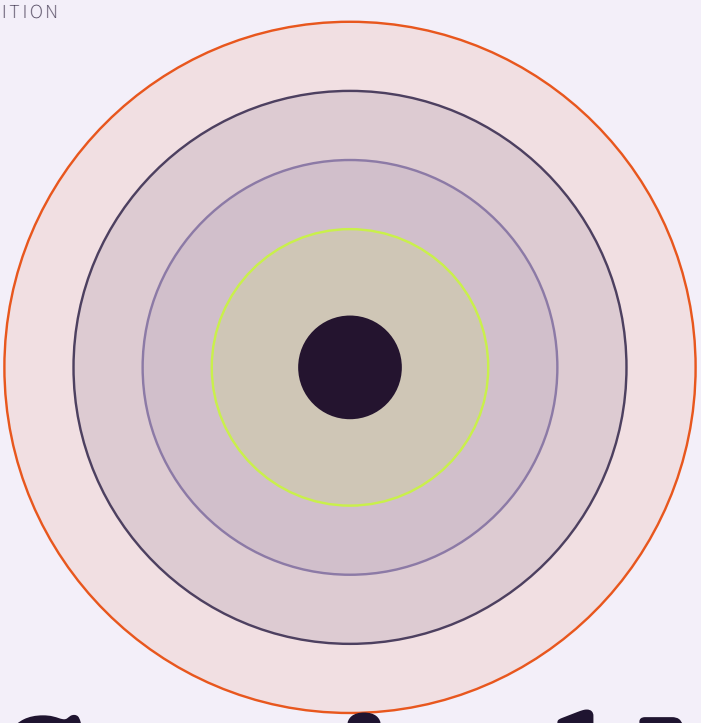


The Survival Medicine Handbook: The Essential Guide for When Help Is NOT on the Way

A reading of the book by Joseph Alton and Amy Alton (2021)

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 the kit twice a year 11

Read one section before you need it 12

Keep your training current 13

ABOUT THIS EDITION

This is HourLife's reading of The Survival Medicine Handbook: The Essential Guide for When Help Is NOT on the Way, in our own words. It is not a substitute for the book.

BEFORE YOU START 01

The book in a minute

Joseph Alton is a physician trained in obstetrics and surgery, and Amy Alton is a nurse practitioner and certified nurse-midwife. Together they teach medical preparedness as Dr. Bones and Nurse Amy under the Doom and Bloom name. The book is written for the ordinary person who becomes the family medic when a disaster or a remote place puts doctors and hospitals out of reach. It argues that you can learn enough, and store enough, to manage many common problems yourself, and to recognise the ones you cannot. The fourth edition runs to 35 sections: preparedness and supplies first, then medical conditions, injuries and wound care, and finally mass casualties, nursing off the grid and medications. It gives a section to natural medicine, including essential oils, alongside conventional care, and leans heavily on supply lists.

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

Someone in every household should decide, ahead of time, to be the one who knows what to do.

An early section asks the reader to become a medical asset to their family or group. That role is built in calm times, through reading, training and gathering supplies, not improvised in the middle of a crisis. Naming the person also means naming who backs them up.

2 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Plan for the gap between getting hurt and getting help, because in a disaster that gap can be days.

In normal life an ambulance closes the gap in minutes. After a storm, a flood or deep in the backcountry it can stretch much longer. The whole book is about what a prepared person can do in that stretch, and about getting the injured person to real care as soon as it exists.

3 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

A medical kit is only as good as the hands that know how to use it.

The authors give long lists of supplies, but a box of gauze does nothing on its own. Every item you store is a reason to learn the skill that goes with it, ideally on a hands-on course rather than from a page.

4 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Knowing your limits is a medical skill, not a weakness.

A good family medic can tell a problem they can manage from one that needs a hospital, and acts on that early. When emergency services can be reached, calling them comes first. The book's advice is for when they truly cannot.

5 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

The first thing a disaster takes away is the medicine someone already relies on every day.

The book covers long-term conditions alongside injuries, because heart problems, diabetes and asthma do not pause for an emergency. The practical step is a conversation with your own clinician or pharmacist about what a sensible reserve looks like, never changing a treatment on your own.

6

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Good care starts with careful noticing: ask, look and write it down.

The book includes a section on taking a history and examining a patient, the routine a clinician runs before deciding anything. For a lay reader the lasting lesson is simple: note what happened, when, and how things change. Those notes help whoever takes over care later.

7

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

The book keeps an herb garden beside the medicine cabinet, and it helps to read that part as the authors' view.

Amy Alton is known for her work on herbal remedies, and the book gives a section to natural medicine, including essential oils. The evidence for many of these remedies is mixed or thin, and mainstream medicine does not treat them as substitutes for proven care. Ask a clinician before relying on any of them.

8

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Medicines are the most debated part of the book, and the part most worth taking to a clinician.

The authors give a long section to medications and antibiotics for a world without pharmacies. Mainstream medicine is clear that antibiotics should be prescribed and supervised by a clinician, because the wrong drug or dose causes harm and feeds resistance. If stored medicine matters to your plan, talk it through with your doctor or pharmacist.

9

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Fear spreads faster than infection, so a calm caregiver is part of the care.

A disaster weighs on the people being cared for and on the person doing the caring. A medic who is exhausted or frightened makes worse decisions. Rest, shared duties and someone to talk to belong in the plan too.

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

- [ ] Book a recognised first-aid course
- [ ] Build one kit and give it a home
- [ ] Write a health sheet for each person
- [ ] Ask about a reserve of regular medicines
- [ ] Write down how you would reach care

KEEP UP DAILY

- ◯ Check the kit twice a year
- ◯ Read one section before you need it
- ◯ Keep your training current

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

Book a recognised first-aid course

Find a hands-on first-aid and CPR course from the Red Cross, St John Ambulance or your national equivalent, and put a date in the calendar this week.

If you hike or live far from a hospital, look for a wilderness first-aid course instead.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

- [ ] SETUP 2

Build one kit and give it a home

Gather your supplies into one labelled box or bag, sorted by category, and keep it where everyone in the house can find it.

Use the planner on this page as a starting list and tick off what you already own.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

- [ ] SETUP 3

Write a health sheet for each person

On one page per person, list conditions, regular medicines, allergies, blood type if known, and the doctor's and pharmacy's numbers.

Keep a copy in the kit and one on your phone.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

- [ ] SETUP 4

Ask about a reserve of regular medicines

At your next appointment, ask your clinician or pharmacist how to keep a small reserve of any medicine someone in the house depends on, and how to store it.

Never stop or change a treatment on your own.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

- [ ] SETUP 5

Write down how you would reach care

Note the local emergency number, the nearest hospital and urgent care, and a second route to each.

Put the list in the kit and on the fridge.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

DAILY HABIT 1 OF 3

Check the kit twice a year

Pick two fixed dates, such as when the clocks change.

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

Read one section before you need it

Once a month, read one part of the book or your first-aid manual that matches a risk in your house, such as burns in the kitchen or allergies.

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
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EACH FRIDAY

WHAT HELPED

WHAT GOT IN THE WAY

ONE CHANGE TO THE SETUP

DAILY HABIT 3 OF 3

Keep your training current

Note when your first-aid certificate runs out and book a refresher before it does.

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 ○
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30 ○						

December 2026

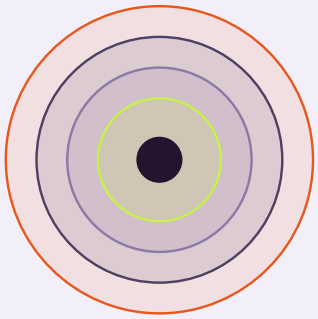
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EACH FRIDAY

WHAT HELPED

WHAT GOT IN THE WAY

ONE CHANGE TO THE SETUP



Learn it while help is still a phone call away.

HOURLIFE NOTE AFTER JOSEPH ALTON AND AMY ALTON