make fire starters by filling paper condiment cups with saw dust and pouring paraffin into the cup.

Put matches in corrugated cardboard strips (about every other hole) and dip into paraffin for fire starters. Cut off what you need to start a fire.

If your hand warmer came without a bag or the bag has been lost, replace the bag with a sock.

A length of chain and a piece of coat hanger bent into an S-shape will allow you to hang your lantern from a tree limb.

Use a cookie tin as a dutch oven.

Keep batteries in an appropriate size prescription bottle to insure that they cannot run themselves down by accident.

Prescription bottles make good match safes.

Prescription bottles or 35mm film containers make good storage places for small items.

Grills from old ovens can be used for fire grills, refrigerator shelves cannot be used as they will release toxic gas when heated.

A Frisbee will add support to paper plates when the plate is placed inside the Frisbee.

Make a camp washing machine from a five gallon bucket and a toilet plunger.

Placing a plastic garbage bag over logs in a triangle will create a wash basin.

Making a slit in a trash bag large enough to let your head through will make an emergency poncho.

Laundry lint makes good tinder.

Cutting slivers off scrap lumber and heating in the oven to dry out the wood will produce some very dry tinder. Remember to store in plastic bags for your next trip. Save candle stubs for fire starters or to use as paraffin to make other fire starters.

Insulate your backpacking stove from the ground in cold weather with a 6" X 6" piece of plywood.

Cover the ice in a picnic cooler with foil to help it last longer. Keep the water in your canteen cooler by wrapping the canteen in foil.

Use foil ring dividers for frying eggs. Put rings in the greased pan and drop eggs into each ring.

Find it hard to put patches on straight ? Tape them in place first with two-sided tape. When you are half-way done sewing, remove the tape.

Save a handbook that's getting battered looking by putting on a transparent contact paper cover.

Run candle stubs along the edge of a saw to help it glide better.

When it comes time to pack up at the end of a camp, a wet toothbrush, face cloth and bar of soap wrapped in foil won't dampen the other things in your kit.

To prevent night accidents in camp, use phosphorescent paint to mark the edges of latrines, the top of corner pegs of tents, etc.

Before starting to sew a tough material like denim or canvas, stick the needle into a bar of soap. The coating will help the needle slide more easily through the fabric.

To make sure you don't sew a pocket together while sewing a badge to the front, slip a jar lid, preferably plastic, into the pocket, then fearlessly sew away.

To help shed burrs easily, rub the laces of your hiking boots with paraffin before hitting the trail.

Keep a dry bar of soap in your sleeping bag to combat musty odors which develop during damp-season camping.

Waxed milk cartons are an excellent source of emergency kindling. Cut cartons into slivers, wrap a bundle of them in plastic and carry them along in your pack.

If a Scout has to take medicine, give him a break by letting him suck on an ice cube to numb his tongue before swallowing the vile stuff.

Ice cubes are handy when you have to remove a splinter from a hand or foot. Use the ice to numb the area around the splinter before operating.

Make your own insect-repelling candle from an ordinary thick candle. Drill a 1" deep hole near the wick, fill the whole with citronella and cover it with melted wax.

When handling evergreens or pine cones, they can remove the sticky sap from their hands easily if they use baking soda instead of soap to wash.

Water proof matches by dipping them in nail polish.

To prevent batteries from wearing down if a flashlight is accidentally nudged on while you're traveling, put the flashlight batteries in backwards.

Kitchen foil can add extra warmth to your boots. Trace each foot on a piece of foil and add a 5 cm border. Place the foil inside your boots, shiny side up so you benefit from radiant heat.

The little plastic tags from bread and bun packages are great for pinning up wet bathing suits and towels at camp, and they take up a lot less packing space than clothespins.

To protect your feet from blisters, smear soap on the inside of your inner sock at the heel and underneath the toes. Carry along a bar of soap and, when you feel your feet become tender, give it a try.

Wear nylon footies next to your feet to help prevent blisters.

To keep mosquitoes away rub the inside of an orange peel on face, arms and legs.

Waxed-paper milk cartons have several lives left in them after the milk is gone:

- make a drinking cup by cutting off the carton about three inches from the bottom.
- make a water scoop by cutting off the top.
- cut a container into slivers, wrap them in plastic and put them in your pocket for emergency kindling on a camping or hiking trip.
- make a leak-proof mini-garbage can by opening up the top of the container and putting in your scraps.

Discarded roll on deodorant bottles make an excellent insect repellent applicator because it enables you to keep 'bug dope' off your hands and out of your eyes. Snap off the plastic top or snap out the ball, rinse out the bottle and refill with your favorite liquid repellent.

Make handy fire-starters by filling egg carton cups with lint from the dryer and pouring melted paraffin over the lint. Break the cup off to start each fire.

Keep your toilet roll dry by packing it in a coffee tins with a snap-on lid.

Remember that mosquitoes and biting flies seem to like dark colored clothing and the perfumed scents of many grooming products (soaps, shampoos, colognes, etc.) Dress so that you won't attract the biters, and try using unscented grooming aids.

Certain fibers can be damaged by insect repellents. Don't apply repellents to spandex (from which bathing suits are made), rayon, or Dynel fabrics. Tent fabrics, plastic and painted surfaces also can be damaged by insect repellents.

An insect repellent will not keep bees, wasps, or hornets from stinging you. Your wisest move is one away from stinging pests.

Try using a 35mm film cannister when collecting insect specimens. A drop of alcohol makes the canister a fine killing jar. Label the cannister with tape and keep the specimen in it.

It is easier to cut plastic containers if you soak them in very hot water immediately before cutting them.

Wrap fishing gear in foil to keep line from tangling and hooks from rusting. By lining the compartments of a tackle box with foil, you can prevent rust damage to plugs and other equipment.

Wrap a wet washcloth in a foil package and put it into your pack. You'll have a handy 'wet-wipe' for cleaning hands and face after a satisfying camp meal.

Foil provides good packaging material for a campers personal toilet articles.

Waterproof matches by dipping them in shellac.

To remove musty smell from canteen, put three teaspoons of baking soda into the canteen with a bit of water. Swish it around and let sit for an hour, then rinse out the canteen.

An empty plastic soda bottle, cut off to a convenient height, will work as a camp bowl. You may want to sandpaper the cut to smooth the edge.

Make a survival fishing kit out of an empty 35mm film cannister. Wrap fishing line around a small empty thread spool. Tie the end to a fishhook, and place in the cannister. When ready to use, take the spool of line out. Lay the line across the opening of the cannister and snap the lid back on for use as a bobber.

Make a fish scaler by nailing metal bottle caps to a wood block. Scrape against side of fish against direction of scales.

Make a flag stand using a 2 pound coffee can filled with cement. To make hold, wrap flag pole in wax paper.

To conserve rope, mark each length of rope with a distinctive color and make a rule that the rope is never cut.

A rope tied to a bleach bottle with an inch of water in it will make an effective water rescue throw line.

Save inner cardboard tubes from kitchen and toilet rolls, stuff with waste paper and use as fire-lighters.

Cut a rubber glove, when discarded, into thin strips to create varied rubber bands.

Did you know that the egg whites left in empty egg shells makes good glue ? Use it for scrapbooks, etc.

When using a bucket for a messy job, line it with a plastic bag which can be thrown away afterwards.

Do the handles get hot on those old cooking pots you take camping ? Buy plastic coated fuse wire and make a neat job of winding it all along the handle, tuck the ends in.

A large sheet of plastic, carried on long trips, is useful in many ways - from ground sheet to an impromptu tent. Similarly, always carry a folded plastic bag for taking home interesting finds, for carrying water in emergencies, etc.

Give your boys a head start on spring. Cut off large plastic bleach or detergent bottles, fill the base with soil and use it as a starter tray for seedlings.

Small seedling trays or pots can be fashioned from aluminum foil.

Slit a piece of old garden hose lengthwise to use as a sheath for your saw or axe, use twist ties to hold it on the saw blade or axe.

Make mini-fuzz sticks from wooden kitchen matches. Leave the heads on to strike the match. (A very sharp knife is a must for this.)

Save your wooden kitchen matches after you use them, they can be used as tinder for your next fire.

Carry some sanitary napkins in your first aid kit. They are inexpensive, sterile and very absorbent. Use them as compresses to stop bleeding.

Pants legs from old jeans can be made into stuff sacks by sewing up one end.

A 25-gallon oil drum cut in half (watch for sharp edges) and placed on cinder blocks will make a good fire container when you cannot have fires on the ground or in high winds. A wire mesh can be placed over the top to allow cooking or contain sparks.

Soak charcoal briquettes in paraffin to make fire starters.

A metal trash can may be used as a water heater by placing it on cinder blocks over a fire. Install a metal faucet near the bottom of the can to make it easier to draw off the water.

A pop top liquid soap container can be used to store vegetable oil. (Be sure to make the contents of the container on the outside.)

When traveling you can heat frozen T.V. dinners on the manifold of your car.

Deepen a shallow pan with heavy duty aluminum foil.

Make fire starter from paper condiment cups filled with saw dust and melted paraffin.

Waterproof your own matches by dipping them in melted paraffin.

Use candle stubs as fire starters.

Glue your whetstone to a wood base to hold onto instead of the stone itself. This will help to protect your fingers when sharpening your knife.

Use a 9-volt transistor radio battery and fine steel wool to start a fire by laying the steel wool across the battery terminals. (If carrying a battery, make sure the terminals are not crossed by keys, coins, etc. in your pocket by putting it in a large empty medicine bottle.)

Put matches in corrugated cardboard strips (about every other hole) and dip into paraffin for fire starters. Cut off what you need to start a fire.

Add a cap full of carburetor cleaner to the tank of your white gas stove every once in a while when you fill it. This will help reduce the gum deposits and help keep the generator clean.

One of the 2 1/2 gallon compressed air insect sprayers can be used as a shower, it is not wise to use one that has been used with insecticide.

Old worn out nylon tents can be recycled as stuff bags, tent bags, bear bags, etc., with a seam across the bottom and up the side to form a bag. If you want a draw string just sew the top over on itself and thread a thin nylon rope through the hole. Use a coat hanger to do the threading.

If you have stored your white gas stove with the fuel in it for a long period of time, empty and refill the tank, water and gum deposits will effect the efficiency of the stove.

A couple of drops of vegetable oil can revive the leather or rubber gasket in your lantern or stove long enough for you to finish the trip. Replace the plunger unit as soon as possible as there is a limit to the number of times this trick will work.

Use zip-lock bags for mixing foods, be sure it is closed tight and the top is held shut before shaking or kneading.

Recycle your torn dining tarps as ground cloths or make stuff sacks out of them.

Remember to use seam sealer on any seam to waterproof the sack.

Use ski bags to hold your dining tarp, poles, pegs and ropes together. They are relatively inexpensive at the end of ski season.

Aluminum foil can be shaped into bowls, cups, plates, etc. in an emergency or for ease of cleaning. Remember to recycle the used utensils.

Duct tape can be used to repair most everything on a trip. Use it to patch tents, mend poles, hold up schedules, patch torn shoes, hold poles for mosquito nets to cots, etc.

Make a box for your binder's twine. String the twine through a hold in the top of the box. This will keep you from having multiple ends and tangling. Mark the box in inches so twine can be measure to reduce waste.

Mark your dining tarps dimensions on the edge so you know which tarp is which without having to unfold them.

If you want to make some tin can stoves, pans, pots, etc., a good source of the large tin cans are restaurants, cafeterias, and catering services.

When making your own equipment it is an idea to prototype the design in cardboard or paper to get an idea of the size you want. When sizing, remember that smaller boys will also have to move and use the equipment. Keep it as small and light as possible.

Melt snow in a black trash bag by filling the bag with snow and laying the bag in direct sun. (Water can be warmed up by the same method.)