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# The Hatchet Survival Guide

## *Chapters 5 & 6*

**Recommendations: For students in Grades 6 to 9. Outdoor activities. Adult supervision recommended for working with tools and required for safe food and water consumption.**

**Purpose**: Accompany reading a novel with learning some real survival skills

**Materials:**

- The Hatchet by Gary Paulsen
  - Free online pdf *(contains minor typos)* https://scotland.k12.mo.us/view/637.pdf
  - Audio: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UIk04bruadE
- Activity Materials will be included with instructions for the specific activities below

**Chapters Summaries**: Brian, still dazed, awakens to the most pressing needs of survival: water, food, and shelter. The process of securing each of these has unique barriers to overcome.

**Survival Skill 5** – Gathering Safe Drinking Water

*"He was unbelievably, viciously thirsty. His mouth was dry and tasted foul and sticky. His lips were cracked and felt as if they were bleeding and if he did not drink some water soon he felt that he would wither up and die. Lots of water. All the water he could find."*

*"But he did not know if he could drink it. Nobody had ever told him if you could or could not drink lakes."*

Although Brian drinks freely from the lake without ill affect, one should avoid drinking unfamiliar, untreated water as it contains parasites, bacteria, viruses, and protozoa. All sources of water in nature should be purified before deemed safe for human consumption. In Brian's situation he needed to drink water or risk extreme dehydration leading to heat stroke.

- Boiled
  - Bringing water to a rolling boil rids it of all viruses and bacteria, making it completely safe to drink.
- Filtered
  - Bringing a chemical *(iodine, pristine, aquatabs)* or physical filter *(handpump, gravity bag etc.)* on all outdoor excursions will aid in gathering clean water.
- Solar Collection

- Taking advantage of the water cycle, capture evaporated water and collect it for your own clean drinking water

**Make Your Own Solar Still**

**Purpose**: Gather water that is safe to drink

**Materials**:

- Shovel or another digging tool
- Large piece of clear plastic *(cutting open an empty milk bag or used large ziplock will work, a plastic grocery bag does not do as well)*
- Cup, Bowl, or Tupperware container
- Large open, sunny area where you have permission to dig
- A way to mark the area so no one disturbs it

**How It Works:**

**Step 1:** Dig a hole slightly smaller than your piece of plastic. A standard solar still will work well with a hole that is approximately 1ft wide by 1ft deep.

If you want to make a science experiment out of the activity, dig the same size hole in three different types of soil OR dig three different sized holes in the same soil. Collect and analyze data to determine which size of hole or type of soil is best for gathering water

**Step 2:** Place your tupperware container in the centre, at the bottom of the hole. Then, stretch the piece of plastic over the hole and seal the edges with dirt. Place a pebble in the centre of the plastic to make a centre point lower than the edges of the hole without pulling the plastic out from the dirt.

**Step 3:** Mark the area so that it won't be disturbed. Leave untouched for an entire day, ensuring that it gets a lot of time in the sun.

**Step 4:** Carefully push away the dirt edges and remove the piece of plastic to see how much water you collected in the container.

***Important: While this water should be clean, always check with an adult before consuming anything from nature.**

**Survival Skill 6** - Berry Identification

*There weren't any beans here, but there must be berries. There had to be berry bushes around. Sure, the woods were full of berry bushes. That's what everybody always said. Well, he'd actually never heard anybody say it. But he felt that it should be true. There must be berry bushes.*

Brian comes across two different types of berry in the Canadian woods. Look back in the chapter for the descriptions of the different berries and compare them. Make note of the similarities and differences to see if you can identify what the "gut-cherries" actually are.

If you are interested in learning more about identifying edible plants, be sure to do thorough research so that you don't misidentify something toxic. There are many helpful videos that show ways to prepare different parts of edible plants such as these videos from "The Outsider" YouTube Chanel. ***Important: never eat a plant without talking to an adult and being *absolutely sure* you know what is and how to prepare it to make it edible.**

Cattail Pasta: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eBfIORVLNUA

Pine Tea: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PZSBKrXjJN0

Black Walnut: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XVZ4DDfzSGE

**Survival Skill 7 -** Making Shelter

*"He started dragging sticks up from the lake and pulling long dead branches down from the hill, never getting out of sight of the water and the ridge. With these he interlaced and wove a wall across the opening of the front of the rock."*

*"and he kept working until the entire front of the overhang was covered save for a small opening at the right end, nearest the lake. The doorway was about three feet, and when he went in he found himself in a room almost fifteen feet long and eight to ten feet deep, with the rock wall sloping down at the rear."*

**Purpose:** Build a safe, secure structure that would protect the inhabitant from wind and rain.

**Materials:**

- Dead sticks
- For real, that's all you need!

**How It Works:**

**Step 1**: Location!

- Look around you to find a spot that has good drainage. If you build in a low area, rain or spring run-off could soak you while you sleep.
- See if there are any natural geological features that you can take advantage of like the small cave Brian found.
- Remember to **look up to make sure there are no dead trees or branches** that could fall on you or the shelter.
- For an extra perk, find a spot that has lots of materials for building nearby so that you save time and energy.

**Step 2:** Planning! Look at the images and explanations of different styles of shelters below and choose one that will work best for you and your area. Remember to consider the size of shelter you are building *(too little space and you won't fit, too much space and it won't be as warm).*

**Step 3:** Collecting! Besides dead sticks of various sizes you should also consider collecting natural debris such as leaves, bark, and even mud.

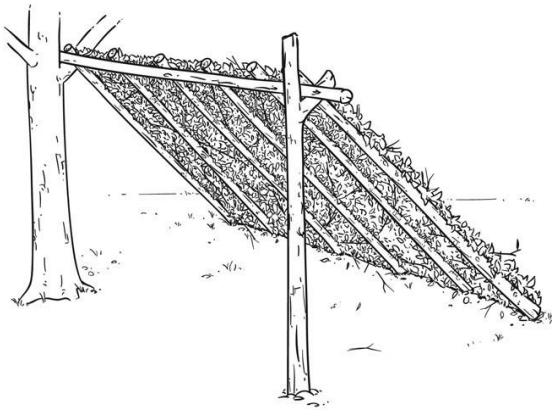
**Step 4:** Construction! Check out the styles below that have been used for hundreds of years. You can also modify and combine styles to come up with your own that works best for your surroundings.

***Shelters are made from natural materials and will blend into the surroundings. If you are in a lost person scenario, have your shelter stand out so it's visible to rescuers. Use brightly colored materials such as flagging tape to attract attention.***

*Lean-to*

This is a fast shelter to make in a survival situation. The lean-to typically begins with one horizontal ridge line and then sticks are added, making an angle from the ridge line far enough out to the ground so that there is room for a person to sleep underneath.

- Can lash the horizontal ridge with rope or wedge between 'Y' trees
- Can use longer sticks with a high ridge line or shorter sticks with a low ridge line
- Can cover with dead bark or leaves.

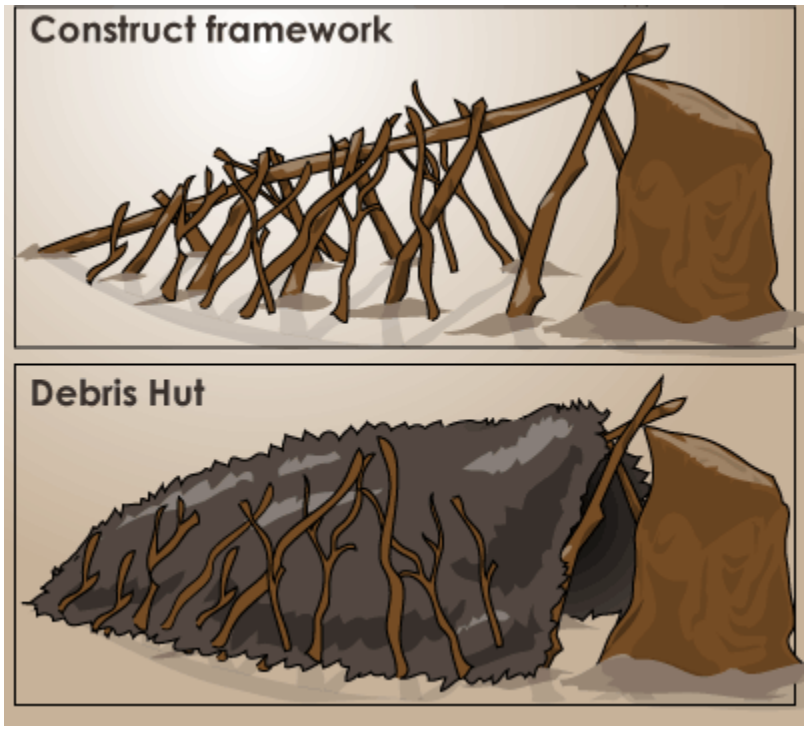


*Debris Hut*

A variation on the 'A' frame structure, the Debris Hut typically begins with one long central ridge line and then more sticks are added along at an angle on either side to make slanted walls.

- Can spear the low end into the ground for stability

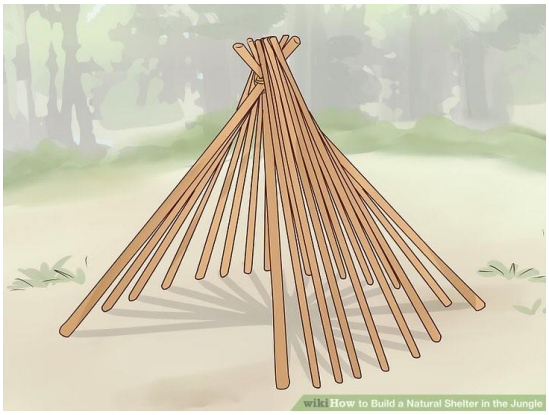
- Can use a stump, tree, or ‘Y’ stick to support high end
- Can leave different sizes of openings for a door




*Round Lodge*

A highbred between the tipi and the wiki-up, the round lodge typically begins with 3 or 4 main support sticks and then more sticks are added to make a wide circular base and a narrow top.

- Can use lashing or interlocking sticks to make a more stable beginning to the structure
- Can leave different sizes of openings for a door
- Can cover with dead bark or leaves.




See “The Hatchet Chapters 7 & 8” on the Gould Lake website for more content!