

6 Homesteading Skills to Learn First



The list of homesteading skills that could be listed here are numerous. When you are beginning a homestead, a large list can be overwhelming. I know when I feel overwhelmed I am not very productive. My goal is to help you get started with homesteading without the overwhelm. Taking big plans and goals and breaking them into smaller chunks is a good way to change your lifestyle.

If you haven't had much experience being self sufficient in the past, don't feel you have to overlook having a homestead and providing good clean food and self sufficiency to your family dynamic. I took a look at various lists of skills that are good to learn. While I don't have any argument with the items on most lists, you don't have to learn it all at once. I chose six categories that I think will help you start strong. Focus on these six or any handful from a list, that will help you feel in control.



Gardening

This is the skill you would expect to see on the list, and for good reason. Every bit of food you grow or raise yourself is one less bit you would have bought from the grocery store. I am not against grocery stores! I am for being self sufficient. It is nice to know [how to grow food](#) because it tastes great, is as fresh as you can get, and you know exactly what was used to grow it. Since most of us have other jobs in addition to our homesteading efforts, grocery stores are very convenient to have around. And should some type of emergency happen, financially or otherwise, you will know how to grow your own food.

Home grown food can be used to barter, trade or help someone in need. My advice is something I try to follow. Start with a [manageable size garden](#). If you work off the homestead, your garden efforts will be largely concentrated on the weekends.

Trying to plant, weed, water, and tend to a large plot of ground every weekend will be exhausting, unless it is your favorite thing to do. Grow a smaller amount at first. In some zones, [a fall garden](#) will offer a way to get more produce. [Succession planting](#) is another method to increase yield from a smaller garden.

Know your garden zone and purchase plants and seeds that do well in your climate. When you have a plant that is doing well for you and is from heirloom seeds, learn to [save seeds](#) from those plants. These seeds from top performing plants can be used the next season in your garden.



Cooking

As important as growing food, knowing how to [cook healthy food](#) is one of the important homesteading skills. Don't worry if you have been relying on take out food and restaurants for

your meals. Cooking is nothing more than following a plan. The internet has many cooking websites that you can access. Purchase one [comprehensive cookbook](#) that uses real food ingredients and read through the recipes. Its not as hard as it looks! When you grocery shop, purchase whole ingredients such as meat, cheese, fresh vegetables, whole grain and natural bread products. Better yet, try an easy no – knead bread recipe and [bake your own bread](#).

Learn to use cast iron cookware. Cast iron makes the food taste even better, and this cookware will last forever! In an emergency, cast iron can be used over an open cooking flame, or on a wood burning stove.

Heating

Learn to chop firewood safely. A chainsaw will make the job easy if you know how to safely operate one. Or learn to use an axe. Either way, if you need an alternate form of heat, wood fire is your answer. It may even become your only source of heat.

Maintain your fireplace or wood burning stove so it operates safely and efficiently. Get your stores of firewood in place during the summer so you have seasoned wood ready when the weather turns cold. Any wood will burn, but wood that has been stacked correctly and seasoned or weathered, is drier and will catch fire quicker. Green wood can be a challenge to many people trying to start a fire for warmth.



Hunting and Foraging

Yes, I realize that these are two entirely different topics but for this purpose my intention is to highlight wild food. Learn [what is edible](#) and how to find it, prepare it, and cook it. If hunting isn't for you, there are plenty of wild plants in rural areas that can supplement your food supply. Wild berries picked during the season, can be preserved by canning, freezing or dehydrating. Greens and herbs are often plentiful. Have a reliable field guide that can help you identify plants and berries. My rule of thumb is if I can't clearly identify something, I leave it behind. Some wild foods can make you sick, if consumed.

If you choose to hunt for game animals, learn the proper seasons for each species. Check the laws for your area about licensing requirements. Keep your weapon clean and prepared and store it in a safe manner.



Healing

Using natural plants such as herbs to create [health promoting mixtures](#) is a natural step from cooking with whole foods. Herbs are very easy to grow indoors and out. [Homegrown herbs](#) can be added to your home cooked meals as seasoning and flavor. Infusing oils from the herbs is an easy step that takes very little time. From the infused oils, [beeswax](#), coconut oil, and olive oil, it is easy to create [homemade salves](#), lotions and soaps. When you use these products you made, you know that they include only fresh ingredients and no harmful chemicals.

Honey is one of the best healing products. Even if you don't have your own bees, you can get raw honey from other farmers, or suppliers. Try using honey in mixtures or straight from the jar. Colds, coughs, skin rashes, burns, and more ailments can be healed with the help of raw honey. It is definitely one of

the best things to learn more about and a valuable addition to your homesteading skills.



Sewing

When you know how to sew by hand, you can repair clothing, towels, bedding and more. Instead of buying new, you will be able to repair your favorite barn shirt. Making [something useful](#) will become easy for you with just a little practice. [Quilting](#) uses sewing skills to take bits of fabric from different sources and combine them into a usable new item. Quilts are also a thing of beauty for your home.

Sewing skills can be used to repair livestock coats, like those used on horses and sheep. Being able to repair costly items can save you considerable money.

What Homesteading Skills Would You Put on the List?

There are a multitude of homesteading skills you can learn along the journey. The time to start is now. While you learn, be kind to yourself. We all started somewhere along the path. Much time is spent learning and forging ahead. Along the way, I hope you find confidence and the desire to share your list of top homesteading skills to know, with others starting out. I look forward to hearing the homesteading skills you place at the top of the list, in the comments.



The Herbal Starter Kit



CATNIP LEAF 1.5 oz

Prepared: _____

CALENDULA 1 oz

Prepared: _____

Expires: _____

ELDER BERRIES 3 oz

25 Recipes, 22 Herbs,
Monographs and More!

GET YOURS TODAY!