

# How to build a campfire

The easiest way to build a fire for your next summer camping trip or backyard hangout.

Building a fire can seem like an intimidating task, but it doesn't have to be. Follow these steps to build a safe and successful campfire.

Before you begin, it is crucial to make sure you have all the materials you will need.



## What you will need

- *Tinder:* This is what will be used to start the fire initially. It can be any material that burns quickly and easily and is dry, such as paper, cardboard, cotton, small twigs, leaves, or tree bark. You can also buy a commercial fire starter from a store or campsite and use that to help get the rest of your materials to light.
- *Kindling:* The materials chosen as tinder will be used to help the kindling materials catch fire. Medium-size twigs and tree branches work well for this. Once the fire starts to get going, larger pieces of kindling can be added.

- *Firewood:* These are larger pieces of wood or logs that you can usually buy in bundles from a store or at a campsite.
- *Fire source:* You will need a lighter or matches to light your tinder.
- *A safe site for the fire:* This should be a dry spot free of grass or other vegetation. Ideally, there should be a firepit surrounded by either a metal ring or a circle of rocks.

The most important thing is that all your materials are dry. The fire will be much more difficult to get going if anything you are trying to burn is wet. If your site is wet, a commercial fire starter might be the only way to get the fire to start.

Once you have all your materials, you can begin building your fire.

## Building your fire

1. Make a pile of your tinder in the center of your firepit. Make sure not to use all of it in case it fails to light on your first attempt and you need more.
2. Build a “teepee” shape out of your kindling over the top of your kindling pile.
3. Use your lighter or a match to light the tinder pile in several places. Kneel down and gently blow on the base of the flames to make them spread throughout the pile. Do not blow too hard or you may blow the fire out.
4. Wait for the kindling to catch the flames. Continue to gently blow to spread the fire throughout.
5. Once you can see that the initial pieces of kindling are burning, you can begin to add larger pieces of kindling. Continue to add them in a “teepee” shape and allow them to catch the flames, which at this point should be getting larger.
6. You should now have some sizable flames developing. You are now ready to add your firewood. There are several options for doing this, but the simplest method is to continue with the “teepee” shape we have been using. Choose three or four pieces of firewood around the same size and lean them against each other over the fire in the “teepee” shape, taking care to make sure they are steady before releasing them.
7. As the fire burns and eventually consumes them, lean more pieces of firewood against the burning logs to keep the fire going. Place the new pieces in areas where the flames are beginning to die out, but also try to keep the “teepee” structure intact the best that you can. Make sure any burning materials remain within the boundaries of the fire pit.

## Putting out your fire

Once you have finished your campfire activities, you need to safely put your fire out. Stop adding any more firewood at this point. **Do not simply douse the fire with water.** You need to allow the fire time to die down; around 20 minutes.

When the flames have gone out and only glowing embers remain, you can slowly pour water over the fire site. Stir the embers and make sure to extinguish any that are still glowing. Feel near the embers with your hand; once it feels cool, it is safe to leave the fire area.

## Congratulations, you have now built a successful campfire

If you have carefully followed the steps outlined above, you will see that building a campfire is not as difficult as it seems. Once you grow more confident with the process, you can look into other proven methods of laying your firewood, such as the log cabin, the lean-to, or the star.