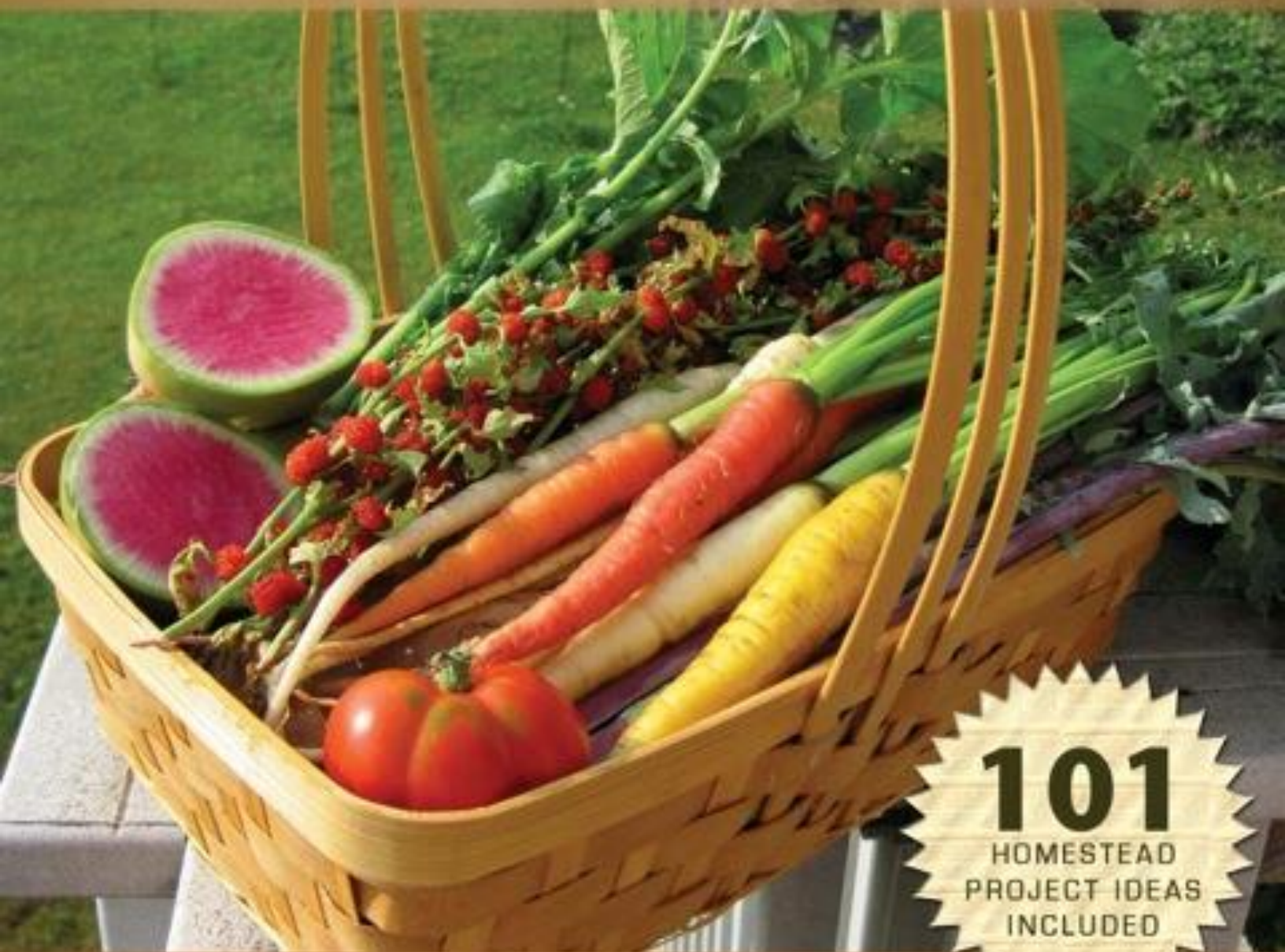


COMMON SENSE HOMESTEADING 101

7 STEPS TO BECOME MORE SELF-RELIANT NOW



101

HOMESTEAD
PROJECT IDEAS
INCLUDED

LAURIE NEVERMAN

AUTHOR OF

COMMON SENSE HOMESTEADING

Homesteading 101

7 Steps to Become More Self-Reliant Now



Praise from our readers about Laurie Neverman and Common Sense Homesteading:



“You provide the best information for self-sufficiency in a way that makes sense to everyone.”

“Your topics are interesting and humorous, insightful, intriguing, honest.”

“You strive to live the things that you teach, and that you are always willing to share not only your knowledge, but to actually research questions to help others in living a more green life.”

“You're my "go-to" person for all questions garden, fermenting, energy..... I figure if you don't know it, you've got a solid lead..... I refer to you as my "organic/heirloom garden, nutrition-foody, math-y fact-checker guru" in certain circles.... seriously, with modern homesteading questions, I check with Laurie before google.....”

Other E-Books by Laurie Neverman

[*Common Sense Health*](#)

Homesteading 101: 7 Steps to Become More Self-Reliant Now

By Laurie Neverman
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To learn more about the new self-reliance movement, visit Common Sense Homesteading at:
<http://www.commonsehome.com>

Table of Contents

<i>Praise from our readers about Laurie Neverman and Common Sense Homesteading:</i>	3
<i>Other E-Books by Laurie Neverman</i>	3
Introduction.....	6
Homesteading Step #1 - Getting Started.....	8
Homesteading Step #2 – “Daily Do’s”.....	9
Make Your Self-Reliance Master List	9
Pick One Self-Reliance Skill to Work On, Start There	9
Where do I get help learning self-reliance skills?.....	10
Homesteading Step #3 – Knowing What Goes In Your Belly	12
Self-Reliant Food Choices	13
Homesteading Step #4 – Home Sweet Home	14
Creating a Healthy Home.....	14
Water Conservation	15
Energy Conservation.....	15
Homesteading Step #5 – Skill Building.....	16
Money Management	16
Gardening and Cooking	16
Food Storage	18
Raising Livestock.....	20
Health and Wellness Basics for Everyday Use and Emergencies	20
Basic Home and Vehicle Maintenance and Repairs	21
Sewing, Carpentry and Crafting	22
Homesteading Step #6 - Preparing for Everyday Emergencies.....	22
Some of the most common “Everyday Emergencies”	22
Preparedness Basics – Covering the “Stuff”	23
Preparedness Basics – Preparing Yourself	24
Homesteading Step #7 - Creating Community	25
Check Out Local Clubs and Interest Groups	25
Ask Around Work, Church, School and Civic Groups.....	26
Visit Your Local Farmers Market, Feed Store or Farm Supply Store	26
Watch for Community Events	26
Online Communities	26
Conclusion and 101 Homestead Project Ideas.....	27

Introduction

My name is Laurie Neverman, and I was raised on a small dairy farm in northwest Wisconsin. As the youngest of six kids, I always seemed to be tagging along with someone doing something. Spring meant planting and baby critters; summer meant haying and long, hot days picking and preserving; fall was butchering and a mad rush to get everything possible out of the garden before deep frost settled in; and winter saw plenty of snow and cold, but also a surfeit of holiday baking and fun projects like our annual gingerbread creations. Our official income placed us below the poverty line (anyone else familiar with the huge blocks of government cheese food?), but we ate well because we raised so much of our own food.

When I went off to college, I was all fired up about working with solar power and saving the world. Five and half years and two degrees later, I ended up working with a solar energy contractor in Green Bay, Wisconsin, and married to my college sweetheart. Solar was not nearly as glamorous as the shiny brochures had made it appear. We did solar thermal installations and repairs, and operated the world's largest flat plate collector solar water heating system, Packerland Solar System. Through a series of unfortunate events, the solar system that once heated over one million gallons of water per year was scrapped and sold for parts. This coincided with my first pregnancy. I got used solar panels for a baby shower gift and severance pay.

I came home and settled into mommyhood in suburbia. Baby one was followed by baby two. We set about transforming our half acre suburban yard into serious food growing space. Cherry trees, apple trees, peach trees, grapes, blueberries, raspberries, currants, 23 raised garden beds and more quickly filled up the space. The neighbors pretty much thought we were crazy, but the folks who ended up buying the place from us when we moved said it was the gardens that sold them on it.

In 2004, we decided to sell our first home and move out to the country. I missed the wide open spaces, and the neighborhood that had grown up around our home left us feeling very out of place. My husband got to embrace his passion for architecture by redesigning our home a few hundred times while we hunted for affordable property and waited for our builder to finish prior commitments. What we ended up with is a Wisconsin Green Built and Focus on Energy certified, handicap accessible home that will hopefully be our forever home. We've planted extensive gardens, and are also working with native plants and permaculture areas. I've begun studying herbalism (there are so many plants that I think you could study for a lifetime and still only scratch the surface) and wildcrafting, i.e., using wild plants for food and medicine.

Once again we live by the seasons, with planting, harvest, and storage and long winter nights. In spring the attached greenhouse is filled with hundreds of seedlings. In late summer every kitchen surface is filled with produce waiting for processing. In fall we fill the root cellar with potatoes, cabbages, canned goods and other fruits and veggies. At winter solstice, the sun shines past the passive solar overhang, penetrating deeply into the home to provide additional light and heat; and the house is filled with the smell of home baked treats.

The boys, now teenagers, still get excited about sharing “their food” with company, because it tastes good and they worked hard to make it. They know the neighbors who raise our eggs, meat and milk. If we get snowed in by winter storms, they know we’ll be fine for a quite a while because we have ample food stored and emergency preps. If something breaks or stops working, they know basic problem solving skills to analyze the situation, and have a keen appreciation for youtube videos featuring, “How to fix xyz”. They know something doesn’t need to smell like some heavy artificial fragrance to be “clean”. This is my legacy to them – the gift of knowing how to do more for themselves, the gift of self-reliance. I look forward to sharing it with you.

Homesteading Step #1 - Getting Started

Congratulations! If you're reading this, you've taken what may be the most important step to become more self-reliant. I'm not talking about reading my book; I'm talking about **making the conscious decision to take a look at your life and make positive changes**. Nothing meaningful can be done to or for someone who has not decided to make a change. Many folks go through life without giving any of this a second thought.

Every structure needs a good foundation to build on, so I've grouped our **self-reliance fundamentals** into six additional steps.

Step 2 – “Daily Do’s” - Making small, daily changes to establish new behavior patterns

Step 3 - Knowing What Goes in Your Belly

We all have to eat, and food directly impacts our health and well-being, so it's a great place to focus on to increase our self-reliance

Step 4 - Home Sweet Home

As with food, we all need a place to live. There are many changes we can make in our homes to save money, live healthier and leave a lighter footprint on the planet.

Step 5 - Skill Building

Many of us have hobbies or areas of interest that can be developed to do more for ourselves in our homes and on our homesteads, used to create extra income, or bartered with others in exchange for services or goods. If not, there's no time like the present to start learning.

Step 6 - Preparing for Everyday Emergencies

A big part of what triggered my personal shift towards self-reliance and taking a more proactive role in my own healthcare was when my husband lost his job and I ran into health problems. I'm not particularly concerned about zombies, but I think we all need to be prepared for emergencies that we run into every day.

Step 7 - Creating Community

Unless you're superwoman (or superman), doing absolutely everything that needs doing while maintaining a comfortable standard of living can be extremely difficult. It's great to have a variety of skills and be able to do things if you need to, but it also makes a whole lot of sense to let someone who is really good at something get it done in half the time while you focus on your area of expertise. Division of labor can be a useful tool. It's also great to have like-minded people to work with on group projects that can be a lot for one person to tackle - like raising buildings, processing livestock or large quantities of produce, or making maple syrup.

Now that you know what's coming, let's get into the details.

Homesteading Step #2 – “Daily Do’s

Ben Franklin made up a list of 13 virtues that he aspired to, and worked on one each day, until they became habit. The Japanese concept of “[kaizen](#)” translates to “continuous improvement”. It involves taking small steps, every day, to make a process better.

How do we apply this to homesteading?

Make Your Self-Reliance Master List

- **Changes You Would Like to Make**
- **Things You Would Like to Do**
- **Skills You Would Like to Learn**

Get a notebook or binder to track your goals, your progress and your mistakes. This will be great learning resource and motivational tool so you can see how far you have come. Also, tracking everything in one spot helps keeps you organized and focused. Who knows? You may be writing what could eventually lead to the Little House series of our age.

In the front of your binder, put all your ideas on one big wish list that you can tackle over time. Categories/skill areas you may want to consider are:

- Food Preparation
- Food Storage
- Gardening/Growing Your Own food
- Learning more about Home Remedies, Herbalism and Natural Health
- Preparedness for Every Day Emergencies
- Raising animals, such as chickens, bees, rabbits and other homestead helpers
- Basic skills like home repair, carpentry, small engine repair, sewing, etc.
- Sustainable Living skills such as water conservation, reduction of electric use, and using less toxic products
- Green Home Building and Remodeling
- Wildcrafting (Using wild plants for food and medicine)

Pick One Self-Reliance Skill to Work On, Start There

Don’t go for “all or nothing”. That usually winds up being “nothing”. Don’t put off starting until this or that happens – there will always be a reason not to get started. Don’t think you can’t be a homesteader or more self-reliant because you live in the city – urban homesteading options are growing by leaps and bounds.

For example, if you wanted to improve the quality of food your family eats, your kaizen homesteading efforts might look something like this:

- Start by replacing a single prepackaged food item with a homemade version of that item.
- Continue until most things you eat are homemade or better quality pre-made.

- Ditch the highly processed snack foods.
- Eat out less (or not at all).
- Add more veggies to your family's meals.
- Source your ingredients closer to home, either via CSA, farmer's market or growing your own.
- [Buy in bulk](#) and learn [how to store foods](#).
- Try [sprouting](#).
- Experiment with [fermenting](#).
- Learn home food preservation techniques.

As you can see, there are many steps you can take, you just need to choose what's right for you and try it.

Where do I get help learning self-reliance skills?

You may be thinking, "Sure, that's great, but if I don't know it, where am I going to learn it?" We live in an age where most of us have an abundance of information just a click away in the form of websites, videos and online reference libraries.

Other helpful resources include:

Books and Magazines

I may be a dinosaur, but I'm still a fan of print books and magazines. There's just something about curling up with a good book that an e-reader just can't match. Plus, if you are off grid or with limited power, printed copies don't need electricity. With preparedness shows attracting a growing audience, more people are waking up to the reality that the goods and services we depend on every day might not always be available. There are many good publications that cater to the growing interest in self-reliance, gardening and homesteading.

Cooperative Extension System Offices

The USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture maintains a network of Cooperative Extension System Offices throughout the United States, including Alaska, Hawaii and the U.S. territories. These offices are staffed by experts who provide information and services to the public, many of them free of charge. They often have pamphlets about specific crop production, and may offer classes in food preservation or other services like soil and water testing.

Libraries

In addition to their wonderful array of books, many libraries now offer e-books, magazines, CDs, DVDs, computers, internet access, microfilm, maps and more. Some also offer programs and workshops, or host special events and speakers on topics of local interest. This book was inspired by a presentation I prepared for a local library.

Local Groups and Organizations

For the younger set, there are national groups like 4-H, Future Farmers of America (FFA), Boys Scouts and Girl Scouts, Frontier Girls, Keepers of the Faith, Earth Champs and many others that teach different skill sets.

For adults (and in some cases, children), look to vocational and technical schools, and less formal settings such as clubs that support gardening, beekeeping, quilting, homebrewing and more. Asking around your local farmers market or natural food and health stores can be a grate place to make connections with like-minded people.

Sometimes local business will offer open houses or demonstrations to draw in new customers, such as the sheering day celebration at an alpaca farm near our home.

If you are lucky enough to have a living history museum nearby, they may offer classes or presentations on techniques such as blacksmithing, Dutch oven cooking, use of draft animals, quilting and sewing or other old time skills. Some in our area also hire additional staff in summer as docents to demonstrate equipment to the public, which of course includes training in the use of said equipment.

If you find someone who's doing what you'd like to do, talk to them and ask where they learned or if they'd like to share their own experience.

WWOOFING and Other Volunteer Options

WWOOF (Word Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms - www.woof.net) links up volunteers with organic farms and growers. WWOOF started all the way back in 1971 in the UK and has now spread to over 50 groups worldwide. Volunteers live with their hosts and provide help with daily activities, and hosts provide room and board and share their knowledge with up and coming sustainability peeps.

Other similar organizations include:

Workaway (www.workaway.info) Workaway pairs up volunteers with not only farmers but local family businesses and small organizations. Their website emphasizes integrating with local cultures and language learning along with learning new skill sets.

Help Exchange (HelpX - <http://www.helpx.net/>) HelpX is an online listing of host organic farms, non-organic farms, farmstays, homestays, ranches, lodges, B&Bs, backpackers hostels and even sailing boats who invite volunteer helpers to stay with them short-term in exchange for food and accommodation.

Homesteading Step #3 – Knowing What Goes In Your Belly

Growing up, I never gave much thought to food, which may sound strange, since we spent so much time producing it. It was always just “there”, and gardening, preserving and raising animals was just what a part of life. I just followed mom’s guidance, so I didn’t need to do much thinking or planning. We ate what was in season, along with things we had a taste for that were in the budget. Next to the fresh picked cucumbers and tomatoes, the kitchen table might feature a pitcher of drink mix and boxed cereal. Nutrition advice was eating from the four food groups – candy, candy corn, candy canes and syrup. (Just kidding! It was before the movie Elf came out.) The food groups were fruits and veggies, milk, meat, and cereals and breads.

Convenience foods were everywhere, and that new gadget called a microwave promised faster meal preparation than ever before. Even mom often bought bread and things like premade spice mixes, because they were so cheap and easy to use.

Fast forward to my early married years. My husband and I were both working outside the home, which often meant getting home late in the evening and little time to cook. Quick foods like instant oatmeal packets and the infamous “meat helper” products made it into our home.

Fast forward again, to the arrival of our boys. I was much less “crunchy” then than I am now. I followed the standard pediatrician recommendations, breastfeeding for around a year and introducing solid foods mostly out of jars and packages. Bright orange fish crackers and fruit snacks that had only a passing acquaintance with fruit made regular appearances in the snack bag.

While the boys were growing, so was my backside. I hopped on one of the trendy diets of the new millennium; avoiding fats and sugar, adding soy to our diets, exercising fanatically – basically running myself into the ground and eating food that tasted like sawdust. I lost weight, but I couldn’t keep it up. The weight came back on.

Around this time I discovered the book, “[Nourishing Traditions](#)”. It was such a relief to finally find a discussion of nutrition that made more historical sense. Our ancestors didn’t have access to highly processed, vitamin enhanced “nutrifoods”. They ate fresh, seasonal foods, and those that were naturally shelf stable or pickled and fermented. Fat wasn’t something to be feared, it was a concentrated source of energy (living off the fat of the land). Not every recipe I tried from the book was a winner, but the main concepts help me to build my current dietary guidelines.

We are far from perfect. There are many people out there who I’m sure could lecture me on how our choices could be improved. (I know this because a number of them have stopped by to troll the website and Facebook page.) It took half a lifetime to build up bad habits, so I figure the other half can be spent learning to make better choices. The main point I want to convey in this step is to simply **think about everything that goes into your mouth.**

We are a nation of careless eaters. Food is abundant and cheap (compared to many areas of the world), and our health is paying the price for our “cheap” food. The following is our list of budget friendly, good food habits for better health and self-reliance.

Self-Reliant Food Choices

1. **Read labels, or buy food that doesn't need labels, like fresh produce.** Go for short ingredient lists with easy to understand ingredients.
2. **Buy local or grow/raise your own.** Several studies have shown that the average American meal travels over a thousand miles to get to your plate. When fuel prices rise, the cost of these food miles could dramatically increase. Fresh food often contains more nutrients and tastes better, too.
3. **Buy in bulk.** Brick and mortar buying clubs and smaller bulk resale shops are spreading around the country, and online buying clubs such as Azure Standard, UNFI and Country Life can get bulk items to almost anywhere. If there's an item you use in quantity, bulk purchasing is almost always a good deal. Just remember – don't buy it if you won't use it before it spoils. Food that goes to waste is not a savings.
4. **Eat the whole food, not the food product.** Go for the piece of fruit over the commercial fruit candy. Eat a baked potato instead of fast food fries. Put together a casserole or side dish with meat, veggies and cheese instead of salty powder packets of dried food bits.
5. **Don't fear the fat.** Enjoy good quality fat as part of your diet to help you absorb fat soluble vitamins and minerals. Fat helps you to feel full, and feeds your brain, which is mostly made up of fat. Look for good quality fats, such as grassfed butter, coconut oil, olive oil, non-hydrogenated lard and tallow, and pastured poultry fat. Seed and nut oils are also good in small amounts, but most are best kept refrigerated and used quickly because they are not shelf stable and go rancid. I try to buy organic, but even when I can't get organic, I trust cows more than chemists.
6. **Look for pastured, free range and wild meats.** Not too surprisingly, animals that get out and get some exercise and live green food to eat have different meat quality than their confined counterparts. You'll need to grow or hunt your own, or connect with local farmers or other trusted food producers.
7. **Eat less grain and processed grain products.** We've been trying to add more veggies to meals in place of grains. Grains are cheap and filling, and are a great storage items, but it seems more and more folks are having trouble digesting them. Most commercial baked goods are loaded with sugar, rancid fats, and preservatives. Bake your own if you want to keep grains in your diet, or follow the short ingredient list rule. Traditional sourdough baking and soaked flour baked goods may also help you get the most nutrition out of your grains.
8. **Eat at home, take time for meals.** Regular restaurant visits can blow your budget, pack on excess calories, and include the consumption of mystery meal ingredients. An occasional meal at a place you trust is one thing, becoming one of the people who eat fast food every day – not so good. When you eat, make time to enjoy the food and think about what you're eating. Try not to eat on the run or eat when distracted.
9. **Watch out for GMOs.** More than 80% of the corn grown in the US is genetically modified, and more than 4000 products in the average US supermarket contain corn or corn derivatives. Most granulated sugar is now made from genetically modified sugar beets (unless it says "cane sugar", it's probably beets). All these Round Up Ready crops have led to glyphosate being found in the breast milk blood and urine of women in the US and Canada, even those who were trying to avoid chemicals. I'm tired of being a lab rat.

Homesteading Step #4 – Home Sweet Home

Our homes should be a safe haven, but this can be challenging. Right now I have two friends battling severe mold issues in their homes. Others have had problems with chemical sensitivities (including me). That “new house smell” of fresh paint or new carpet is really volatile organic chemicals (VOCs), which in quantity can cause serious problems. Many commercial cleaners contain toxic ingredients. Energy prices keep creeping (and sometimes leaping) up, and drought and contamination are straining water resources in many areas. In this step we’ll discuss how to make your home healthier and more energy and water efficient.

Talking about health may seem a little “off track” for a homesteading book, but it’s always been a big part of my writing because without good health, everything else is a whole lot tougher. You can learn more about healthy living choices in my e-book, [Common Sense Health](#).

Creating a Healthy Home

Air Quality

Check for any visible signs of mold and mildew. As houses have become tighter, air exchange rates decrease. In humid environments, this creates a perfect breeding ground for toxic black mold. If you have allergies that are worse when you are home, with symptoms like sneezing, sore eyes and a runny nose or congestion that feel better when you go out, mold may be the culprit. Home mold test kits are available, or you can have professional testing done. If excessive mold is found, I would recommend professional help to remove the mold and find a way to keep it from growing in the future.

When bringing in new household items, building or remodeling, look for non-toxic options. Watch for low or no-VOC labels and natural materials. Buying used is often a good option, as any outgassing that was going to happen is already done.

Consider an HRV (Heat Recovery Ventilator) system. An HRV is an air-to-air heat exchanger that allows you to transfer heat from stale indoor air to fresh air from outside. You get fresh air inside the house without the energy loss of an open window.

Use non-toxic cleaners like baking soda and vinegar. Avoid synthetic perfumes and scented products.

Water Quality

Get your water tested. There are home test kits available. Sometimes Cooperative Extension Offices or other local government offices offer testing. You can also get mail order water testing. However you get it done, it’s just common sense to make sure that you’re using safe, clean water. Many wells in our area have issues with nitrates and bacteria, some areas of the country have arsenic or industrial pollutants. Municipal water supplies are often treated with chlorine and fluoride, neither of which does your body any good. If you find problems, filter as needed.

Water Conservation

The EPA estimates that an average American family of four uses 400 gallons of water per day. Given that there are over 300 million people in the U.S., we're talking about billions of gallons of fresh water being used every day. I think it's safe to say there's room for improvement.

Ways to Conserve Water

1. Repair any leaks
2. Install low flush toilets or put bricks in the toilet tank
3. Install a waterless urinal
4. Install low-flow showerheads
5. Install faucet aerators
6. Turn off the tap while brushing your teeth or shaving
7. Get a high-efficiency clothes washer
8. When washing dishes in the sink, fill a basin and wash in the basin. Use non-toxic soap and you can use your dishwater for watering outside plants.
9. If you use a dishwasher, make sure it's fully loaded
10. Compost food waste instead of using a garbage disposal
11. Thaw food in the refrigerator instead of with running water
12. Install a composting toilet
13. Place water heater near hot water point of use if possible to minimize the water that needs to be run off to get hot water
14. Xeriscape and/or Use Permaculture
15. If you have a pool, cover it to avoid evaporation
16. Get a rain barrel (as long as rainwater harvesting is legal in your area)

Energy Conservation

One of the questions I've been asked most frequently over the years is what type of solar system people should install to save the most money. As much as I support solar, energy conservation typically offers a much quicker return on investment for most people.

Ways to Conserve Energy

1. Upgrade/Service Your Furnace and Air Conditioning Units – HVAC is one of our biggest energy loads
2. Use Energy Efficient Lighting – I'm a fan of LEDs, which use only a fraction of the electricity of incandescent bulbs, don't contain mercury, don't overheat, and last about forever
3. Buy Energy Efficient Appliances
4. Use People Powered Appliances – It's much quieter to mix your dough by hand, too.
5. Line Dry Laundry
6. Ditch the TV, or at the very least, avoid the mega-TVs and limit your viewing time

7. Insulate, insulate, insulate – even older homes can generally have insulation added to exterior walls and attics
8. Eliminate air leaks – leaks around doors, windows and other exterior penetrations can be a significant energy waster
9. Install Energy Efficient Windows – Double or triple pane windows with insulated frames can make a big difference in heating and cooling loads
10. Install insulated window coverings – these can be used to block out heat or cold
11. Set your thermostat warmer in summer and cooler in winter
12. Take advantage of daylighting
13. If you have the option, place appliances that require venting, like stoves and clothes dryers, on exterior walls to minimize the length of ductwork
14. If you have to move, Consider Downsizing Your Home – Less to Heat, Cool and Maintain

There are a lot more creative ways you can conserve and produce your own energy, but these are things nearly everyone can do to get started.

Homesteading Step #5 – Skill Building

What are your hobbies and interests? Think about how you can expand and use your existing skills or learn new skills. Maybe you enjoy gardening, and could expand your garden to provide more of your family's food. Maybe you're a problem solver, gadget builder or craft maker who could create objects that others want to purchase. Whether you're saving money or making money, at the end of the day it all adds up to provide the things you need to survive and thrive.

Money Management

One of the most critical and often overlooked skills is money management. Too many people are drowning in debt, living beyond their means. There are many resources out there to teach you money management if you struggle with it. Money Management International (<http://www.moneymanagement.org/Financial-Education.aspx>) has a comprehensive listing of money management resources. Locally, money and budgeting education is often available through churches and other community organizations.

Track your spending and your income. A monthly budget can be a very useful tool, but I confess I've never taken the time to put a formal one together. I just make sure the incoming number is bigger than the outgoing number, and watch spending trends to make sure that everything makes sense. We don't shop except when needed, and our regular monthly expenses are pretty static. I keep a record of everything in Quicken so I can generate automated reports if needed. Sometimes it's helpful to be boring, or at least it's less expensive.

Gardening and Cooking

Grow your own food and cook your own meals. A bountiful garden is a classic homesteading image, and for good reason. Almost anyone can grow some of their own food, even in the city. Once you've grown it, of course you're going to eat it (at least I sure hope you're going to eat it).

It's hard to beat the taste of a perfectly sun-ripened tomato or peas fresh off the vine, still damp with morning dew. Growing your own food is deeply satisfying, too. My boys learned early on that the taste of "their beans" or "their cucumbers" was different than the taste of store produce. They were so excited to invite grandma and grandpa over to try what they had raised. Even as a grownup, it feels pretty good to put a spread on the table and realize that everything their came from our garden or friends and neighbors.

When you're setting up your garden, look for an area that has at least six hours of sunlight per day (those in hot climates might get by with a little less, those in cooler areas would do better with more direct sunlight for most crops). If possible, make sure your garden is somewhere you will regularly see and visit. There's an old saying that "the gardener's shadow makes the best fertilizer". If your garden is tucked in some out of the way corner, it's much easier to ignore and neglect.

Make sure your soil isn't contaminated with the "ghost of lead paint past" or any other nasty things you don't want to eat. If you're growing in containers, make sure they aren't contaminated, either. I saw someone growing root vegetables in a computer case. With the level of fire retardants and other chemicals used in those cases, I wouldn't want them anywhere near my food.

Investing in soil testing from a reputable lab that will give you soil building recommendations can be very helpful for both new and seasoned gardeners. Sometimes this service will be offered by your local Cooperative Extension Office, but it is also available via mail order online. It can be very frustrating for a beginning garden to have crops struggle and not have any idea why. If a full lab test isn't in the budget, you can get basic DIY soil testing kits at many home improvement stores and gardening centers that will check your pH and Nitrogen, Potassium and Phosphorus (NPK). Good soil gives you a head start on a good harvest.

Grow what you eat. The best way to stay motivated to keep up with your gardening to grow the foods that you love and that you know your family will eat. Once you have more experience (and if you have more room), you can experiment with less favored produce, if desired. We always grow large amounts of green beans, because they are the boys favorite vegetable, and several hundred pounds of tomatoes to make salsa and tomato sauce. (Salsa has become one of my younger son's favorite food groups.) I always throw in a couple of eggplants and okra plants, just to have more variety, but after all these years, they are still not my favorite veggies. I usually hit the seed catalogs for a few new crop varieties each year. You just never know when one might be "the" crop that you've been waiting for – like the Blacktail Mountain watermelons that produced big, juicy melons even in our short Wisconsin summers.

Once you have your harvest in hand, turning it into a great meal is a natural progression. Whether you use your own produce or purchased food, cooking your own meals can be a great money saver. It does take a bit of planning and skill - but we're skill building, right? TV and internet abound with recipes and demonstrations of said recipes. Used book sales are a great place to find older cookbooks, and bright, shiny, new cookbooks are printed every day. If you're not comfortable in the kitchen, hit up a friend or relative who is for some cooking lessons, or hunt around your community for cooking classes.

Food Storage

Once you've mastered basic cooking skills, you can combine your gardening and cooking skills to learn home food preservation. To help us eat local through our long Wisconsin winters, we have a root cellar, a canning pantry, two freezers (half a cow takes a lot of room) and miscellaneous storage around the home.

There are many ways to store produce for extended periods of time. The most common include:

Cool storage

This includes cool, dry storage, such as an unheated pantry or porch, and root cellaring, i.e., cool, damp storage. "Root cellars" may include actual root cellars, unheated basement space, crawl space, in ground "clamps" (holes or trenches for food storage) and other options. Cool storage basics, including storage requirements for many crops, can be found in the post "[Root Cellars 101](#)" and "[Above Ground Root Cellars – Enjoy Your Local Produce Longer](#)".

I always include storage crops that can store without much processing, such as shell beans, pumpkins and squash and root vegetables. You can read more about my favorites in the post "[Planning for Storage Crops](#)".

Drying

Food can be dried using a commercial dehydrator such as the [Excalibur](#) or [American Harvest Dehydrator](#), or air dried in a [solar dehydrator](#), on drying sheets or hang drying. Dried foods are great when storage space is tight, but dried foods lose more nutrients than root cellaring or canning. Dried foods should be stored in a cool, dry location in an airtight container for longest shelf life. The USDA recommends pasteurizing dried foods at 160F/71C for 30 minutes or freezing at 0F/-18C for 48 hours to kill insects and their eggs, but I haven't had any insect problems with food dried in my commercial dehydrator. Read "[Getting Started with Home Food Drying](#)".

Canning

Canning is the heat processing of food in glass jars.

Water bath canning can be done with any large stockpot or kettle with a lid, as long as you have a way to keep the jars from sitting directly on the bottom of the pot and can cover your jars with at least two inches of water. Water bath canning is used to preserve high acids foods such as tomato sauce and pickles, and high sugar foods such as jams and jellies. If you can a pressure canner, you may use it for water bath canning by leaving the vent open.

Pressure canning must be done in a pressure canner, which processes foods using high temperature, high pressure steam. **PRESSURE CANNING MUST BE USED FOR LOW ACID FOODS**, such as beans, carrots, corn, soups, sauces, broth, etc.

Read “[Getting Started with Home Canning](#)“ for more information.

Freezing

Freezing foods typically produces flavors and textures most similar to fresh, and can be done without much specialized equipment. It is recommended that you blanch (briefly immerse in boiling water) most produce before freezing to stop enzyme action and insure best quality. I like to seal my frozen produce in [vacuum seal bags](#) to prevent ice crystal formation. I have found this to greatly improve the quality and storage duration for most crops.

LactoFermentation

Natural fermentation can be used to change low acid foods into high acid foods, giving them a [longer shelf life](#) to store “as is”, or allowing them to be canned in a water bath canner instead of a pressure canner. Through the use of salt, whey or specific starter cultures, food is fermented, improving its digestibility and nutrient content. It becomes what is referred to as a “live culture food”.

Because fermentation involves substances such as lactic acid and specific microbes, the flavor profile and texture of the food does change. Fermentation is responsible for treats such as chocolate, cheese, yogurt, and [kombucha](#), as well as pantry staples like [sauerkraut](#), kimchi, [sourdough bread](#) and vinegar.

Preserving in Salt and Sugar

More common before modern canning, freezing and dehydrating were available, packing foods in salt or sugar draws liquid out of the food, drying it, while the salt and sugar also interfere with microbe activity. These methods significantly impact food texture and flavor.

Immersion in alcohol

Booze is toxic to microbes (to us, too, if we consume enough of it). You can submerge small amounts of food completely in the hard liquor of your choice, and they will store almost indefinitely. Best for making flavor extracts or perhaps some highly flavored fruit. I’ve still got some raspberries in amaretto in the back of the fridge that I pull out for special occasions.

Vinegar Pickling

Microbes can’t survive in a high acid environment, so vinegar can be used for food preservation without heating/canning. Think old-fashioned pickle barrel. I make at least one batch of [vinegar pickles](#) every season.

Immersion in Olive Oil

Very common in some parts of Europe, this is not one I recommend for the inexperienced home food preserver. Basically, food is immersed in oil, locking out the air, to preserve it. The problem is, if the vegetables are low in acid, they present a serious botulism risk.

Raising Livestock

Along with a garden, backyard chickens are another classic homestead icon. Healthy homestead hens can provide an egg a day during prime laying season, turning feed, bugs and food scraps into high quality protein.

Just like us, chickens need food, water and shelter, but you don't have to break the bank to provide them. Sometimes you can repurpose another shelter into a chicken coop, such as [an old camping trailer](#). Premade chicken tractors are now available pretty reasonably in many hardware and home improvement stores if you'd like to jump right in and don't have an opportunity to salvage building materials. Whatever you decide, just make sure that your coop provides proper ventilation, protection from predators and weather, roosts, nesting areas, spots for food and water and access for cleaning. To learn more about the basics of chicken care, you can visit "[Top 7 Tips for First Time Chicken Owners](#)".

Rabbits are another good choice for the backyard homesteader, as long as you are comfortable processing them for the table. They are quiet, reproduce quickly and abundantly, and require only a modest amount of space. You can learn more in the article "[Homestead Rabbits](#)".

Dairy goats round out our top three most common homestead livestock animals. Dwarf breeds make fresh dairy a possibility even in an urban environment. Food, water and shelter needs of goats will require a little more work, space and planning, and a good fence is a must to keep them out of mischief. During milking season, you'll need to make sure that milking takes place on schedule to keep your nanny happy and healthy. Be aware that this may be a significant time investment. A close friend of mine has a goat that produces so much milk that she needs to milk her three times per day to keep the goat comfortable and avoid udder health problems. You can learn more about goats in the articles, "[Getting Started with Homestead Goats](#)" and "[Keeping Homestead Dairy Goats](#)".

Health and Wellness Basics for Everyday Use and Emergencies

Many common ailments can be treated with items from your pantry and backyard, if you know how. The [Home Remedies section](#) of the website addresses over a dozen common minor health problems, and is a great place to start with simple self-care. The wild plants most people refer to as weeds and try to eradicate in their lawns may have been carefully cultivated in the past for their healing properties. In the [Weekly Weeder series](#), I discuss dozens of weeds that grow throughout much of the temperate world, and give information on their historical use for food and medicine.

For emergency care, it's best to get professional training if possible. CPR and basic first aid classes are offered by the Red Cross, as well as community colleges and hospitals. In our rural area, our township has funded training for a group of First Responders for our township. We were able to have a teacher from the technical college come out to our town hall and train people from our township and the neighboring township, dividing the costs of the training between the two municipalities. If you can't get training, at least consider keeping an emergency care pocket guide and a well-stocked first aid kit in your home and vehicles.

If you or a loved one requires the use of injections, an IV or other specialized medical equipment, training someone in the home to be able to use the equipment offers extra protection in case a medical professional is not immediately available in an emergency.

Basic Home and Vehicle Maintenance and Repairs

Don't be like the family member (whose name shall not be mentioned) who drove their car until the engine locked up with black, tarlike oil. Regular maintenance can be a huge money saver by reducing repair and replacement costs.

Basic Repair and Maintenance Skills Most People Should be Able to Tackle

1. **Oil Change and Routine Maintenance of Yard Equipment** – I keep a spare set of blades for the mowers so we can take one set in to be sharpened. Each season, we go over the motors and tiller maintenance checklists, swapping out filters, sparkplugs, oil and other bits as needed.
2. **Oil Change and Tire Change for Vehicles** - With current vehicles, this may be trickier than it used to be. We have a great mechanic who lives about 5 minutes from our house and will drop me off at home if he's doing major repair work, so I let him cover the regular maintenance, too.
3. **Jump Start Your Car or Hook it Up to a Battery Charger** – We bought a battery charger a couple of years ago, because there are times when there isn't another vehicle close by for a jump. It came in really handy last winter when the intense cold zapped my aged battery dead. I was able to charge the van and get through the snow to the mechanic I mentioned above, who had a battery in stock and got me on my way in about 10 minutes. (Have a mentioned I love my country neighbors?)
4. **Use a Stud Finder and Wall Anchors** – I'd be willing to bet that most of us have seen a hanger pulling out of a wall because someone missed the stud. Every basic tool kit should contain a stud finder.
5. **Repair minor damage to walls** – There are some nifty new products on the market that make drywall repair easier than ever before, like the Wall Doctor drywall repair kits.
6. **Unclog Drains, Toilets and Sinks** – I highly recommend having both a mini pipe snake and a full size pipe snake available for minor problems such as slow running sink drains due to hair clogs to major problems such as the basement flooding due to a toilet backup from a grandchild flushing an entire container of “flushable” wipes. (It wasn't my kid, but I felt really bad for grandma and grandpa.) Hot water, baking soda and vinegar, and power plungers may loosen small clogs and remove some build up, the pipe snake reigns supreme in my clog busting arsenal.
7. **Other Toilet Repairs** – You can get basic replacement parts like levers, chains and flappers at the hardware store to address problems like wobbly handles and water that won't stop running.
8. **Clean and Change Filters** – Furnaces, air handlers, clothes dryers, clothes washers and automatic dishwashers and other appliance may all have filters, and eventually filters get clogged. Make sure to clean or replace filters as needed.
9. **Replace Batteries and Lightbulbs** – I try to keep spares on hand since the hardware store is half an hour away.

These are just a handful of ideas – the internet is awash with tutorials and videos just waiting to help you through your next repair or maintenance project.

Sewing, Carpentry and Crafting

I have some wonderfully talented friends and family members who can create amazing fiber art, sewing and carpentry projects. Me – not so much. I haven't any serious sewing since junior high home economics class, and that turned out pretty ugly. Maybe I'll try again someday – or maybe I'll stick to plants.

If you are a person who is naturally gifted in working with your hands, you may be able to turn it into a full or part time business, or use the items you create for bartering. With online commerce, you can sell items to people around the globe. I know a blogger who makes a good income selling chicken waterers that she and her husband build in their home. Another friend sells handmade wooden items and hand forged pieces, and still another sell custom fiber items.

Some farmers markets also allow craft items, and of course there are always craft shows, fairs and fleamarkets. Themed fairs, such as Renaissance Festivals, may bring better prices for some specialty items. A friend of mine who does metalworking sells his wares at a regional Renaissance Fair on the weekends during the summer.

Learning to do more for yourself and creating things builds a sense of self-accomplishment, and keeps your brain working right along with your hands, which is always a good thing.

This is just a small sample of ideas. Hunting, fishing, small engine repair, massage therapy, raising bees and selling honey and beeswax products, making personal care products like soaps and lotions, pet sitting, photography – the possibilities are endless for cultivating skills that can either help pay the bills or put food on the table.

Homesteading Step #6 - Preparing for Everyday Emergencies

You have that nagging feeling you aren't prepared – but you don't know what to do, where to start, or maybe even what to prepare for. Think through what the real risks are for you. Start with the most likely event first, and prepare for that.

Some of the most common “Everyday Emergencies”

Job loss and Reduced Income – Businesses restructure, industries change, you change – the average person will hold [11 different jobs during their lifetime](#).

Weather – Hurricanes, blizzards, bitter cold, tornadoes – all of these are likely to present physical risks to your person and your property, as well as the potential for **power grid failure** and difficult travel.

Minor injuries – From falling on the ice or water slicked surfaces to dog bites and bee stings, accidents happen. Every household should have a basic medical kit on hand for minor injuries. For more on relative risks, see the post, [“Odds of Everyday Emergencies”](#).

Preparedness Basics – Covering the “Stuff”

To get started we suggest you start with the basics of life:

- Food
- Water
- First Aid
- Shelter, Safety and Hygiene

Prepare for 4 hours to 72 hours of living without electricity and simple injuries. As your skill level increases, you can prepare for more complicated scenarios and longer time periods.

Food – Have 72 hours of food on hand.

This can be as simple as having a few extra boxes of breakfast bars, cans of soup and other dry foods. You can and should try buying the things you eat already. Put a few extra items in your cart when there is a sale. Buy in bulk. If the power is out for an extended time, refrigerator and freezer items may spoil, so it’s good to have emergency foods that are shelf stable.

You should have some way to heat/cook food that does not require the power grid. If food prices rise, which is likely, extra food storage will save you money down the road. Don’t forget pets and livestock. They need to eat, too, especially in rough weather.

For more information on food storage and emergency cooking, check out:

- [Top 10 Real Foods to Store Without Electricity](#)
- [Preparedness Storage – Finding Room and Keeping it Safe and Sound](#)
- [Emergency Cooking – 10 Ways to Have a Hot Meal When the Power Goes Out](#)

Water – Store a minimum of one gallon of water per person per day.

2 to 4 gallons per person per day or more would be even better, since the average U.S. family of four uses [100 gallons per day](#). For temporary emergency storage, consider something like a [waterBOB](#), which stores water in your bathtub and comes with a pump for easy access. Remember, too, that bad weather or other water delivery disruptions can also lead to water contamination, so you should have water filtration available, too.

For more information on water storage, please read: [“Emergency Water Storage and Filtration – What You Need to Know”](#)

First Aid

If anyone is on **prescription medication**, make sure you have adequate supplies on hand. **Know your limits**. If you are the only one there, what happens if you get injured? Plan ahead. The best way to “treat” injuries is to avoid them in the first place.

Purchase or assemble a **first aid kit** that will allow you to treat minor injuries. Have a few more first aid items for larger, more complex injuries, such as a sling for arm injuries. **Take a first aid class** if possible, and invest in a **first aid guide** such as the [Living Ready Pocket Manual – First Aid Fundamentals for Survival](#), which I reviewed.

For more detailed recommendations, read “[Preparedness – First Aid Kit and Medical Supplies](#)”.

Shelter, Safety and Hygiene

Our homes are our first places of shelter in most emergencies. Take steps to secure your home from weather and intruders. Difficult economic times often cause an increase in burglaries. Use your locks, consider motion activated security lighting and/or full security systems. Well trained watch dogs and basic security/safety training may also prove useful. Consider firearms/firearm training at your discretion.

Prepare to heat or cool your home without electrical power if possible. In hot weather, take advantage of shading and natural ventilation, opening the home during the cooler periods of day and closing the home up during the hottest part of the day. For cold weather, read “[Winter Storm Survival – Keeping You and Your Home Warm When the Power Goes Out](#)”. The winter storm survival post also discusses toilet options during a power outage. Safety also includes:

- **Emergency Lighting** – Have flashlights, lanterns or candles on hand. Always be extra careful with open flame, especially around children and pets. Don’t forget matches or lighters.
- **Emergency Communication** – Have an emergency radio. Have a way to charge your cellphone when the power grid is down. Some [crank emergency radios](#) and lamps can do double duty as cellphone chargers. You may also want to invest in a [solar cellphone charger](#). Have extra batteries on hand, and make sure to keep them organized and rotated.

See also: [Preparedness – Summer Storms, Tornadoes and Hurricanes](#) and [Emergency Power Options for Your Home](#).

Preparedness Basics – Preparing Yourself

If you take daily steps to prepare for what might happen – good or bad – when things get stressful, you will be able to make better decisions, have more options and possibly save yourself some money. This is what I refer to as “Common Sense Preparedness”.

Just as athletes train, musicians practice and scholars study, time that you put in learning skills and gaining knowledge will keep you level headed, focused and forward thinking. Interviews

with survivors of large scale accidents show consistently that those who survive were those who were determined to survive, and developed a plan to make it happen.

1. **Learn – always.** Like muscles, the brain responds to exercise. Challenge yourself with new knowledge, new skills and interaction with real humans. Employers are complaining that those under 30 have trouble with non-digital communication. We can do better than that.
2. **Get physical.** It's so easy to spend way too much time sitting. Plant a garden, take a walk, crank out some pushups – just get moving!
3. **Plan.** A plan provides a framework to follow, modify or break. Change plans to match changing needs, and adjust plans based on observations and practice.
4. **Practice.** A plan is meaningless if you can't execute it. Every time I see one of those prepper shows where they hold up a container of seeds and say, "We'll learn to garden when we really need it", I cringe. Every activity has a learning curve. If you practice now, your odds are much better for success when it really counts. Your body remembers even when your mind is struggling to focus.
5. **Create your team.** Find people you can trust, work together in good times and bad. A team will beat an individual every time; an educated team is even more formidable. Think wide and deep – your team needs a variety of skills and personality types. Get to know people in different age groups. Our elderly neighbors are a wonderful resource for information about the area, and my sons do odd jobs and computer work for them.

The most important thing to remember is, "Don't panic!" Prepare in steps – "Eat the elephant one bite at a time". Start with just one thing; finish it, and then move on to the next.

Homesteading Step #7 - Creating Community

Up to this point we've largely focused on things you can do for and by yourself, or with your family, but connecting with like-minded people can make the daily routine a lot more fun and sometimes less work.

It's such a pleasure to talk to and work with people who "get it" and share your enthusiasm for a given project or simply a more self-reliant way of life. With more people in your local homesteading community, each person can spend more time focusing on what they really enjoy instead of trying to do everything.

So how do you make connections when you're just getting started?

Check Out Local Clubs and Interest Groups

Local libraries, government or tourism organizations (such as Newcomers clubs) may maintain a list of groups and organizations in your area that relate to specific interests, such as 4-H, beekeeping, equestrian clubs, quilting guilds, community gardens and more.

Ask Around Work, Church, School and Civic Groups

If you have one interest or belief in common, you may have others. Strike up a conversation about shared hobbies. Plan a friendly competition like a chili cook-off as a fundraiser for your organization, or organize a potluck dinner to get people talking about food. Build relationships that may turn into homesteading relationships. Local homeschooling groups are often a good resource because homeschooling and homesteading tend to go hand in hand.

Visit Your Local Farmers Market, Feed Store or Farm Supply Store

Smaller markets and/or time periods with slower traffic may give vendors the opportunity to chat and share their knowledge. Meeting people who were truly interested in organic gardening was one of my favorite parts of the summer I was a vendor at the sleepy little farmers market near my home. The farm supply megastore isn't likely to be much help, but smaller mom and pop feed stores and hardware stores are an integral part of their communities.

Watch for Community Events

In our area, we have options such as:

- Sheering Days at the Alpaca Farm
- Music on the weekends at the local vineyard (and seasonal grape picking jobs)
- Day on the Farm and Farm Progress Days Expo
- County Fairs
- Nature Walks and other Presentations at the Wildlife Sanctuary and Waterfowl Preserves
- Garden Walks and Herb Fairs at the Botanical Gardens
- Heritage Sampler Dinners at the Farm Market Kitchen, a commercial kitchen available to the public to process their home raised foods for commercial sale
- Brewfests and Wine Fests
- Pick Your Own Orchards and Pumpkin Patches
- Annual Solar Tours of Homes

All of these are a potential opportunities to meet people with similar interests.

Online Communities

Last but not least, we have the world of online community. There are online only groups such as yahoo groups and homesteading and gardening forums, and groups that connect online to organize local gatherings, such as homesteading meetup groups. I'd also like to invite you to visit my little corner of the online homesteading world at www.commonsehome.com, and to our Facebook community at <https://www.facebook.com/CommonSenseHome>, and for homesteading eye candy and project ideas at <http://www.pinterest.com/commonseidea/>.

Conclusion and 101 Homestead Project Ideas

I hope that this book has given you some food for thought, and inspired you to make positive changes in your daily life to increase your level of self-reliance.

We've barely scratched the surface, so I wanted to provide you with a list of project ideas to build on from here. The following links all go to articles on the Common Sense Homesteading website that will give you more detailed information on each project.

1. [Grow Fresh Food in Small Spaces - Sprout Some Seeds](#)
2. [Grow Your Own Transplants from Seeds](#)
3. [Extend Your Growing Season](#)
4. [Try Repurposed Planters](#)
5. [Plant a Vegetable Garden](#)
6. [Plant an Herb Garden](#)
7. [Grow Garlic](#)
8. [Grow Asparagus and Rhubarb](#)
9. [Grow Pepitas](#)
10. [Build a Tomato Trellis](#)
11. [Grow Some Pole Beans](#)
12. [Dry Beans for Seed and Storage](#)
13. [Grow Blueberries](#)
14. [Grow Raspberries](#)
15. [Try Vermicomposting – Let the worms eat your compost](#)
16. [Use Natural Garden Pest Control](#)
17. [Learn Innovative Gardening Techniques like Using Biochar](#)
18. [Is Drought a Problem? Try These Alternative Farming Methods.](#)
19. [Explore Permaculture](#)

20. [Start a Market Garden](#)
21. [Clean and Sharpen Your Garden Tools](#)
22. [Build a Rain Barrel](#)
23. [Grow Stevia and Make Homemade Stevia Extract](#)
24. [Infuse Herbs in Oil, Water, Vinegar, Alcohol or Honey](#)
25. [Learn About Wildcrafting](#)
26. [Learn How to Make a Good Meal Out of Common Weeds](#)
27. [Learn How to use Dandelion Roots for Medicine](#)
28. [Learn Which Weeds Make Good Natural Bandages](#)
29. [Make Homemade Extracts](#)
30. [Make Elderberry Syrup and Jellies](#)
31. [Learn How to Can Food](#)
32. [Make Your Own Spaghetti Sauce](#)
33. [Make Your Own Salsa](#)
34. [Make Your Own Ketchup](#)
35. [Make Homemade Jams, Jellies and Spreads](#)
36. [Learn How to Dehydrate Food](#)
37. [Make Fruit Leather and Cinnamon Apple Slices](#)
38. [Build and Cook With a Solar Oven](#)
39. [Learn to Cook with a Dutch Oven](#)
40. [Build a Root Cellar for Food Storage](#)
41. [If You Don't Have Room for a Root Cellar, Try Above Ground Alternatives](#)
42. [Have Food Storage That Doesn't Require Electricity](#)

43. [Order Grain in Bulk](#)
44. [Grind Your Own Grain](#)
45. [Eat Bugs as an Alternate Protein Source - Are You Brave Enough?](#)
46. [Create an Aquaponic Garden to Grow Fish and Vegetables Together](#)
47. [Get a Beehive](#)
48. [Raise Some Chickens for Eggs](#)
49. [Raise Homestead Rabbits](#)
50. [Raise Homestead Geese](#)
51. [Raise Homestead Goats](#)
52. [Heat with Wood](#)
53. [Make Maple Syrup](#)
54. [Learn to Cook with Cast Iron](#)
55. [Learn How to Season Cast Iron](#)
56. [Learn How to Restore Cast Iron](#)
57. [Makeover Leftovers](#)
58. [Render Beef Tallow](#)
59. [Render Poultry Fat](#)
60. [Learn How to Make a Basic Bone Broth](#)
61. [Bake Homemade Bread](#)
62. [Experiment with Sourdough](#)
63. [Ditch the Box Mix Brownies](#)
64. [Bake a Pie from Scratch](#)
65. [Ferment Some Sauerkraut](#)

66. [Brew Some Kombucha](#)
67. [Brew Some Water Kefir](#)
68. [Make Homemade Cheese](#)
69. [Brew Some Wine](#)
70. [Learn How to Make Kitchen Substitutions](#)
71. [Learn How to Make Freezer Meals for an Easy, Quick Meal](#)
72. [Grow Your Own Herbal Medicine](#)
73. [Make an Herbal Salve](#)
74. [Learn Basic Home Remedies](#)
75. [Learn How to Boost Your Immune System Naturally](#)
76. [Learn How to Use Honey as Medicine](#)
77. [Make Homemade Deodorant](#)
78. [Make Your Own Hard Lotion Bars](#)
79. [Make Homemade Toothpaste](#)
80. [Make Your Own Perfume](#)
81. [Make Your Own Laundry Stain Removers](#)
82. [Make Your Own Household Cleaners](#)
83. [Keep Your Pantry Pest Free With Natural Pest Control](#)
84. [Properly Season and Care for Your Cutting Boards](#)
85. [Shop Thrift Stores and Check Tags](#)
86. [Make Homemade Gifts and Get Creative with Gift Wrapping](#)
87. [Install a Solar Electric System](#)
88. [Install a Solar Water Heating System](#)

89. [Install Eco-Friendly Flooring](#)
90. [Use Natural Tips for Keeping Your House Cool](#)
91. [Install Emergency Backup Power](#)
92. [Create an Emergency First Aid Kit](#)
93. [Have a Bug Out Bag or Kit in Case of Evacuation](#)
94. [Be Prepared for Summer Storms, Tornadoes and Hurricanes](#)
95. [Have a Safe Room in Your Home](#)
96. [Build a Burn Barrel to Burn Trash Safely](#)
97. [Prepare Your Vehicle for Winter](#)
98. [Know How to Keep Your Home and Family Warm in Winter if the Power Goes Out](#)
99. [Know How to Prepare a Hot Meal Without Electricity](#)
100. [Have Emergency Water Storage and Filtration](#)
101. [Prepare Emergency Lighting and Communication](#)