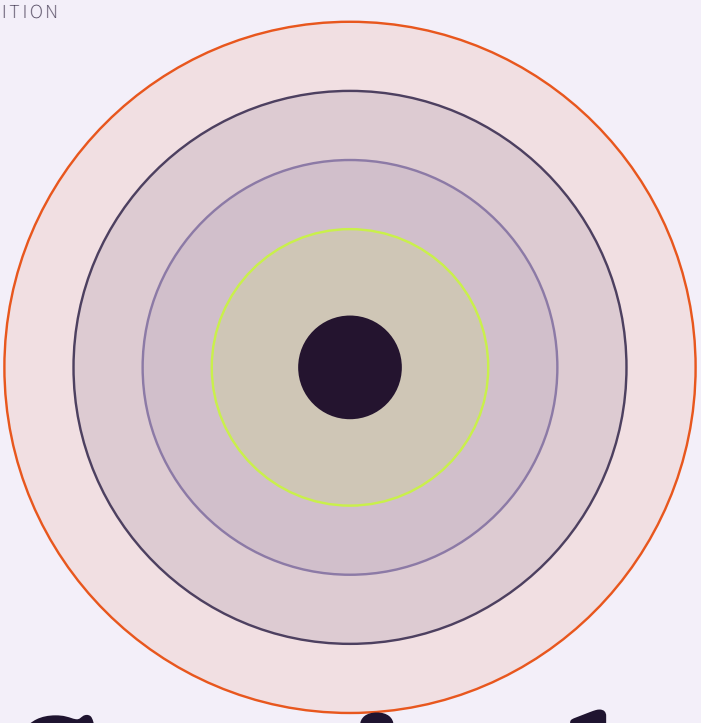


SAS Survival Guide: How to Survive in the Wild, in Any Cli-mate, on Land or at Sea

A reading of the book by John 'Lofty' Wiseman (2005)

1. ACTION BOOK

CONTENTS

Inside this edition

The book in a minute 4

The takeaways 5

Your action book 7

Before you go 8

PART TWO · THE ACTION BOOK

The setup checklist 10

Check your kit before every trip 11

Practise one skill a month 12

Check the weather and set a turnaround time 13

ABOUT THIS EDITION

This is HourLife's reading of SAS Survival Guide: How to Survive in the Wild, in Any Climate, on Land or at Sea, in our own words. It is not a substitute for the book.

BEFORE YOU START 01

The book in a minute

John 'Lofty' Wiseman spent 26 years in the British Army's Special Air Service and taught its soldiers how to survive. This pocket guide condenses his SAS Survival Handbook, first published in 1986, into a book small enough to carry on a trip. It covers preparation and kit, finding and purifying water, food, fire, shelter, finding your way, signalling for rescue and first aid, with advice for cold, desert, tropical and sea conditions. Running through it is Wiseman's point that the will to survive matters as much as any technique. It teaches through short, practical instructions and line drawings rather than stories.

Below are the 9 ideas HourLife readers vote up most, each in our words with a note on what it asks of you, and then the steps that put them to work.

WHAT READERS KEEP

The takeaways

1

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Survival starts at home, in what you pack and who knows where you are going.

Wiseman puts preparation first. Learn about the place, the weather and the people before you go, and carry the right kit. A trip plan left with someone you trust turns a lost day into a short search.

2

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

The will to survive counts for as much as any skill.

The book keeps coming back to mindset. Panic wastes energy and leads to bad choices, while a calm, stubborn person with little kit can outlast a well-equipped one who gives up. Skills give the will something to work with.

3

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

The best kit is the small one you actually have on you.

Wiseman's survival tin is a small tin packed with essentials such as matches, a candle, a flint, fishhooks and a button compass. It goes in your pocket, not the pack, because the pack is what you lose. Know every item in it and how to use it.

4

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

When things go wrong, stop and take stock before you move.

Rushing burns energy and often makes a bad position worse. Check for injuries, see what kit you have, read the weather, and only then decide whether to stay or to move. If someone knows your route, staying put is often the better choice.

5

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Protect yourself from the weather first, because cold and heat kill faster than hunger.

Shelter, dry clothing and warmth come before food. The book shows how to pick a site out of wind and away from flood risk, and how to keep off the cold ground. In the desert the same logic means shade and staying still in the heat of the day.

6

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Water matters more than food, and wild water needs treating.

A person can last weeks without food but only days without water, much less in heat. Wiseman gives many ways to find and collect it, and treats boiling as the reliable way to make it safe. Ration sweat, not water.

7

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Fire gives you warmth, safe water, cooked food, a signal and morale at once.

The book treats fire as one of the most useful skills to practise. A fire needs heat, fuel and air, and most failures come from too little dry tinder and kindling ready before the first match. Learn it in good weather so it works in bad.

8

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Make yourself easy to find.

Rescue is the goal, so signalling is a survival skill, not an extra. Fires, mirrors, whistles and shapes laid out on open ground all help searchers spot you. Bright colours and anything that breaks the pattern of the land make you stand out.

9

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Every climate has its own main danger, so plan for the one you are going into.

The book gives separate advice for polar, desert, tropical and sea conditions. Cold brings hypothermia and frostbite, heat brings dehydration, and water brings drowning and exposure. A kit list that ignores the climate is only half a kit list.

PUT IT TO WORK

Your action book

Do the setup steps once, then keep the habits going. The setup changes your week; the habits keep it changed after the first good one.

The download puts this whole reading and a printable action book in one PDF: the setup checklist, then a page of real calendar days for each habit, starting on the day you choose.

SET UP ONCE

- [ ] Leave a written trip plan
- [ ] Pack a pocket survival tin
- [ ] Learn map and compass properly
- [ ] Do a first aid course
- [ ] Set up your phone for emergencies

KEEP UP DAILY

- ◯ Check your kit before every trip
- ◯ Practise one skill a month
- ◯ Check the weather and set a turnaround time

30 days · Nov 6 - Dec 5, 2026

Part two, after the reading, prints each of these as a page to fill in by hand.

THE LAST WORD

Before you go

Pick one step from the action book and do it today. An idea from a book starts to count once it changes what one ordinary day looks like.

PART TWO

The action book

Change the setup once, then keep it up. 5 setup actions to do once, and 3 habits to mark each day for 30 days.

Nov 6 - Dec 5, 2026

Print it, or write on it in any PDF app.

SET UP ONCE

The setup checklist

Each of these is done once. Do one a day, and check it off when it is done.

- [ ] SETUP 1

Leave a written trip plan

Before your next walk, write down your route, when you start, when you will be back, and the time someone should raise the alarm.

Give it to one person who will act on it.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

- [ ] SETUP 2

Pack a pocket survival tin

Fill a small tin with a lighter, waterproofed matches, a candle stub, a button compass, a whistle, plasters and a little cord.

Tape it shut and keep it on you, not in the pack.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

- [ ] SETUP 3

Learn map and compass properly

Book a navigation course or practise on a walk you already know.

Take a bearing from the map, follow it, and check where you end up.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

- [ ] SETUP 4

Do a first aid course

Book a one or two day first aid course, ideally an outdoor one that covers cold, heat and getting help from a remote place.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

- [ ] SETUP 5

Set up your phone for emergencies

Learn your local emergency number for where you are going, turn on emergency location sharing, and download offline maps for the area.

Carry a charged power bank.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

DAILY HABIT 1 OF 3

Check your kit before every trip

Open the tin and the first aid kit before you leave.

Nov 6 - Dec 5, 2026 · 30 days · circle each day you do it

SMALLEST VERSION

CUE

WHERE

November 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
						1
2	3	4	5	6 ○	7 ○	8 ○
9 ○	10 ○	11 ○	12 ○	13 ○	14 ○	15 ○
16 ○	17 ○	18 ○	19 ○	20 ○	21 ○	22 ○
23 ○	24 ○	25 ○	26 ○	27 ○	28 ○	29 ○
30 ○						

December 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
	1 ○	2 ○	3 ○	4 ○	5 ○	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

EACH FRIDAY

WHAT HELPED

WHAT GOT IN THE WAY

ONE CHANGE TO THE SETUP

DAILY HABIT 2 OF 3

Practise one skill a month

Pick one skill, such as lighting a fire in damp weather where fires are allowed, or pitching a tarp in the dark.

Nov 6 - Dec 5, 2026 · 30 days · circle each day you do it

SMALLEST VERSION

CUE

WHERE

November 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
						1
2	3	4	5	6 ○	7 ○	8 ○
9 ○	10 ○	11 ○	12 ○	13 ○	14 ○	15 ○
16 ○	17 ○	18 ○	19 ○	20 ○	21 ○	22 ○
23 ○	24 ○	25 ○	26 ○	27 ○	28 ○	29 ○
30 ○						

December 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
	1 ○	2 ○	3 ○	4 ○	5 ○	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

EACH FRIDAY

WHAT HELPED

WHAT GOT IN THE WAY

ONE CHANGE TO THE SETUP

DAILY HABIT 3 OF 3

Check the weather and set a turnaround time

Look at the forecast and the sunset time before you leave.

Nov 6 - Dec 5, 2026 · 30 days · circle each day you do it

SMALLEST VERSION

CUE

WHERE

November 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
						1
2	3	4	5	6 ○	7 ○	8 ○
9 ○	10 ○	11 ○	12 ○	13 ○	14 ○	15 ○
16 ○	17 ○	18 ○	19 ○	20 ○	21 ○	22 ○
23 ○	24 ○	25 ○	26 ○	27 ○	28 ○	29 ○
30 ○						

December 2026

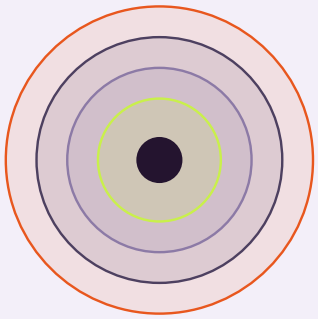
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
	1 ○	2 ○	3 ○	4 ○	5 ○	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

EACH FRIDAY

WHAT HELPED

WHAT GOT IN THE WAY

ONE CHANGE TO THE SETUP



Most of surviving happens before you leave: the kit you pack, the plan you share and the calm you keep.

HOURLIFE NOTE AFTER JOHN 'LOFTY' WISEMAN