



4A & 4B--OUTDOOR SURVIVAL, WEEK 1

Shelters, signaling, starting a fire with a bow drill

3/5/20



Shelter is your #1 survival priority, so knowing how to make a survival shelter is something that *everyone* should know. **Don't forget to practice it so**

you'll be prepared should you ever need this survival skill!

Step 1: Choose Your Site

Choose a spot for your wilderness shelter which is:

- **Dry**
- **Flat**
- **Not right next to a body of water.**
- **Not underneath any cliffs, falling rocks, or dead limbs which could fall on you**
- **Is readily visible or very well hidden (depending on whether you want to be found or not)**
- **Have a good place for a fire right in front of the doorway**

A note about choosing a flat site for your shelter. This is not just for comfort! If your shelter is on a slope and it starts raining, then the rainwater can come into your shelter. If you are unable to find a flat spot for building your shelter and rain is likely, then you will need to dig trenches to divert the water away from the shelter.

Step 2: Assess Your Needs

A lot of wilderness survival experts will tell you that this or that method is the best survival shelter. However, it really depends on your needs. Here are some of the things you need to consider:

- How many people are in your group?

- Does your shelter need to be camouflaged?
- How cold is it? Will you need to build a fire inside or directly in front of your shelter?
- How much time do you have to build the shelter?
- Is the shelter for long-term or short-term use?

Step 3: Decide On a Type of Shelter

This is actually the most important part of building a shelter in the wilderness. If you know a few shelter designs AND know what they are best suited for, then you will be able to make the right choice. Five types of shelters are described below.

1. The Tarp Lean-To



For this survival shelter, you just need a plastic tarp and some cordage. You can even make it with a poncho in a pinch. Just tie each end of the tarp to a tree.

Pros

- **Fastest to build**
- **Very easy to build**
- **Good for larger groups**

Cons

- **Poor protection from wind and rain**
- **Could easily break from falling sticks, hard rain, etc.**
- **No protection from animals**

2. Tarp Tent



Just tie some cordage between two trees and drape your tarp over it. Then use some rocks, sticks or more cordage to anchor the sides of the tarp away from you.

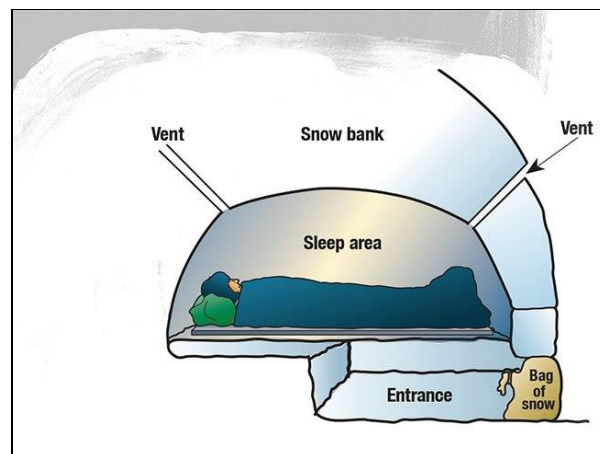
Pros

- **Fast and easy to build**
- **Protects from rain**

Cons

- **Only moderate protection from wind**
- **Could easily break from falling sticks, hard rain, etc.**
- **No protection from animals**

3. Snow Shelter



What do you do if you are in an emergency situation outdoors in the snow? It will be too cold to spend a lot of time making a shelter. This survival shelter you can make very fast (especially if you have an emergency shovel). Just find a tree, prop a branch against its trunk at a 45 degree angle. Push the snow out of the way to form a "wall". Prop another branch to support your tarp. Then drape a tarp over the branches. You can line the inside of this survival shelter with pine needles and brush to act as insulation and keep you warm. Be sure to make ventilation holes in the snow.

Pros

- **Good for winter survival situations**
- **Can be made bigger or smaller depending on group size**

Cons

Moving snow can be time consuming and draining without a shovel

4. Fallen Tree Shelter



This is a great survival shelter because it can be easily adapted to the situation. It does rely on you being able to find a fallen tree though.

You can do it multiple ways, such as draping a tarp over the fallen tree to make a tent. Or you can prop debris to act as your shelter wall. If it is windy or cold, use other debris to block off the entrance.

Pros

- **Easy to camouflage**
- **Good protection from the elements, including snow**

- **Adaptable to multiple situations**
- **Can be made easily with a tarp or with just debris**

Cons

- **Be prepared to share the shelter with bugs from the rotting log!**
- **Will take some time to gather debris to block off entrance**

5. A-Frame Brush Shelter



This is a great short-term survival shelter for a single person because it is so fast and easy to build. It is also easy to find materials to use.

Pros

- **One person**
- **Fast to build**
- **Very easy to build**
- **Camouflaged**

Cons

- **Temporary/short-term**
- **Fire won't warm inside the shelter**

How to Build the Shelter:

1. Find one long, sturdy branch. It should be a few feet longer than your height.
2. Prop one end of branch up on a tree stump or log. Alternatively, you can prop it up on two shorter branches, making an A shape.
3. Lean shorter branches against the branch. Now you have a frame.
4. Now cover the frame with leaves, branches, or other brush.

*You can also make this survival shelter against fallen trees. Or, for a larger A frame shelter, prop up *both ends* of your long branch. With this method though, wind can blow in from the sides and it also won't trap your body heat as well.

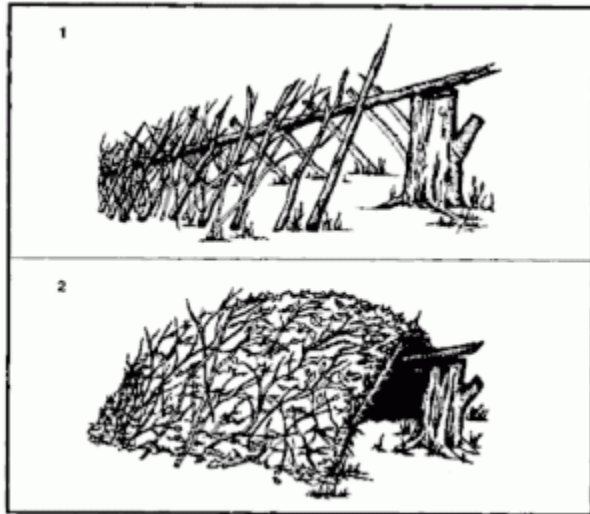


Figure 5-11. Debris hut.

Here's what the shelter frame design looks like



You can make a larger A frame shelter by building it between 2 trees



