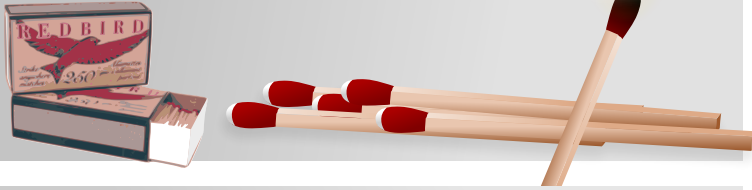


TOP TEN FIRE STARTERS

1. Strike Anywhere Matches

Good strike-anywhere matches are increasingly difficult to find. I stock up on my favorite brand (Redbird from Eddy Match in Ontario) when we are in Canada for our canoe trips.



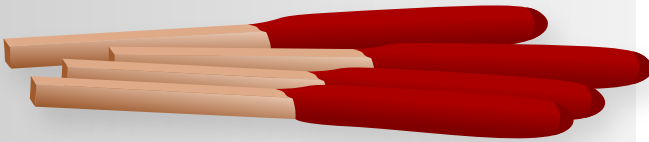
2. Butane Lighter

Lightweight and reliable (if dry) a disposable butane lighter may get a little sluggish at very low temperatures. Not as traditional or picturesque but if you must light a fire in difficult conditions a butane lighter can save your life. I always have a couple stowed away in my gear for emergencies.



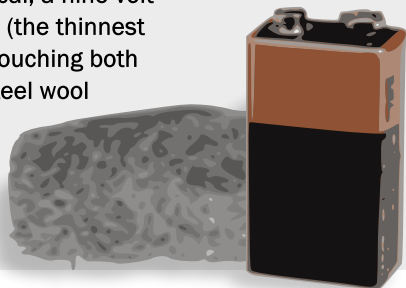
3. Life Boat Matches

Lifeboat matches are made by several different manufacturers, look for high quality ones. They burn for ten or twelve seconds, and that can make a big difference!



4. Steel Wool and Battery

More interesting than practical, a nine volt battery and 0000 steel wool (the thinnest grade) are an old standby. Touching both poles of the battery to the steel wool creates an electrical short that heats and ignites the fine strands of steel wool.



5. Flint and Steel

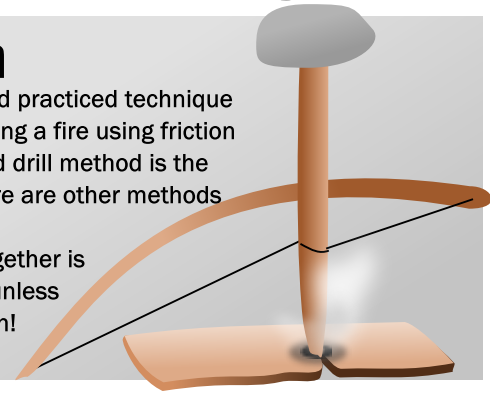
Flint and steel was the standard fire-lighter for centuries. Key to successful use is a good steel striker, a sharp piece of flint or similar stone and a ready supply of char cloth (carbonized cotton or linen cloth), and plenty of practice.



6. Friction

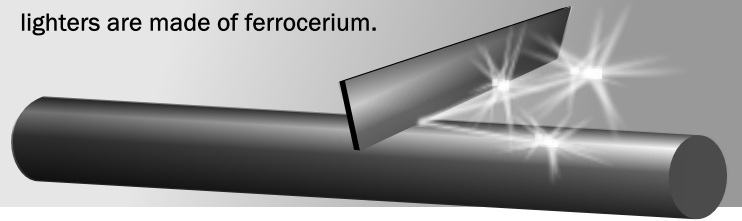
The right materials and practiced technique are important to lighting a fire using friction methods. The bow and drill method is the most familiar, but there are other methods using friction.

Rubbing two sticks together is not a viable method, unless one of them is a match!



7. Ferrocerium Rod

Ferrocerium is a man-made metallic material that sparks at temperatures at 3,000 °F when scraped with a knife blade or steel striker. Most all commercial strikers and the 'flint' of lighters are made of ferrocerium.



8. Birthday Candles

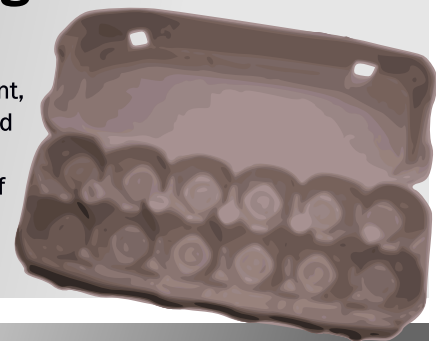
A small candle or a piece of a larger candle ought to be in any fire-lighting kit. Lightweight, small, and easy to find birthday candles (once lit, of course) burn for a few minutes and make lighting damp tinder a great deal more likely.

(Now you know what to do with those candles left over from your next birthday!)



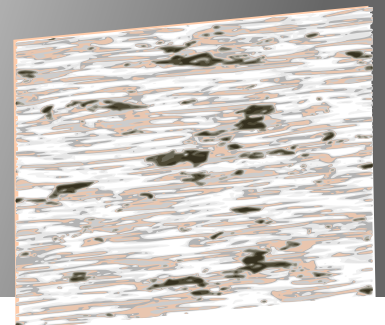
9. Waxed Egg Carton

Fill the chambers of a used egg carton with sawdust, a charcoal briquette, dryer lint, a roll of newspaper, etc. and fill with melted wax. Provides several minutes of steady flame for really difficult conditions.



10. Birch Bark

The bark of down, dead birch trees (don't strip living trees unless your life depends on it) contains flammable resins. Once lit a roll of birch bark will burn hot and long enough to start a fire in wet conditions.



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