

FIREDROP

By Adam Nestor

The bow drill is my favorite bushcraft fire starting method. I even wrote a 400-page book on the subject! However, if I had to pick one go-to, dependable and practically fail-proof method... it would have to be a cotton ball saturated with Vaseline, lit with a spark from a ferro rod. Practically speaking, in an emergency, time is precious, and you may need to start a fire quickly instead of carving a bow drill set.

It can be messy to carry cotton balls saturated with Vaseline. Your hands can get coated with Vaseline or your gear could get unwanted residue on it, possibly making it too slippery to hold or use safely. There are many ways to carry those slippery cotton balls. I have used the classic plastic film canister, a vitamin container with a screw top lid and a resealable plastic bag to name a few.

The Firedrop is a convenient way to carry those precious cotton balls saturated with Vaseline. A Firedrop allows you to carry one or more saturated cotton balls. You can spread-load multiple Firedrops throughout your gear and pockets to improve the chances of having a firestarter when you need it most.

Here's how to make a Firedrop: gather some heavy-duty aluminum foil, cotton balls made



of 100% cotton, petroleum jelly aka Vaseline, duct tape, scissors and a hole punch. Petroleum Jelly is also a component of an anti-bacterial ointment, one of which is Neosporin. This knowledge will come in handy later in this article. When it comes to duct tape, I like to use the thinner variety because it's less bulky, but still strong and durable enough to do its job of holding everything together. I also like to use brightly colored tape, so I can see the

Firedrop easily and find it on the ground if I accidentally drop it.

Take a cotton ball and dip it into some Vaseline. Roll it around in your hands. You can use disposable gloves to roll the slippery cotton ball in your hands and keep your hands clean. If you don't, you will get Vaseline on your hands and prevent chapped skin. That's not necessarily a bad thing. Dip the cotton ball in the Vaseline again if you see any dry areas on the cotton ball.