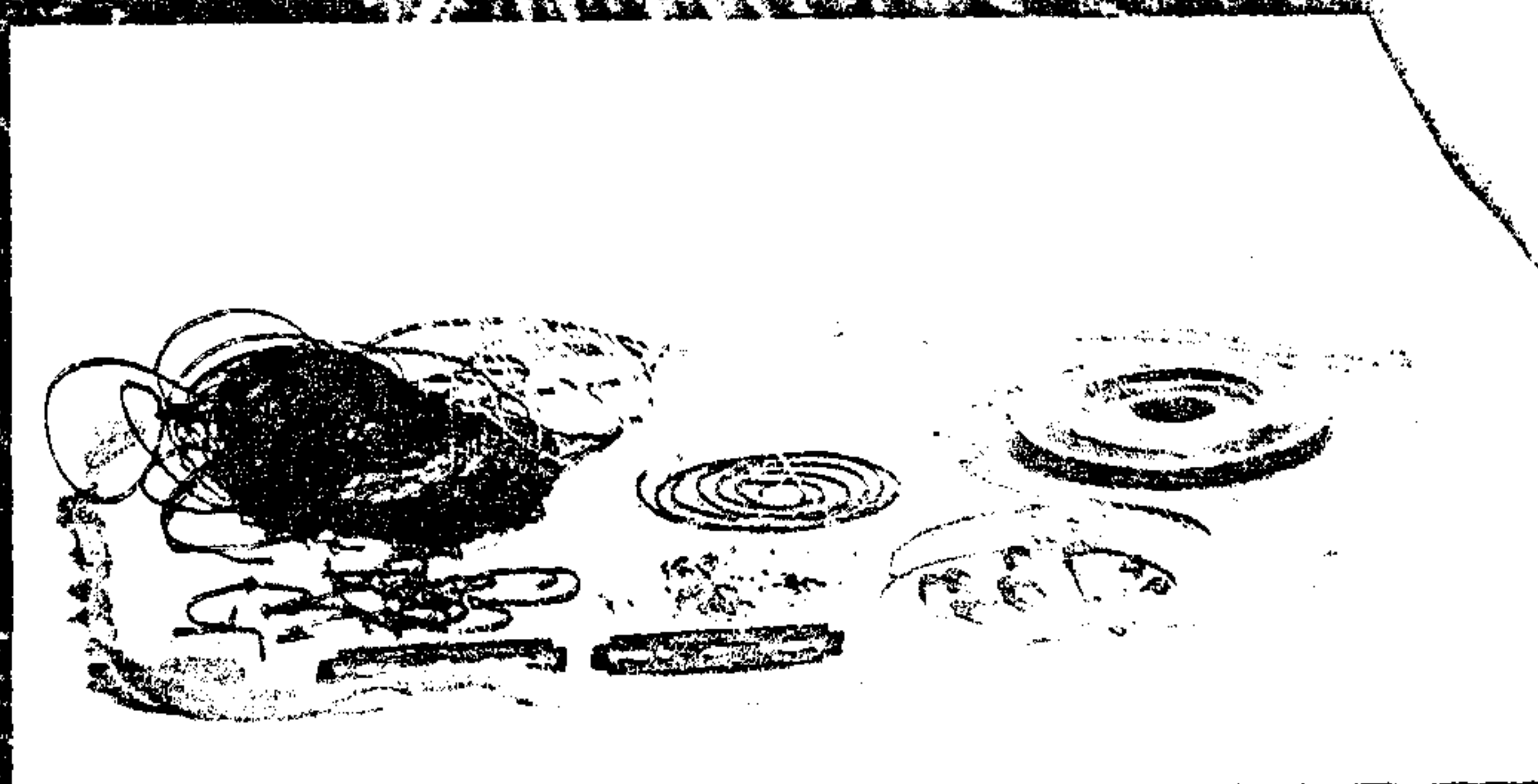


EVERYTHING EXCEPT SHELTER:

WATER



World's Smallest Survival Kit is slightly larger than a half dollar. This photo shows kit's contents: copper wire, monofilament and braided nylon lines, razor blades, matches, compass, two sizes of fishhooks and upholsterer's needles.

THE WORLD'S SMALLEST SURVIVAL KIT

In almost every case, the victim, though recognizing the value of a survival kit, saw no need to carry one—not expecting to need it . . .

BY HAL GORDON

Question: What's the most important single item in a survival kit? Compass? Knife? Matches? Fishhooks? Snare line? Fire-starter? Answer: None of the above!

The truth is, none of these items will do any good if you don't have them when you need them.

Commercial survival kits aren't bad, as far as they go, but most are just a little too large and bulky, or the wrong shape to carry in a pocket. You can put one in your pack, but you probably won't take the trouble to transfer it to your clothing when you leave camp for a look-see or a day's hunting.

The majority of outdoors activity-related deaths or survival situations in the U.S. arise when the outdoorsman fails to return to camp or car before becoming lost or is overtaken by darkness or a sudden storm. In almost every case, the victim, though recognizing the value of a survival kit, saw no value in carrying one—not expecting to need it.

There is only one way that guarantees you will have a survival kit with you at all times. The trick is to force yourself to have one on your person when otherwise you might decide that your pockets are too full to carry just one more item—your survival kit.

How is this possible? The secret is to make your own "World's Smallest Survival Kit." It is so small and flat that you can open a seam in your jacket drop in the kit and sew up the seam again. You'll never know the kit is there. The only trouble may arise when you need the kit and forget that you have it with you. If your jacket doesn't have a lining, simply put a patch of the same color over the kit on the inside. This can be iron-on material, or you can sew it on. Locate it about half-way between waist and armpit, and you'll never be bothered by its presence.

Here's how I assemble the all-around survival kit:

If you plan to produce a number of kits, consider a couple of things. First, you'll wish to buy all the items in bulk form for economy's sake, and so you can mass produce kits simultaneously. The second consideration is that you may wish to make specialized kits for the type of environment you plan to encounter. I'll offer some suggestions later.

First is a list of things you need:

1 flat plastic leader line spool with tapered edges.

45 feet of 20-pound-test monofilament line.

50 feet of 15-pound-test braided nylon line.

2 curved upholstery needles, 3½ inches long.

1 small compass, under ½-inch diameter.

2 double-edge razor blades.

8 wooden "strike-anywhere" kitchen matches.

Copper wire, No. 22, about 1 foot.

40 No. 14 short-shank fishhooks.

20 No. 8 medium-to-long-shank fishhooks.

2 12-gauge shotgun cleaning patches, or a clean rag 4 inches in diameter.

1 block of household parafin.)

1 red crayon. *MIK PARAFIN & WAX FROM BABYBOL*

1 sheet tissue paper. *WAX FROM BABYBOL*

After laying out these items on a table, start melting the parafin wax. You must use caution in heating. The safest method is to employ a double-boiler arrangement in which hot water melts the wax, not a direct flame. And here's where you add a pea-sized chunk of the red crayon to the wax to add the visibility factor to the white parafin.

When the wax has melted, dip the shotgun patches or cloths into the wax so they are thoroughly saturated. Use a clothespin to prevent burned fingers. Set the patches aside to solidify. You'll use them last.

During this initial operation, you can dip your matches, too. This waterproofs them and extends the burning time of the matchstick wood. You may wish to consider using commercially made windproof matches, though they take up more room in the kit. Some people dip matches in clear fingernail polish. This works well, but I believe the wax tends to burn more slowly, hence longer.

Next, measure out your line, or simply wind it on the monofilament spool until the reel is half filled. Finish with the braided nylon line, winding it tightly out to the edge of the spool's lip.

Break or cut your first match so that it just fits the full diameter of the hollow center of the spool. The remaining matches should be cut in decreasing lengths so they form a rough diamond pattern which will fit snugly inside the spool's center. You may be able to insert a few more or fewer matches in your kit. You can always add more elsewhere, which increases the bulk of the kit only slightly.

The small fishhooks come next. Lay tissue paper over the matches and place the hooks on top—or you can reverse this and put the hooks under the matches, separated by tissue paper, in order to keep the hooks together.

Pour some almost solidified wax over this assembly, then smooth it with your fingers. While the wax is still warm, press down one of your razor blades into the wax so that its sharp edges are protected by the wax. This completes the kit's first side. After the wax has hardened, turn your kit over.

Set your small compass into the center hole of the spool, and lay your larger hooks around it. You may have to push and shove so that the hooks lie as compactly as possible. Next come tissue paper, some warm wax and the razor blade. The idea of the warm wax and tissue paper is three-fold: additional fire starting material; tissue to keep the fishhooks from being embedded in wax; and, together, they tend to hold all kit parts together.

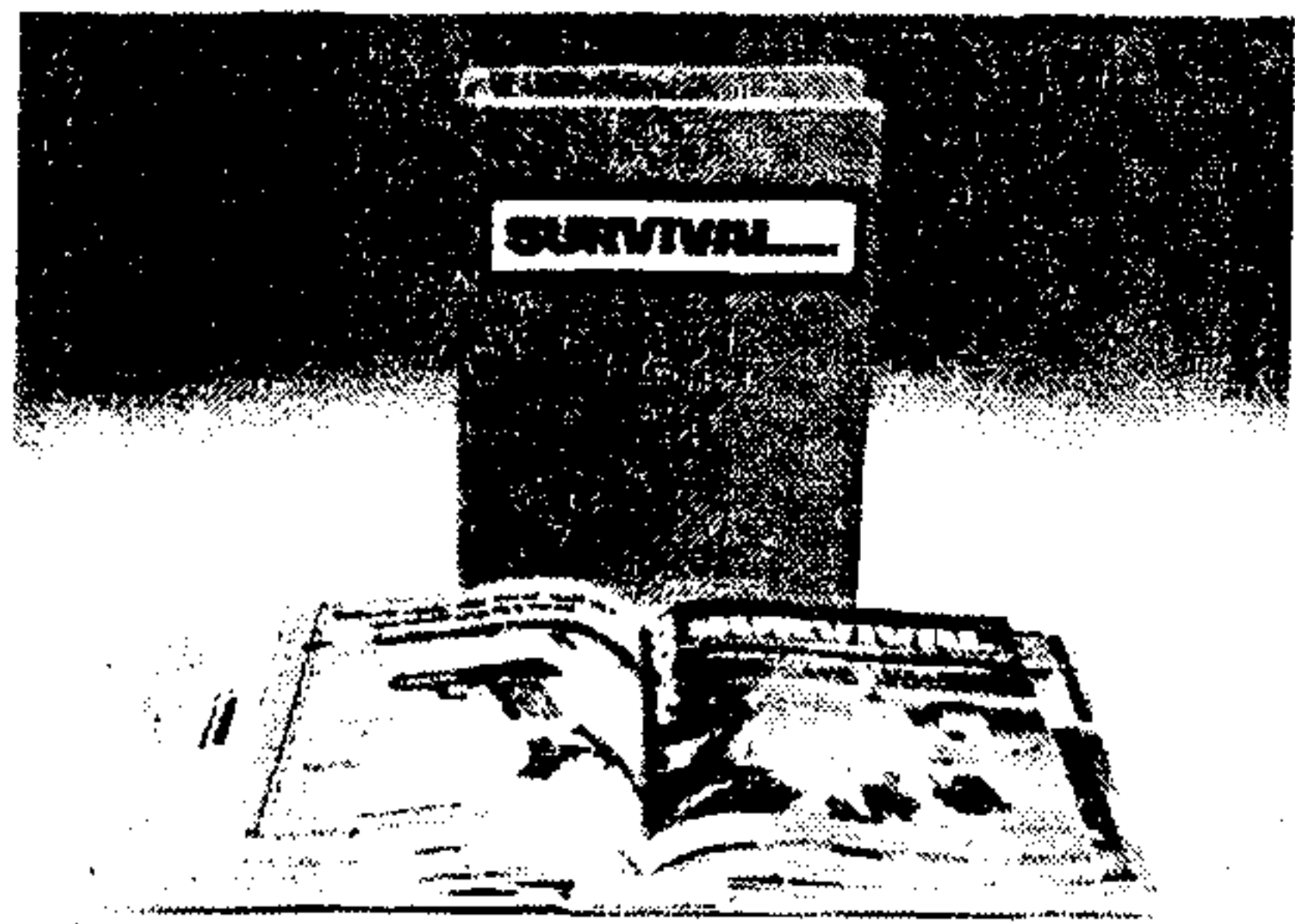
Now make a flat coil of your copper wire and place it atop the razor blade. Lay the upholstery needles in the groove of the spool's lip. (Their radius is about the same as the spool's.) You may still have space to add other tiny items, such as cigarette lighter flints or a safety pin.

To install the shotgun patch covers, dip them again into the melted wax while it is in a barely liquid state, then slap them onto your kit, and press their edges firmly so they stick together. Slip the finished kit into a plastic sandwich bag or wrap it in a piece of thin plastic. On hot days, this prevents softened wax from soaking into your clothing.

An optional method for installing the covers is to use unwaxed cloth over the kit, gluing the edges and, after the glue has dried, dipping the entire kit into medium-warm parafin.

Now for the most important part of the kit, the mental image of what to do with all of these little items. Exhausted and lost, you may not receive much comfort from gazing at this small pile of apparently useless junk. But conjure up vision of food these items can bring, when used correctly, and your stress can melt away. Your chances for survival will improve

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immensely.

Starting with the monofilament, you probably will use this mainly for fishing because fish tend not to see the line as a threat or distraction. Some outdoorsmen use monofilament line for snares. However, I don't recommend this practice. When snared in monofilament, the animal may be able to gain some slack for an instant and, because the material is stiff and springy, the loop may open and allow your supper to escape. If you believe you won't be near fishing waters, substitute flexible woven "picture" wire for the monofilament. The woven wire is about the best snare material obtainable. Braided nylon line will do the job, too. In addition, it can be used for many other chores—fishing and in construction of any number of traps.

The upholsterer's needles are mainly for repair of clothing and for making traps and nets, utilizing rough twine which you can make from bark or plant fibers. The curve of the needle allows sewing tough canvas and leather without use of an awl or sailor's palm because the needle's curve provides leverage. And, in an extreme situation, the curved needle can be used with the monofilament to suture a wound. If you try this, make sure things are sterile and that you know how to knot the mono securely.

A razor blade can serve as a knife for cutting line and whittling intricate tools. Save one of your kit blades just for emergency surgery. Without a large knife, major wood carving tasks can be carried out by first charring the wood in a fire, or by dropping hot rocks in specific areas, gouging out the area with a sharpened stone and finishing with the razor blade.

The compass, probably purchased from a toy store, will be cheap, and its needle may stick. If this should happen, you can remove the clear plastic top and it should perform properly. A small compass is better than none at all.

The copper wire is for repairs and tool construction. It can be cut to length by repeated bending. If you have a dry cell—from a flashlight, perhaps—the wire can be used to provide an electric short to produce a spark for starting a fire.

The fishhooks can secure meat on land, as well as in the water. Because they take up so little room, there is no reason you

shouldn't always have some with you. When serving as "land" hooks for small game, their use may offend you. Keep in mind, however, that you will use them only in a survival situation.

Here are just a few ways hooks will bring food. Bait them with berries or seeds and tie them in trees. You will hook birds even more surely than fish when fishing. The system can be used for all small animals. Hooks can be tied onto limbs where squirrels have been observed. The hooks will seize their skin or tangle in their fur. By tying several hooks onto the end of a long, flexible pole, and revolving the pole rapidly in a burrow, hidden animals may be snared. Other applications of hooks are limited only by your imagination.

Another use for razor blades comes when you decide to turn your circular patch kit covers into fire starters. By sticking one blade in a smooth log, parallel to its surface, and the other blade at a 45-degree angle parallel to the first blade, about 1/4-inch distant—you can slice the cover into a spiral. Start at the outer edge and use the upright blade for cutting and the other as a feed guide. Simply pull the cloth through the "cutting machine." This also is a slick way to make long leather thongs from animal skins—should your snare and hook hunting prove fruitful. Rawhide thongs are a prime tool and weapon manufacturing material, as they shrink and dry to effect truly solid construction connections. Ax, spear and like tools can be made easily with rawhide ties.

To use your fire-starter strips, wind them around sticks and burn them like candles. Stick them into the ground and light them under a teepee of damp sticks. The flames will dry the fuel and ignite it. As the fire gets going, add larger sticks so that you can use larger limbs that must be broken by hand, or by stepping on them. You don't need an ax.

As you can see, using a little knowledge and imagination, materials in this tiny kit can get you by fairly well. The kit, of course, doesn't allow for shelter—which is very important. However, any survival manual offers ideas on this problem.

Read and practice in your backyard. You can survive with the "tools" provided by the "World's Smallest Survival Kit." ●