



# Build a Campfire

(Remember always ask permission and clean up after you are done)

## Materials Needed:

Tinder – Tinder catches fire easily, but burns fast. Material like dry leaves, dry bark, wood shavings, dry grass, and some fluffy fungi make good tinder. Dryer lint works very well.

Kindling – Kindling is small twigs and branches of various sizes, pencil size and smaller

Fuel Wood – Logs that are about the size of your wrist or upper arm are ideal.

Matches

## Directions:



This can **only** be done with parent permission and supervision.



Fire needs three things to ignite fuel, oxygen, and heat.



Gather all your supplies. When gathering wood for a fire, collect wood that snaps and breaks easily. Dry wood burns the best. If your wood “bends” it is too wet or “green”. Collect twice as much tinder, kindling and fuel wood as you think you’ll need. You’ll be surprised how fast you’ll go through tinder and kindling when starting a fire. You can practice building a campfire without ever lighting it. Then, the next time you are able to build a fire you’re ready!



Select a fire site away from trees, bushes and other plant material. Your fire bed should be on bare earth, not grass (especially not dead grass). There are three ways to build a fire.



**Teepee Fire Lay** – Place your tinder bundle in the middle of your campfire site. Above your tinder bundle form a teepee with some kindling. Leave an

opening on the side the wind is blowing against. This will ensure that your fire gets the air it needs and will fan the flames onto the kindling. Continue adding kindling to the teepee, working your way up to pencil sized twigs. Create a larger teepee structure around your kindling teepee with your fuel

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wood. Place a match under your tinder. This will direct the flame up, the flame should rise to the kindling and then to the fuel wood. The teepee structure will eventually fall, and at this point you can simply add some fuel logs to the fire.



**Lean-to Fire Lay** - Stick a long piece of kindling into the ground at about a 30-degree angle. The end of the stick should be pointing into the wind. Place a tinder bundle underneath the support stick. Place some small pieces of kindling around your tinder nest. Lay small pieces of kindling against the piece stuck in the ground. Add another layer with larger pieces of kindling. Light the tinder, and watch it burn.



**Log Cabin Fire Lay** - Start off by creating a small teepee lay. Have you played with Lincoln Logs? Basically, you're going to play a larger version of Lincoln Logs and burn them when you're done. Get large pieces of fuel wood and place them on opposite sides of the teepee. Find smaller pieces of fuel wood and lay them across the first set of fuel wood, parallel on the other sides of the teepee. Just like you would with Lincoln Logs. Repeat laying smaller and shorter pieces to form a cabin or pyramid shape. Light this baby up.



### **Putting Out Your Fire**

**Start early.** Putting out a fire completely takes longer than you think. Plan when you're going to bed or leaving and start putting out your fire about 20 minutes before then.

**Sprinkle, don't pour.** You should have a bucketful of water near your campfire for safety reasons. When it's time to go, this will serve as your fire extinguisher. Avoid the impulse to pour all the water on the fire. You don't want to flood the pit because you or someone else will need to use it later. Instead, *sprinkle* as much water as you need to put out the embers and charcoal.

**Stir.** As you sprinkle water over the embers, stir them with a stick or shovel. This ensures that all the ashes get wet. When you don't see any steam and don't hear any hissing noises, you know you're getting close to a completely extinguished fire.

**Touch test.** Don't actually run your hands through the ashes. You don't want to brand yourself with a searing ember. Put the back of your hand near the ashes. If you still feel heat, it's too hot to leave. Keep adding water and stirring. As soon as it feels cool, you're good to go.

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**Dispose the ashes.** You don't want to leave the next camper a fire bed full of old ashes. Also, if you had to create your own fire bed, you want to leave the land in the same condition as how you found it. Scoop up the ashes in a bag and spread them out around the campsite.

**Patch up your ground.** If you made your own fire bed, replace the dirt and sod you dug up.