



The Boys' Brigade Mountaineering Club

The BBMC's How to Guides: Number 1: Survival Camp

Making outdoor adventure possible through sharing hundreds of years of our collective outdoor expertise

How to run a Survival Camp

The Concept?

2nd Reading Coy started Survival Camp in 2008. The concept was to provide Juniors with a simple Sat morning to Sun afternoon one-night camp/ residential experience with a mixture of simple fun activities but at least one with an edge.



Does it work?

From a simple start with 10 Juniors, it quickly grew (with Company & Seniors starting on Friday night) to around 50 boys and 20 leaders. Although we do lots of trips it's the firm favourite of our calendar and the boys just love it.



Do you have to skin rabbits?

Of course! It's our staple activity, but there is a vast range of activities that you can do – see other How to Guides for ideas but the emphasis is on keeping it simple and allowing the boys 'loosely supervised play' to enjoy the woods.



Where do you go?

Not far – but far enough. We've been using 2 venues, a YMCA cabin and a Barn owned by a Christian Trust. Both are in the countryside but no more than 10 miles from our town centre Church. They're both cheap and provide indoor options.



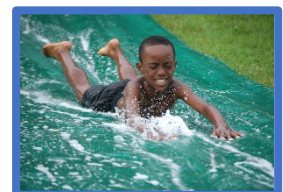
How do you sleep?

We started with tents – but started bivvying around a big fire on the Friday night, and then let the boys sleep in the dens they build on Sat night. I've built up a stack of various size tarps. Check dens for robustness & have a night patrol.



When do you go?

We generally aim for the 2nd or 3rd w/e in September but have gone as late as the 2nd w/e in October. It's a great way to start the new BB programme, and the weather is usually fantastic – balmy Indian summers. We have an indoor option just in case.



How to Guide #1: Survival Camp continued

Dark early?

Yes, it makes running a night time wide game easier – we also retreat indoors to watch ‘the big film’ (a projector, DVD player and a sheet works great) – have a talk, let the boys play cards & simple board games & get them to bed on time.



What do you teach?

Obviously, anything, but our favourite is to tell the David stories in situ. So out on the field we’ll pause, & semi act out the story (leaders vs boys for tug of war for David vs Goliath) – and then continue with the activity. Works great.



How to keep safe?

Obviously, a first aid kit & a risk assessment (see Guide 5) but the important part is the briefing – to leaders & boys – constantly over the w/e and especially over meals – highlight a poor behaviour and discuss the consequences.



BB Qualifications ?

The only certificate you must have is the Holiday Leadership. Your RA will drive activity specific qualifications (such as air rifle shooting). First aid is always recommended but isn’t mandatory & you’re close to home to call parents.



Related How to Guides?

Virtually every question posed on this How to Guide is supported by more detailed Guides, which covers possible activities, model programme, generic risk assessment, teaching ideas etc. So check the BBMC website.

Link to BBMC How to Guides

Top Tip?

Keep it Simple – it’s easy to over plan the weekend. Boys just love being out in the woods and will create their own games & activities. And of course, don’t forget the rabbits!!



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