

10 ways how to start a fire without a lighter



Knowing how to start a fire is one of the most critical elements to surviving an emergency or wilderness survival situation. Hopefully you're carrying some kind of fire-starting gear in your EDC or your go bag but if not, there are many ways to start a fire. Just FYI, I still think this is the best fire starter overall, and it's always the first thing I grab.

You should learn as many fire-making methods as possible because you never know what situation you'll be in where you need to make one. I have MANY ways to start a fire in my personal bug out bag because I think it's so important – and my pack's still only 25 pounds. Also, remember that it's important to build your fire correctly before lighting it so it stays lit.

This goes for a lot of survival skills but fire gives you heat, cooking, craft-making ability, water purification, light, and protection. Also, practice these for yourself so you know exactly how they work and not just think remembering a concept will always work.

Remember, these methods usually have many variations that you can use if you understand the concept behind it.

Here are some unique and creative ways to start a fire without a lighter or permanent survival match.

Friction-based fire-starting

Well, since there are literally thousands of website pages and YouTube videos out there that show how to start a fire by rubbing two sticks together, this isn't really creative. Boring. Next!

Electrical methods

Cell phone and steel wool

Cell phones have a battery that can ignite things like steel wool or small batteries. Watch the magic happen:

Batteries and gum wrapper

I've tried this one myself. The trick is to get the wrapper cut small enough that it heats up enough but wide enough that it doesn't burn up or break before you get your fire started. It takes two batteries because each is 1.5v and that's not quite enough. You could use a 9v instead, and you can use strips of aluminum foil instead of the gum wrapper. You also have to have your tinder and fire ready to go through because this doesn't burn very long:

9v and Steel wool

steel wool can be ignited by rubbing both battery posts of a 9V battery, the battery from your cell phone if it's removable, or wires from a 12v car battery on it. Here's a quick video of a 9v and steel wool.

Chemical reactions to get a fire going

Brake fluid and chlorine

If you find some chlorine powder or tablets that you can shave or pound into powder, you can combine that with brake fluid to start a fire. You'll need to use chlorine powder or shaved tablets for a pool because I doubt your laundry chlorine will work. This one is extremely exothermic so it'll have some force behind it when it combusts. You need to make a big tinder pile and stand back:

Potassium Permanganate and glycerin is my favorite way to start a fire without a lighter theoretically but I haven't been able to find a way to do it realistically.

Using the sun to start a fire (without having to fly there)

Obviously, a magnifying glass is a great fire starter. One REALLY FREAKING POWERFUL way to do this is to take the Fresnel lens out of a broken projection TV to light a fire. This works so well that you could use this to cook with or heat water or take

over a small nation. You can also order smaller Fresnel lenses that are more portable. Watch and learn peeps; watch and learn:

Now in a survival situation, you're probably not going to carry around a Fresnel lens out of a projection TV. They make page-sized Fresnel lenses though that you can carry – and they're super cheap (see the video below where I try the one I bought and did a review on). You just have to try to keep them flat so they don't get a crease or they'll be a bit less effective. You also have to play with bending it slightly in your hand as you're lighting your tinder. Focus the light on the inside pieces of the tinder so as they heat up and catch, they catch the pieces above them. I took this quick video in my back yard just to see how well it worked. I had to hold my iPhone to take the video so I put a small tinder bundle of dried grass I found in my yard (I really got to do some yard work) and folded them into an old cardboard box to keep the bundle tight. It only took a few seconds for it to catch:

Soda can

I don't know what he's talking about with the tinder or whatever but if you have some toothpaste or clay or sand or whatever and a crapload of time to polish the bottom of a soda or beer can, you can get a fire to light. It's not as easy as you think though:

Reflector from a flashlight

A flashlight reflector is designed to take light from one point and focus it forward. Because mirrors work both ways, you can use flashlight reflectors to focus light into one point.

This video shows a few ways to start a fire using water as a lens to focus the sun's energy in one spot. It also shows using sodium, but I don't know where you'd find that.

5 Ways to start a fire with water

Air pressure

Fire can also be made by compressing air. I've included a video showing one way you can make them from scratch but there are many ways to do it with copper or PVC tubing or whatever but you might just want to go ahead and order one of these badass fire pistons instead (it has a fire steel backup that comes with it btw).

Keep in mind, one of the most critical elements to getting a fire started and keeping it going easily with the fuel you have available is building it properly. It's so important that I've devoted an entire post just for that.

I think the best way is still to have a lighter in your pocket as part of your EDC kit as well as in your bug out bag and/or camping gear. You might want to consider an Everstryke Match. It's sealed so it doesn't have the problems that Bic lighters do.

The more methods you learn about how to start a fire, the easier it'll be for you to find a way with what you have in a survival situation. Just make sure you get out there and practice!

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