FIELD GUIDE · BONUS

Fire Starting Method

Carry more than one way to make a flame, and make lighting the last step, not the first.



FROM THE BOOK

1. Modern ignition tools make fire building easier, but they still need a plan. A disposable lighter is simple and dependable, yet it can fail if it is damaged or runs out of fuel.
2. Waterproof matches are an excellent backup. A ferrocerium rod continues to work even after it has become wet, once it has been dried off. Carrying more than one way to start a fire is inexpensive insurance when warmth or safe drinking water may depend on it.
3. Prepared tinder — commercial fire starters or cotton balls coated with petroleum jelly — can make an enormous difference when natural materials are damp. A few ounces weigh very little.
4. Place tinder where your ignition source can reach it easily. Light it in one or two places rather than trying to ignite every corner at once, then give the kindling time to catch before you add larger wood.
5. Gather enough tinder, plenty of kindling, and larger fuel, and build your fire lay, before you strike a match or spark a rod. Lighting the fire should be the final step, not the first. Build fires only where they are permitted, and never leave a fire unattended.

PRACTICE IT

In a safe, permitted fire ring, spark a ferro rod or light a waterproof match into a cotton ball or commercial starter, then transfer the flame to kindling you already have stacked and ready.