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The Lifehouse Network UK formed in 2024 and is largely a volunteer and peer-to-peer effort. It exists to serve a growing number of individuals, groups and communities who are preparing for the "Long Emergency". It aims to support work that builds togetherness, resilience and power through collaboration and shared resources.
For more information go to: https://lifehousenetwork.earth

LIFEHOUSE HOMES
HOUSEHOLD PREPAREDNESS GUIDE

Caring for ourselves, each other and all of life is at the heart of the Lifehouse ethos.

While services are crumbling, the cost of living is rising and extreme weather events are becoming the norm, none of us can take stability for granted any more.

People are worried. But we do have each other.

There is a need to get together and prepare on many levels for the changes ahead, such as on streets, in neighbourhoods and in bioregions. This resource tackles the smallest node of preparedness: the individual and household level.

Being prepared is about care. There is a myth that "prepping" is about isolation or paranoia. In the Lifehouse ethos, preparedness is a foundation for community. Sensible household preparedness makes us less likely to become immediately dependent on others during a disruption and increases our ability to be a capable part in a network of mutual relationships.

INNER RESILIENCE

The first Lifehouse is in our hearts

One of the most important things we can do to prepare for crisis is to care for our own wellbeing and build emotional and psychological resilience. Not only to be able to stay present and focussed in an emergency situation, but also to withstand the chronic stress we experience as we live through the “Long Emergency” witnessing the slow motion collapse of various systems. Let’s spell it out: even just thinking about needing to prepare can make us feel really unsettled!

Think about this:

- what helps you get through and bounce back from difficult situations?
- what practices help you get stronger?
- what mental and spiritual resources can you draw from?
- what gives you joy in life?
- how do you keep your body well and strengthen physical resilience,?

You might want to try:

- mindfulness, breathing, grounding exercises;
- balancing 'doom scrolling' with nature connection
- cultivating gratitude, joy and spiritual endeavours
- sharing emotions with others (friends, buddies, affinity groups, listening circles etc.)
- leisure activities
- improved lifestyle routines such as good nutrition, exercise and regular sleep cycles

Resources for inner resilience:

- ***iChill app and website***: learn skills to shift the nervous system back into resilient zone:
- *ichillapp*.com from www.traumaresourceinstitute.com
- ***The Climate Psychology Alliance*** provides support to individuals and groups struggling with eco-distress and offer safe spaces to share emotions surrounding the climate crisis: www.climatepsychologyalliance.org/index.php/find-support
- also associated with: ***Inner Climate Response Alliance (ICRA)*** www.innerclimateresponse.org
- ***Collapse Club***: weekly free online meetings with like-minded people in a safe, structured space to discuss your concerns about our world’s converging crises https://www.collapseclub.com/tag/collapse-support/
- ***"I can"*** comic manual: offers techniques that help you regulate stress and prepare yourself for challenging situations and conflict. It gives insights about the nervous system and helps increase individual and collective competencies to self-regulate. (https://wordpress.libereco.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/I-can-Version-2-

English.pdf; https://www.libereco.org/en/deutschland/publikationen/i-can-how-to-cope-with-stress-overcome-challenges-and-handle-conflict)

- ➔ - ***Psychological First Aid Course:*** consider skilling up for free: www.coursera.org/learn/psychological-first-aid

Although we will never be able to prepare for all eventualities, some level of practical preparedness will help to calm the nervous system, so let's look at “Lifehouse Homes” household resilience next.

LIFEHOUSE HOUSEHOLD PREPAREDNESS:

Each household's needs are different. Adapt any suggestions to your specific situation. There is a lot of "preparedness" information available. The UK government has issued guidance to encourage households to be ready to be self-sufficient for at least 3 days. (beready.campaign.gov.uk/).

We encourage you to think beyond that - to 3 weeks and 3 months. But remember: resilience is not something one household can achieve alone, the longer an emergency lasts, the more we need each other. Having said that - being prepared for 3 days or longer is a good start!

It might be a bit of a stretch for some of us to consider buying extra when struggling to afford the basics, so don't feel bad if you're struggling to accomplish your emergency preparedness. It's very common for people to get stuck, may that be due to overwhelm, lack of time, space or most importantly – money! Build up your resources when you are able - slowly and over time. This is not a checklist or a pressure system — it’s a way to meet your household with clarity and care.

No preparation will be perfect and there are many emergency scenarios which you may want to consider, including if you have to leave your home (make a "grab and go" bag; know how to turn off your gas, electricity and water). This is a useful website of the Red Cross: www.redcross.org.uk/get-help/prepare-for-emergencies. Also, please spread the word: if you know anyone who is disabled/a vulnerable adult they can get themselves on the priority list for utility companies when services are disrupted: Priority Services Register (PSR) www.thepsr.co.uk/.

Below we are focussing on the essentials for keeping a household ticking over when services and supplies stop for a while. We’re looking at maintaining ourselves in terms of Water, Food, Energy, Health and Communication.

THREE DAY DISRUPTION

WATER PREP:

- ➔ get savvy on how to conserve water (simultaneously save on water bills if you're metered)
- ➔ store drinking (and cooking) water: 3litres of water per person per day minimum (don't forget extra for pets or baby formula) but here's a downloadable tool for your own calculations: https://omniprepper.com/free-water-calc/
- ➔ you can either buy bottled water or fill water from the tap into water containers or bottles. Pure water in clean (food grade) containers can last for years. (www.dsb.no/en/Safe-everyday-life/Self-preparedness/How-to-store-drinking-water/). Store water in a dark and cool place. Check annually for taste/smell and change if necessary.
- ➔ If you are unsure if water is safe to drink, bring it to a roiling boil and/ or store water purification tablets
- ➔ if taps are still running during an emergency, fill your bath tub as a reservoir (make sure you have a fitting plug)
- ➔ **Hygiene:** Have wet wipes, hand sanitiser, and some "squirty bottles" to direct water for washing

FOOD PREP:

Think "Normal": Stock up on non-perishable foods you and your household already eat and like. Focus on foods that require little water, no cooking, or minimal prep.With that in mind, sit down and make a list of 3 breakfasts, lunch, dinners and snacks; work out the ingredients and build up your household stocks as and when you can afford to buy extra.

Sample list:

Proteins: tins of stews/soups, beans, chickpeas, lentils, fish/meat/tofu
Carbohydrates: oats, pasta, rice, couscous, polenta, instant mashed potatoes, oat cakes, crackers, tortillas
Vegetables: tinned tomatoes and other veg; pesto, sun-dried tomatoes in oil,
Drinks: Coffee, tea, hot chocolate mix, milk powder/ oat milk powder; long life dairy or dairy alternative
Spreads: jam, yeast extract, peanut butter, tubed cheese or pate, ghee
Sweets: tinned or dried fruit
sugar/ honey; custard, chocolate, energy bars
Condiments: oil, salt, spices, soya sauce, bouillon

ENERGY PREP:

- camping cooker and fuel (beware of fire hazard and fresh air supply when cooking with open flames)
- emergency candles
- paraffin lanterns
- (head)torches and batteries
- battery/ solar powered lantern
- charged portable power bank

HEALTH PREP:

- First aid kit
- latex gloves
- sanitary items
- isopropyl alcohol
- antibacterial ointment
- antihistamines
- pain killers

COMMUNICATION PREP:

- make paper lists with important phone numbers (family, friends, neighbours, emergency contacts)
- talk to your neighbours
- have a radio (battery/ solar powered or wind up)
- download emergency apps that support offline use (local maps, first aid guides etc.)

OTHER:

- think about the specific needs of any babies, pets and vulnerable people
- make a plan for extreme heat (how to keep a specific room cool) and extreme cold (jumpers, blankets, hot water bottles, gas bottle heater)
- think of other useful items such as: tin opener, work gloves, basic tool kit (hammer, pliers, screw drivers; screws, nails and zip ties), spade/ shovel, strong bin liners, gaffa tape, battery powered music player
- have a cash stash (small bills, in case electronic payments fail)

THREE WEEK DISRUPTION

Additional to your ‘three day’ stocks:

WATER PREP:

- consider investing in a counter top gravity water filter
- learn how to make distilled water (don't drink long term as it lacks minerals)
- consider investing in a portable hiking water filter
- **Hygiene:** clean water from natural water sources can be used for washing/ washing up, but also make sure to have: wet wipes, hand sanitiser, squirty bottles to save and direct water where it's needed.
  Also: stock sanitary items, soap, cleaning products (biodegradable) and toilet paper
- plan for toilet waste management if flush toilets fail (buckets with lids, biodegradable bags); refer to this guide: https://rdpo.net/emergency-toilet

FOOD PREP:

- for longer term preparedness make an inventory of what you normally eat and build up reserves of those foods; rotate stocks with the "First In, First Out" approach. Eat your stored goods and replace them.
- Here is a really useful example of one person's household preparedness including templates:
- https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1I_5B1Zh3_5q5XrM_VV86LoFj7OkGSfLW?usp=drive_link
  find space for extra food storage (ideally dry and even temperature below 21 C)
- consider storing and regularly cooking with vegetables that store well in a house such as sweet potatoes, winter squash, cabbages, onions
- Forage: Learn safe, local edible plants (avoid polluted areas)
- grow herbs and sprout seeds (such as mung beans and alfalfa)
- if you have access to growing space, cultivate some vegetables and fruit. Even pots on a balcony help.

ENERGY PREP:

- learn how to make a fire safely and how to cook food outdoors (BBQ or fire bowl might be useful)
- explore the option of wood burning stoves and rocket stoves (highly efficient cooking stoves fuelled with small twigs)
- source solar charger or small foldable solar panel
- if you have the means consider investing in a large-capacity portable power station (top up every 3 months)

HEALTH PREP:

- ➔ have an expanded first aid kit, including splinting material, tourniquet, larger sterile dressings
- ➔ make sure to store enough of everyone's regular medication plus multivitamins
- ➔ learn about local medicinal herbs
- ➔ skill up on treating minor health conditions
- ➔ keep up morale, consider having books, games, art and craft materials, battery powered stereo/ DVD player (plus CDs, tapes, DVDs)

COMMUNICATION PREP:

- ➔ know your neighbours (agree on a communication plan - who checks on whom, schedule for meeting or check-ins)
- ➔ have message pads, chalk boards or whiteboards for leaving notes if you can't speak in person
- ➔ consider 2-way radios or find out about setting up mesh networks (like LoRa) if phones go down

OTHER:

- ➔ get familiar with paper maps and compass
- ➔ learn to fix clothes, tools, and appliances etc.

THREE MONTH DISRUPTION

- ➔ **Scale up all of the above!**

If managing a rotating food stock is too daunting, there are some foods that can be stored for a very long long time in deep storage. If you have the financial resource consider storing more food for extra mouths to feed. These items can remain safe and edible for decades if stored cool, dry, dark and airtight (in sealed or vacuum packed bags/ "mylar" bags).

Long term storage foods:

- White rice 25+ years
- Dried beans and legumes 10 - 30+ years (texture declines)
- Wheat berries (whole wheat kernels) - 25+ years
- Honey – keeps effectively indefinite
- Salt (table or sea) - indefinite if dry
- Sugar (white) - indefinite if kept dry; brown sugar hardens but is usable
- Pure white flour up to 10 -20 years

- Dried pasta (semolina) - 10 -30 years
- Dehydrated powdered milk (nonfat dry milk) - 10+ years
- Instant coffee (freeze dried) many years
- Freeze dried foods (commercially packaged, Mylar/canned) - 20–30+ years depending on packaging
- Hard alcohol spirits, sealed - effectively indefinite
- Vinegar (white distilled) - effectively indefinite
- Pure maple syrup (unopened) - very long if stored cool; refrigeration after opening
- Dried legumes/peas/lentils (see beans) - 10–30+ years

Grow your own!

If you can imagine producing some of your own foods and have access to land, this is a calculator that can give you an idea of your household's needs: www.foodwhentheshopsstop.com

Growing the Commons:

Here's a comprehensive knowledge base on community-driven systems, tools, and practices for producing, governing, and sustaining life's essentials: growingthecommons.org

Pooling resources with neighbours:

Consider shared Infrastructure with your neighbours such as:

- ➔ rainwater collection
- ➔ installing compost toilets/ latrines (away from water courses)
- ➔ growing food
- ➔ bicycles and trailers
- ➔ wheel barrows and tools
- ➔ generator and fuel (or pedal powered!)
- ➔ small scale solar and wind micro systems

As you can see, the longer the emergency, the more it makes sense to connect and prepare with our neighbours for shared resources and skills.

BEYOND THREE MONTHS?

Community counts when systems fail

After a while you might start asking yourself the question - what happens beyond 3 months?

Long term, the sensible way forward is to do things differently – we can reduce our dependence on disposable goods, long supply chains, fossil-fuel transport and globalised manufacturing. We can choose to invest in local materials, local skills, local people, and local systems. This is an opportunity for long lasting regenerative change!

A next step could be to meet with neighbours and think larger scale. Together we can reclaim our power through practical, social and emotional preparedness, mutual aid networks, and grassroots democracy where everyone has a voice.

Over time, the Lifehouse approach can become a slow, deliberate redirection away from fragility and towards a future that can hold its own!

CONNECT WITH THE LIFEHOUSE UK NETWORK:

https://chat.whatsapp.com/JmXOS8jMUisJn65aeLmxaT