

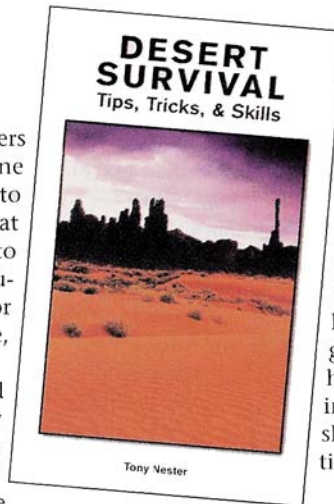
## Surviving in the Desert

Review by Greg Friese

When the tone says go, you go; that's what rescuers do, right? Maybe not. I've seen guys arrive on scene fast, but ill-prepared, only to drop out early due to injuries from fatigue, exposure and dehydration that could have been avoided if they'd taken the time to prepare for the challenge. Many complex rescue situations become short-term survival situations for patients and rescuers alike, especially in remote, desert environments.

*Desert Survival Tips, Tricks, and Skills* is the second in a series of books on basic survival skills by Tony Nester, who has taught survival and outdoor skills for 15 years to the U.S. military, National Park Service, and outdoor enthusiasts. The first title, *Practical Survival*, was an overview of skills for any North American environment. *Desert Survival*, says the author, "is intended to cut to the chase and function as a working manual of field-expedient skills for handling short-term survival situations."

The book's recurring theme is planning and preparation and the author has packed it with useful emergency prevention tips that are easily adapted to rescue situations. After a brief overview of desert ecology, Nester explains how the human body responds to heat stress and offers tips to prevent and treat heat-related illnesses, heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Understanding the environment, employing appropriate personal protection and preparing for short-term survival are critical for rescuers. Adequate



hydration keeps your mind sharp and your body limber. You cannot do your job if you become victim to the environment.

Remaining chapters discuss types of survival situations, pre-trip planning, basic survival skills, outfitting your vehicle, and critical survival skills such as obtaining water, building shelter, fire-making, and signaling for rescue. In addition to general items for a vehicle survival kit in the desert, Nester recommends a ground pad or tarp to protect you from the hot ground or to create shade while changing a flat tire, and an umbrella—to take the shade with you on the hike to the gas station.

Survival starts between your ears with a positive mental attitude. The people who survive, according to Nester, "never give up, no matter how grim things look." The book concludes with a list of additional resources.

Of course, you can also spend a week in the desert with Tony and a pocketknife. For more information about his seminars, visit [www.desertsurvivalskills.com](http://www.desertsurvivalskills.com).

***Desert Survival Tips, Tricks, and Skills* by Tony Nester. Diamond Creek Press, 2003; \$10.95.**

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