



Building a Fire

How to build a fire

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Landscaping fabric (Green Thumb Weed Block, \$8.50 for a 25-foot length) keeps weeds at bay.

For emergencies, keep an extinguisher nearby (Kidde ABC, \$20).

The heart of the project: a stone floor (Rock City river rock, \$4 for a 0.5 cubic-foot bag) and bricks for the pit (RumbleStone round fire pit kit, 45.8-by-10.5-inches, \$341).

For laying out the pit: Landmann 18-inch steel fire-place grate (\$20), left, and Rust-Oleum marking paint (\$5.50 for 17 oz.), right.

For compressing gravel: a Kobalt 10-by-10-inch tamper (\$30), left. For setting bricks: a Mayhew mallet (\$12), right.



String for marking the fire pit area:

A two-by-four (\$4 for a 10-

Work gloves are essen-

The Hers (\$65) is de-

An ergonomic wheelbar-

INTRODUCTION

I am going to give steps on how to build a fire, and how to be safe around fires. Additionally, I will include recommendations for the best materials to use during the process.

TOOLS:

- [Shovel \(1\)](#)
- [Mallet \(1\)](#)
- [Fire Extinguisher \(1\)](#)

Step 1 — Before Building a Fire



● What You'll Need:

⚠ A safe place to build your fire. If you're outdoors, that means a fire pit away from trees and bushes.

Indoors, that means a fireplace with a good grate, a screen that will keep sparks from flying out, and a working flue that you can open up to let smoke escape

⚠ Matches. Obviously, you'll need these to start the fire. Of course, you don't need matches—any fire starter will do. Matches are generally the most convenient.

● Tinder. This is what you'll use to start your fire. Outdoors, this means small, dry sticks and twigs, while indoors newspaper will work just fine. In especially wet conditions, cedar bark, cattail down and birch bark are ideal materials. Make sure to keep them in a dry place as you gather several handfuls to start your fire.

- Assemble your tinder in a loose pile at the center of where you'd like to build your fire. Elevating the tinder slightly on a platform of small stick is a good way to assure that tinder won't get wet, and that the necessary amount of air will be able

to circulate. This circulation is necessary for your fire to burn properly.

- Kindling. This is wood that's slightly larger than tinder, usually a bit less than an inch in diameter. This will burn easily and get your fire going, building a coal bed under your larger wood. Make sure this is dry. Make sure you choose sticks and twigs that have been off the ground, ideally these would be in the branches of trees and deadfalls.
- Logs. You know what these look like. Usually a few inches in diameter, this is the wood that will go on your fire last, that'll build it up to the right size and keep it burning for awhile. You'll want to make sure this is dry before you use it. Some wood burns better than others. Select hardwoods or firs, avoid things such as basswood and poplar.



Water. You've heard Smokey the Bear say it a million times, so I won't bore you, but make sure you have some water handy to put out the fire when you're done. Only you can prevent forest fires.

Step 2 — Building and Lighting the Fire



- Building an Outdoor Campfire
- If you're building a fire outdoors, you'll need to be a bit more resourceful than if you had the comfort of a fireplace. This means you'll need to find the wood, kindling, and tinder, and you'll need to build a small fire pit if you don't already have one.
- Make sure you're away from trees, bushes, or anything that burns. You don't want to be starting any forest fires. Also, if you're at a campsite, double-check that fires are permitted in the area. Ideally, this location will be protected from the wind to make it easier when you start your fire.
- Build a small fire pit. To protect the wood from falling apart into the area where you're sitting, dig a small hole and surround it with rocks. If your campsite already has a fire pit (or you've built a backyard one yourself), you can obviously skip this step.
- To ensure that your tinder stays dry, build a small platform of sticks in the spot you intend to have the fire. Place the tinder in a loose pile (again, you want air circulation) at the center of this platform. This platform will also help air circulate to the fire as it grows.
- The teepee structure truly is the best fire for most applications. Divide your kindling in different sizes from smallest to largest. Once your tinder is lit and burning, place your smallest kindling in a teepee formation on top of the tinder (watch your fingers). Once that has caught, place the next largest kindling in a teepee on that, and so on.
- Once you've reached your largest kindling pile, prepare to add your logs, again from smallest to largest. If any of your logs appear to be damp, reserve those until you have a good bed of coals and are positive your fire cannot go out.

You have successfully lit a fire, congratulations.

