

TOWN NEWS

Texas Outdoors Woman Network

Dallas Chapter – February 2025

Monthly meeting February 10th

Karen King's home

247 Barnes Bridge, Sunnyvale, TX 75182

Guests are always welcome at meetings!

CAR FREE BIKE RIDE IN DALLAS



TOWN ACTIVITIES

Mark your Calendars!!

Backyard Bird Count Workshop - Feb 8th at 9:00 AM
at John Bunker Sands Wetland Center

Contact Marie Waterman if interested
214-733-3222

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Thursday February 20<sup>th</sup>-Sunday February 23<sup>rd</sup>

Palo Duro Canyon State Park

Contact Melissa Brown mbrown.mbrown@gmail.com

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Thursday March 6th – Sunday March 9th

Brazos Bend State Park

Contact Shirley Meurer 972-890-2491

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MARCH 09-19, 2025

GOOSE ISLAND STATE PARK - CAMPING TRIP

Contact Judy Shaw if interested

jshawtx@aol.com

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Thursday March 20TH– Sunday March 23rd

Martin Dies Jr State Park

All TOWN Camping Trip

Contact Shirley Meurer 972-890-2491

Thursday April 10th-Sunday April 13th

Possum Kingdom State Park

Contact Nancy Lee nlee002@tx.rr.com 469-264-4643.

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Saturday, May 17th

Car Free Bike Ride in Dallas

<https://dallasbikeride.com/>

Contact Marie if you decide to sign up

214-733-3222

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Saturday, June 28th

Day of fun on Cedar Creek Lake

Hosted by Mary Nester and Mar Burris

2182 Hickory St., Mabank, TX 75156

214--316-8960

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Monthly Meetings

6pm – 7:30pm

Second Monday of the Month

Contact Shirley to host 972-890-2491



## First Day Hike Fun



*Katie, Abby, Laura, Shirley, Melissa*



*Laura, Shirley, Katie, Melissa, Abbie*

*Preparing for the bird count-Screech owl in Faith and Kay's backyard*



# Keeping your body and clothes clean in the wild

In the wild, staying clean is a key part of survival, as it allows you to keep safe from the harmful microbes that build up on your skin over time. Issues like heat rash, jungle rot, and fungal infections can easily become a problem when hygiene is ignored. These small problems can quickly become life threatening many miles from civilization, regardless of how insignificant they seemed at first. Fortunately, there are easy ways to take care of personal hygiene while out in the wild.

## Basic Hygiene

Basic hygiene in the wilderness simply refers to keeping your body free of microbes that can reproduce and result in disease. In reality, this isn't much different than being at home, however there will be no warm showers or lavender-scented soaps to use on hand. Practicing basic hygiene in the wilderness requires a bit of creativity and recognizing that you still won't be the best smelling person, but you'll be clean. It's primarily about cleaning your body, including your teeth, and cleaning the clothes that you'll be wearing just about every day.

## Natural Soaps

Likely, you won't have any soap with you if lost out in the wild, but that doesn't mean you can't improvise. Plants are often used as additives to soaps, but many can be used alone. Mountain lilac, soapberry, and yucca are three of the most common plants that can be used when available. For mountain lilac, simply rub it in between your hands with water and it will leave behind a pleasant fragrance. Soapberries, which contain saponins for cleaning, may be dried or mixed with water for a good lather. Yucca roots and leaves can be shredded and mixed with water to produce a saponin-rich soap. This works incredibly well for cleaning just about everything, including your clothes and body. In most scenarios you'll be left to clean yourself without any soap at all, so it's important to know how to take care of grime without your everyday cleaning products.

## Sponge Bath and a Scrub Down

Friction alone is a powerful form of removing microbes and grime. When you're without soap, you are often relying on friction to do most of the work for you. One of the best ways to do this is by taking a wilderness sponge bath. You probably won't have a sponge along in your survival scenario, but any absorbent material will work. An old piece of cloth or a bandana is perfect for scrubbing your body down, especially when you don't have much water available. When the grime is really bad, you may need something tougher. Sand and ash from your fire are two great materials that are easily found in the wilderness to help scrub away dirt and grime from your skin. Charcoal has the ability to pull toxins from the skin, which is why you see more and more products incorporating it into their formulas. If you're in survival mode, you're likely producing a lot of charcoal and ash, so put it to good use. Simply grind the charcoal down and lather a paste all over your body. Pay particular attention to all of the body parts that are likely to get dirtier faster, like the armpits, feet and groin. These are spots you'll need to clean often and thoroughly when in the wild. Even without any scrubbing, a water bath is far better than nothing. If you have access to a source of running water, try to bathe as frequently as possible.

## Taking an Air Bath

This method is exactly as it sounds. When you don't have access to water, fresh air and sunlight are going to be your next best option. Strip down and take an air or sun bath. The UV rays from the sun are a powerful cleaner. A breeze will help move clean air over your body as the sun works to kill



germs. Sometimes the body just needs to breathe. While you're "bathing", spread all of your clothes out in the sun so they get the same treatment. The more time they spend in the sun, the cleaner they'll get. The more a wind you have, the better. Try to set your clothes up in a way that will allow for air to pass through them while the sun is strongest.

## **Taking a Smoke Bath**

When I spend a long time in the wilderness in colder months, I often smoke both my body and my clothes clean. This hygiene tool was first learned through a Himba community in Namibia, who have very limited access to water. They smoke themselves clean every day. The smoke helps kill both bacteria and parasites, and kills the odor-producing bacteria that make us stinky. I also smoke my clothes clean by hanging them on a tripod over the smoke from my fire. It works well.

## **The Wilderness Washing Machine**

Washing clothes in the wilderness is nowhere near as simple as throwing everything into the washing machine and pressing a few buttons. There are a few ways you can wash your clothes, including using what I like to call a "wilderness washing machine". The wilderness washing machine is a simple concept. All you need is a vessel to hold your clothes, water, several small stones, and yucca soap. Start off by rinsing your clothes in running water to help get all of the surface-level grime out before throwing it into the washing machine. Then, set your clothes into what ever container you have. This could be the pot you use for cooking, a birch bowl, a plastic bag you have with you or found, or even a depression in a large rock with enough space for your clothes and water. Fill the container up with water and add the small rocks and yucca soap. Instead of how a normal washing machine shakes back and forth, you'll need to create the agitation in your "machine". Move your hands quickly back and forth to shake the clothes amongst the rocks. This motion will allow for the rocks to beat dirt out of the clothing into the water. If you have a plastic bag, or a pot with a lid, simply hold it closed and shake vigorously to get the dirt out. This process is usually done several times in order to get as much dirt out as possible. Once the water starts pouring out clear, your clothes will be as clean as they can get in the wild.

## **Wool vs. Synthetics**

One of the best ways to take care of your personal hygiene is to take preventative measures. Some fabrics are much better at fighting bacteria than others. For example, wool is well-known for its antimicrobial properties. This means you can go much longer without needing to wash your clothing and they won't start smelling as soon. Synthetic clothing, like polyester and fleece, start to smell and get dirty much quicker than fabrics like wool (or even cotton). If you prepare by wearing the right clothing, you won't need to worry about laundry as frequently and will stay cleaner longer.

## **Oral Hygiene**

Keeping your teeth clean is another incredibly important part of taking care of yourself in the wild. The small bits of bacteria and plaque that build up in your mouth can lead to a long-term buildup of bacteria in your gut. This can be harmful in both short and long-term survival scenarios. While you can't plug in your electric toothbrush and brush for two minutes with ultra-bright whitening toothpaste, you can still get your teeth semi-clean. One of the best ways to do this in the wild is to use a frayed chewing stick for a toothbrush and/or use herbs to chew on for positive dental hygiene. Many people chew on wild chamomile, spearmint, eucalyptus, and even throw in a small bit of charcoal to help clean your teeth at least once a day.