STRETCHLEARN · WORKBOOK

Camping & Bushcraft — Workbook

This workbook runs alongside the Camping & Bushcraft course with hands-on exercises, fill-in worksheets, and field-ready checklists for each module. Complete each section before or during your first overnight trip to lock in the skills. Every template is designed to be printed or used on a phone as a living field reference.

Leave No Trace, Site Selection, and Shelter Setup

Internalize the seven LNT principles and practice the site-selection and shelter-setup decisions before you leave the trailhead.

Exercise: LNT Principle Scenario Drill

For each scenario below, identify which LNT principle is most at stake and write the specific action you would take. There is no single correct answer — the goal is deliberate decision-making.

• You arrive at a popular lakeshore campsite at dusk. The established site is occupied and a pristine grassy area 10 m from the lake is available. What do you do and why?

• Your group produces two apple cores and a banana peel. A fellow hiker says organic waste is fine to leave because it decomposes. How do you respond and what do you do with the waste?

• You want to cut a 1-m branch from a living tree to use as a tent stake. What principle applies and what is your alternative?

• You spot a black bear eating berries 50 m from your camp. Another camper wants to get closer for a photo. What do you do?

Worksheet: Campsite Evaluation Score Sheet

On your next trip, score your chosen campsite against these criteria immediately after arrival. A site scoring below 3 on any single criterion should prompt relocation if a better option exists within 20 minutes of travel.

Site name or GPS coordinates

Durable surface type (rock / mineral soil / sand / established site / other)

Distance from nearest water source (paces): __ (target: 70+ paces / ~200 ft)

Overhead hazard check (widow-makers, dead branches): none / minor / significant

Slope drainage: drains away / flat / drains toward sleeping area

Wildlife sign present (scat, tracks, digging, berry patch): none / minor / significant

Campsite triangle feasible (sleep / cook / hang each 60 m apart): yes / no

Overall site score (1–5) and go/no-go decision

Checklist: Shelter Setup Field Checklist

[ ] Footprint or groundsheet laid and staked before tent assembly begins
[ ] Tent floor perimeter extends no more than 2 cm beyond footprint edges
[ ] All corner stakes driven at 45-degree angles to the tent wall
[ ] Guy-lines tensioned so fabric has zero visible sag
[ ] Vestibule zipped with a 3–5 cm leeward gap for condensation venting
[ ] Narrowest tent profile oriented into prevailing wind direction
[ ] No gear stored between tent wall and fly (condensation drip zone)
[ ] Practice pitch completed in under 8 minutes (time yourself)

Fire Craft: Friction, Ferro-Rod, and Fire Management

Build your fire-lighting competency through deliberate practice tracking tinder quality, strike consistency, and bow-drill session results before using fire in the field.

Exercise: Tinder Quality Field Test

Collect five candidate tinder materials from your local area before your first trip. Run each through the tests below and record results. Only materials passing all three tests belong in your tinder kit.

• Squeeze test: take a palm-sized handful and squeeze firmly. Does it crumble and sound dry, or compress silently? Record: crumbles / compresses.

• Moisture test: hold the material to your lower lip. Does it feel room-temperature or cool? Cool = moisture present. Record: dry / cool / damp.

• Spark test (backyard or driveway only, safe surface): strike a ferro-rod into a walnut-sized pinch of the material. Does it catch a spark? Record: catches / no catch.

• For any material that failed, note what drying method (sun, paper bag, 10 min at 80°C in an oven) might make it usable as a backup.

Worksheet: Bow-Drill Practice Session Log

Complete at least three bow-drill practice sessions before your first backcountry trip. Log each session to track improvement in technique and identify the variables affecting success.

Session date

Wood species used (fireboard / spindle)

Weather conditions (temperature °C, humidity, indoor/outdoor)

Time to first consistent smoke (seconds)

Time to visible coal in notch (seconds, or 'no coal')

Coal successfully transferred to tinder bundle: yes / no

Main failure point if no coal (pressure / speed / notch alignment / wood moisture / other)

Adjustment made for next session

Checklist: Fire Safety and Extinguishing Protocol

[ ] Fire built only in existing established ring or on a raised fire pan
[ ] Water source identified and at least 2 L reserved for extinguishing before lighting
[ ] All fuel sticks finger-width or smaller — no log-sized fuel added until stable flame exists
[ ] Fire attended by at least one person at all times
[ ] Fire fully drowned with water before departure or sleep
[ ] Ash stirred thoroughly with a stick to expose hot coals
[ ] Water added a second time and ash stirred again
[ ] Palm-press test passed: no discomfort when palm held flat against ash pile
[ ] All ash and unburned material dispersed if using a fire pan (pack out)

Exercise: Fire Lay Geometry Practice

Before your next camping trip, assemble each of the three fire lays described in the course using kindling and fuel sticks in your driveway or backyard (no ignition required). The goal is muscle memory for the build sequence.

• Build a teepee lay using 10 kindling sticks over a golf-ball-sized tinder bundle. Time how long it takes. Identify: is the structure self-supporting? Does it have air channels at the base?

• Build a log cabin lay with two parallel base logs and three alternating layers of kindling. Check: are all layers secure with no single point of collapse?

• Describe in one sentence when you would choose a star fire over a teepee lay on an actual trip.

Water, Food, and Camp Cooking

Plan a complete two-day meal schedule and field-test your water purification system before relying on it in the backcountry.

Worksheet: Two-Day Backcountry Meal Plan

Plan every meal and snack for a two-day, one-night trip. Use the caloric density guideline of 100 kcal per 28 g minimum. Fill in each row, then total the pack weight. Aim for 600–700 g of food per person per day.

Day 1 — Breakfast: food item, dry weight (g), calories

Day 1 — Lunch: food item, dry weight (g), calories

Day 1 — Dinner: food item, dry weight (g), calories

Day 1 — Snacks: food item, dry weight (g), calories

Day 2 — Breakfast: food item, dry weight (g), calories

Day 2 — Lunch: food item, dry weight (g), calories

Day 2 — Snacks: food item, dry weight (g), calories

Emergency food (+1 day buffer): food item, dry weight (g), calories

Total food weight (g): [calculate manually]

Total calories: [calculate manually]

Caloric density check: total calories divided by total weight in 28 g units (target: 100+)

Checklist: Water System Field-Test Checklist

[ ] Primary filter (e.g., Sawyer Squeeze) tested with a full squeeze cycle — flow rate is strong with no drips at the thread joint
[ ] Filter backflushed with the included syringe before packing
[ ] Chemical backup (Aquatabs or iodine) counted: at least 2 tablets per litre of planned daily water intake
[ ] Water collection container (dirty bag or collapsible bottle) is clean and free of prior odour
[ ] Emergency option confirmed: pot + lighter available for boiling if filter fails
[ ] Water source identified on map within 1 km of planned campsite
[ ] Minimum 1 L of treated water in pack before leaving each water source

Exercise: Camp Stove Boil-Time Baseline

At home, time a controlled boil test so you know your stove's true performance before depending on it in the field. This data lets you budget fuel accurately.

• Fill your camp pot with exactly 500 mL of cold tap water (record starting temperature). Light your stove at the same fuel level you would carry on the trip. Record time from lighting to rolling boil.

• Calculate fuel consumption: weigh your canister before and after the boil test. Note: a 110 g isobutane canister typically delivers 20–25 boil cycles at 500 mL. Does your canister have enough fuel for the trip?

• Repeat the test with a simulated wind (fan or outdoors) and note the difference in boil time. Does your stove need a windscreen? (Note: never use a windscreen with an integrated canister stove — heat buildup risk.)

Bear Country Safety and Trip Planning

Build and verify your complete trip plan, gear list, and bear safety protocol before your first overnight departure.

Worksheet: Pre-Trip Planning Form

Complete this form for every backcountry trip and leave a copy with a trusted contact before departure. This doubles as your emergency trip plan.

Trip name and destination (park / wilderness area / trail name)

Entry trailhead GPS coordinates and parking location

Planned route overview (point A to point B to camp to exit)

Planned campsite GPS or description

Departure date and time

Expected return date and time

Trigger for emergency action: if I have not contacted you by [date/time], call [SAR / RCMP / Park emergency number]

Emergency contact name and phone number

Nearest hospital or trauma centre to trailhead

Group members (names, any medical conditions)

Vehicle make, model, colour, and license plate at trailhead

Known hazards for this trip (fire activity, wildlife reports, water levels, permit requirements)

Exercise: Bear Encounter Decision Tree Practice

Work through each scenario and write the exact sequence of actions you would take. Use the course material to verify your answers after completing this exercise without notes.

• You round a bend on trail and find a black bear 20 m away facing you. It has not noticed you yet. Describe your first five actions in order.

• A grizzly bear charges at you from 30 m. You have bear spray on your hip. Describe exactly when and how you deploy it.

• You wake up at 2 AM to a bear pressing against the outside of your tent. You do not know the species. What do you do first, second, and third?

• You return to your camp and find a bear has broken into your food bag left on the ground. The bear is still present 15 m away. What do you do?

Checklist: Gear Readiness Checklist — First Overnight

[ ] Shelter packed and pitch practiced in under 8 minutes
[ ] Sleeping bag Lower Limit rating at or below the forecast overnight low temperature
[ ] Sleeping pad R-value is R-3 or higher for three-season conditions
[ ] Water filter tested and backflushed; chemical backup packed
[ ] Fuel canister weighed — enough for planned boil cycles plus 20% buffer
[ ] All ten essentials accounted for and verified functional (headlamp batteries tested)
[ ] Bear spray 225 g minimum in an accessible hip holster — safety tab functional
[ ] Food storage method packed: canister or 15 m of hang cord
[ ] All scented items (food, cookware, toiletries, cook clothing) identified for storage
[ ] Trip plan form completed and left with emergency contact
[ ] Offline topo map downloaded and verified on device
[ ] Group notification sent: departure time, return time, emergency trigger instructions

Your Action Plan

1. Read the seven LNT principles and write one specific example of each from a trip you have taken or a local park you know well
2. Identify the nearest 3-season camping destination within a 2-hour drive and download its offline topo map to Gaia GPS or CalTopo today
3. Purchase or borrow a ferro-rod (3/8-inch minimum diameter) and practice the spark-strike technique until you can consistently ignite a cotton ball in under 3 attempts
4. Complete at least three bow-drill practice sessions using cedar or cottonwood before your first backcountry trip and log results in the Bow-Drill Session Log
5. Weigh your existing camp gear on a kitchen scale and identify which of the Big Three (shelter, sleep system, pack) is over 1.5 kg
6. Plan a complete two-day meal using the meal planning worksheet and weigh every item before packing to verify 600–700 g per day target
7. Field-test your water filter with a boil-time comparison in your kitchen before trusting it in the field
8. Purchase bear spray (225 g, IGBC-approved) and practice removing the safety clip and extending your arm in a smooth motion until it takes under 3 seconds
9. Complete the Pre-Trip Planning Form for your first trip and physically hand or email it to your emergency contact before departure
10. After your first overnight, score your campsite with the Campsite Evaluation Score Sheet and note three decisions you would make differently next time