During these uncertain times, a lot of people are thinking more about what they can do to prepare for civil unrest in their area. Over the years, BDS has put together the list you see below.

**30 Steps to Help You Prepare for Civil Disturbance**

1. Ensure that your basic preps and backup supplies are in order.  This includes an adequate supply of food, water, and sanitation supplies.  Two weeks is a bare minimum.  Three months or more is better.

2. Take stock of your first aid kit and medical supplies including necessary prescription drugs.  Medical supplies, remedies, and prescription drugs will likely be in short supply if there is civil unrest.  For ideas, see [the first aid section of this article.](https://www.backdoorsurvival.com/12-months-of-prepping-month-2/)

3. Learn homesteading skills and self-sufficiency skills regardless of whether you are living in an apartment, condo, house, or rural homestead.  Read [**12 Ways to Homestead in Place**](https://www.backdoorsurvival.com/12-ways-to-homestead-in-place/) for ideas.

4.   Inventory the security features in your home to determine weaknesses that need to be strengthened.  Read [**A Dozen Home Security and Crime Prevention Tips for the Prepper**](https://www.backdoorsurvival.com/20-home-security-crime-prevention-secrets-for-preppers/) for tips.

5. Set up a personal self-defense system.  If you own a firearm, apply for a concealed weapons permit, stock up on ammo, and practice shooting at the range.  Invest in [pepper sprays](https://www.backdoorsurvival.com/the-best-pepper-spray-to-keep-with-you/), bully clubs, slingshots, and other tools that will arm you against the bad guys.

6. Form a community of like-minded people that will band together for protection and safety during times of chaos. This is going to be tough because trust will be an issue when your back is to the wall.  A good book to read for ideas is actually a piece of fiction by James Wesley Rawles, **Patriots: Surviving the Coming Collapse**.

7. Stockpile cash in small bills.  In a massive and chaotic riot situation, ATMs and banks are likely to be inaccessible, closed, or inoperable.

8. Accumulate goods for barter.  When the shelves are empty or the stores are closed, you may need to call on others for the supplies you need but did not anticipate.  Have something to barter.  Spirits (including beer, wine, and good old Jack Daniels) are always good choices as are candles, batteries, food, sanitation supplies, and first aid items are good to have a hand for barter as are fresh eggs and homegrown garden vegetables.  See [**40 Items to Barter in a Post-Collapse World**](https://www.backdoorsurvival.com/41-items-to-barter/).

9. Don’t forget about children, [the elderly](https://www.backdoorsurvival.com/disaster-preparedness-for-older-adults-seniors/), and [pets](https://www.backdoorsurvival.com/best-pet-survival-kit-ideas-products/).  In a riot or lockdown, they may become fearful and panicked.  Stowaway some amusements and comfort items for them as well.

10. Invest in a reference library of books, manuals, and survival guides.  Don’t forget to include fiction as well as non-fiction plus reading materials suitable for a variety of different ages.

11. Acquire communication equipment so that you can keep in touch with family members and the outside world during times of civil disobedience.  This may include an [emergency radio](https://www.backdoorsurvival.com/the-best-murs-radios/), a shortwave scanner, a HAM radio or something else.  Your gear will do you no good if you do not know how to use it.  If it is too complicated, create a cheat sheet or find something simpler to use. Practice often!

12. Develop a family emergency plan so that everyone knows what to do and where to meet in the event the worst happens. See [**Survival Basics: 10 Steps for Preparing a Family Emergency Plan**](https://www.backdoorsurvival.com/preparing-a-family-emergency-plan/).

13. Keep a level head and your mouth shut.  If during times of unrest, you are pulled into a police net, the first thing you should do is call a lawyer.  Be courteous and polite and do not resist. Law enforcement agencies will treat you much better if you don’t give them a hard time. It will not do you any good to resist but it could cause you a lot more trouble than you could imagine.

Print out the following and keep it in your wallet and in your car along with your registration:

**IF YOU ARE ARRESTED OR CONFRONTED BY THE POLICE:**

1. First, ask to call your lawyer.  
2. Be courteous; do not resist.  
3. Do not consent to search or entry.  
4. Do not talk about *anything*; do not admit OR DENY anything.  
5. Ask if you are free to go. If you are, GO.

The ACLU also has a printable card you can download and keep with you: [**What To Do If You’re Stopped By Police**](https://www.aclu.org/files/assets/bustcard_eng_20100630.pdf).  For more information, you can also download the booklet [**Your Rights When Encountering Law Enforcement**](https://www.aclu.org/files/kyr/kyr_english.pdf).

1. **Prep for pets**

We love our dogs and cats and it is impossible to not consider them during civil unrest.  Try to have a few months worth of dog or cat food put back. While it may seem expensive, dried dog food is available in 10 lb boxes that rehydrates to 40 lbs. It actually doesn’t cost as much to feed as a lot of dry foods and if you have a small or medium-sized dog you can stash a lot of food in a small space. If you stockpile dry dog food then you can put it in a barrel and seal it up with diatomaceous earth.

1. **Learn some basic self-defense**

There are countless videos, books, classes, etc that you can utilize. If you need to then grab a friend and practice some motions. A lot of local community centers and YMCAs have affordable self-defense classes that can help you learn and set aside the time to learn essentials. Even if you have been in a tussle or two, it never hurts to brush up and also improve your skillset. Remember that situational awareness is your first level of defense and will allow you to avoid a lot of situations that might lead to physical confrontation and harm.

1. **Be in the best shape you can**

I know that those reading this are going to vary in levels of physical fitness and ability but the principle of making sure that you are in the best shape you can is one that everyone should embrace. You might have to do more physical labor or do without some foods or medicines depending on how well prepared you are and how long the civil unrest or long emergency actually lasts.

You don’t have to look like a bodybuilder but strapping on a day pack and walking a few miles here and there isn’t going to hurt. Sometimes finding a friend to do things with can help. Good conversation and a hike are different than going it alone, not that it is a bad thing either.

1. **Be honest about your health and create a strategy to be as healthy as you can be**

In the USA some of the biggest health issues can be avoided or the severity can be drastically decreased. We live in a country where a lot of jobs are sedentary, foods come in big portions, and the plethora of cheap fillers add extra calories.

My father is a Vietnam Veteran with amputations and diabetes as a result of shrapnel and Monsanto’s Agent Orange. Over the years we have actually reduced the amount of diabetes medication he takes to levels far lower than a lot of people half his age. How was this done? Well, he actually changed his diet to one that would be a lot healthier for most people to take up too. He eats a lot of vegetables, fish, and grass-fed meats. Protein-rich almond and cashew milk ( no lactose) and natural fruits either fresh or packed in juice.  A lot of people don’t change their major lifestyle habits when they find they have a condition. It can work wonders if someone can.

I realize the severity and circumstances of a physical illness vary greatly but it can’t hurt to look at ways to improve health and reduce dependence on pharmaceuticals for survival during a short or long term emergency.

1. **Practice sticking to your own**

One thing I remember when talking to others about living out in the country and not being in the thick of it in the city is them saying “ I tried that but I need people and places to go”. Well during any incident you really need to get over it and learn to stay in place and not have to be in the thick of it all the time. This is really important.

Sure it is fun to socialize at times but as someone that has honestly been on the side of a mountain for a decade putting every dime towards building a house and business, I can tell you it can be done. During civil unrest, it might not pay off to be a social butterfly. Stay at home and safe as long as you can until the danger passes.

Avoid protests and other potentially volatile situations during times of civil disturbance. I would actually recommend avoiding them during good times too but if things are tense, a protest is one of the last places you want to be. A lot of protests turn into a civil unrest incident or even a riot.

1. **Target and other weapons practice is essential**

Ok, so you have a gun but are you any good with it? During good times is the time to get yourself more familiar with your gun and other defenses. Even paintball can help. The point is that you get used to your firearm or know how to utilize your knife, pepper spray, or any other weapon you have. If you are at a loss as to what type of weapon you might want to have around, check out my post on Non-Lethal Weapons or Tactical Pens.

Get your whole family in on this. Everyone young and old needs to know how to defend themselves during a major situation.

1. **Keep tabs on the news and events**

At least one person in your household needs to be keeping an eye on what is going on out there as far as current events and news goes. I have a tendency to ignore this more than my husband but we have a rule that he will keep me in touch if something is really going on that I need to pay attention to. Don’t get me wrong, I keep up with what is going on more than average but he does it much more than me. Whatever your system, you need to know what is going on at least somewhat.

1. **Be aware of the issues in your community**

Sometimes localized events can cause civil unrest that the rest of the world simply isn’t affected by. While I am not advocating being really nosy, if you hear something then give it the attention it deserves. For example, if you hear or see signs that there is some type of criminal activity going on in your area then that is relevant. While this could lead to localized unrest, it is also important to know what type of people that you have in your immediate vicinity so you can be prepared to deal with them in the best way possible.

1. **Reassess your security protocols**

Are you a really predictable person? Do you always take the same route home at the same time? All of these things could be noticed by someone else and used against you. If you can, vary your routine a bit and be aware of your surroundings. A little observation can often let you know if someone is following you or otherwise acting suspiciously. Consider getting some security cameras that allow you to observe different parts of your property remotely or at least look around when you are in a single location. This can give some warning if someone tries to breach your perimeter. Check out my post on [perimeter security](https://www.backdoorsurvival.com/best-perimeter-security-practices-for-preppers/) for some tips on how to best fortify your home, property, or business.

1. **Educate your children about civil unrest**

Kids can handle a lot more than a lot of people give them credit for. Kids and teens need to be given the chance to be fully aware of a situation. Civil unrest is a time for honesty and not trying to shelter them too much. Trying to hide a situation that is right outside your door is dangerous and futile. Explaining a situation is going to make it easier to justify telling them that everyone needs to stay in rather than going about business as usual.

1. **Plan for water needs**

Water supplies can become disrupted during civil unrest. Store some water. If you have a filter on hand it could be just rainwater that you can filter as needed. If you hate the idea of doing without hot water then make sure you have some stock pots on hand or an on-demand propane heater you can run off a grill tank.

1. **Keep your most valuable items as secure and hidden as possible**

Now is not the time to flash around what you got. Don’t leave valuable things out where others can see them. Windows that have the curtains or blinds pulled back are essentially peepholes for criminals. Even just a change jar can be incentive enough to arouse the curiosity of criminals that may wonder what else you have in your house.

1. **Dress and tone it down**

Let’s be honest and just admit that what you wear is going to cause some assumptions to be made about you and attract some degree of attention.  During civil unrest looking a bit grungier than usual and ditching any flash and bling is going to be to your benefit.  Now is the time to get out that old flannel and distressed jeans and save the designer fashion for better times. This goes for everyone in your family too. Showing too much skin, wearing bright colors,  or anything that attracts a lot of attention should be considered off-limits.

1. **Be careful who you trust and let in**

We all like to think we really know people but hard times can bring out the worst in someone. This means you should carefully evaluate who you let within in your home or around your family during said hard times. Try to look outside the box. It can be hard to admit that someone you kind of like is not be trusted during an event but your safety and well being can depend on it.

1. **Stay off social media**

Social media can be great for staying in touch with friends and family but posting every little thing during hard times is not going to help. Try to keep kids and teens off of it too. Letting too much info slip out is easier than you or they might think. This goes along with keeping your lips sealed but any more social media is where so many people air out their feelings and situations and not everyone may use that in the best way. During a long period of social unrest, you are probably going to go back and forth from your house and other locations and you don’t need to let others know when you are going to be gone.

1. **Have a lawyer in mind to call if necessary**

Ok, so you are not the type to cause trouble. Well during the civil unrest that may not matter and you may find that you need a lawyer. If you get caught up in something unexpectedly then it can be helpful to have a number in your wallet to call if you need it. There are countless reasons you could become a target for arrest during uncertain times.

1. **Don’t talk about politics or sensitive subject**

Even a basic opinion can seem inflammatory to some. During civil unrest is not the time to be voicing all your political or social opinions. Don’t voice things publicly. Try to appear neutral enough to keep others guessing as to what your alliances are if any. If civil unrest is related to a specific subject then definitely steer clear of discussing it if you can.

**A Word About Civil Unrest**

As you read through this list, keep in mind that according to [Army field manual FM 3-19.15](https://www.fas.org/irp/doddir/army/fm3-19-15.pdf):

“In these modern times, demonstrations, civil unrest, public disorder, and riots happen for a number of reasons.

Some of these reasons are economic hardships, social injustices, ethnic differences (leading to oppression), objections to world organizations or certain governments, political grievances, and terrorist acts. An event can be triggered by a single cause or a  combination of causes.”

If nothing else, this should give you something to think about as you adapt your preparedness efforts to survive civil unrest.

**At a Glance, Steps to Prepare**

| **Preps** | **Level of Difficulty** |
| --- | --- |
| Double check basic preps and supplies | Easy |
| Re-Supply First Aid kit | Easy |
| Learn Homesteading skills | Difficult |
| Conduct security vulnerability assessment | Moderate |
| Set up personal self-defense system | Difficult |
| Form of a community of like-minded people for mutual aid | Difficult |
| Stockpile cash in small bills | Easy |
| Accumulate goods for barter | Easy |
| Prep your pets! | Moderate |
| Invest in reference books and reading material | Easy |
| Acquire communications equipment | Moderate |
| Develop family emergency plan | Moderate |
| Practice staying calm! | Easier for some than others! |

* [Preparedness](https://www.backdoorsurvival.com/category/preparedness/)

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