



THINGS A MAN SHOULD OWN



THE THINGS WE LOVE. THE THINGS WE NEED. THE ITEMS, WERE THEY TO BE LOST, WE WOULD BRIEFLY MOURN AND IMMEDIATELY REPLACE. HERE, A COLLECTION OF OBJECTS NO MAN SHOULD BE WITHOUT. TURN THE PAGE FOR AN ANNOTATED INVENTORY.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAN WINTERS





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ake the work gloves. (Three pages back. In front of the chain saw, above the boots, next to the basketball.) They allow us to hold things that we could not otherwise comfortably hold. They protect. They enable. Mainly because they prevent blisters, but, still, we are enabled by them. They make us better than we actually are.

The things a man should own are mostly simple things that work in simple ways. And sometimes loudly. And often with a lot of grease (Opposite page. On the cigar box, left of the pinup). They function simply.

Yet they confer greatness.

Or at least competence. Because the things men own represent knowledge and skill. If we own it, we need to know how to wield it. We make that contract with our families, our neighbors, ourselves. Our fathers. Our stuff is impressive not because it has been purchased but because it has been used. Part of being a man is knowing how to exploit very simple things, the things we own—a collection of objects that should include the following:

1 CAST-IRON SKILLET (Lodge Logic 12", \$34; lodgemfg.com)

It's not a specialty kitchen item, which means you can cook almost anything in it. Because you never use soap on it, it'll enrich your eggs and burgers and grilled cheese and fish fillets and rib eyes with the earned flavors of a well-used grill. It's impossible to break and can go in the oven. And it will last longer than you.

2 VALID PASSPORT

You can't even go to Canada anymore without one. Not having a passport is like not having money.

3 MULTIPURPOSE TOOL (Leatherman Wave, \$99; leatherman.com)

It's not that it's better than any of the seventeen individual implements it contains. It's that its seventeen implements are good enough that you don't have to carry any of them individually.

4 WAITER'S CORKSCREW/BOTTLE OPENER/KNIFE (Super Professional waiter's corkscrew, \$29; winehardware.com)

Corkscrews should not be expensive. Or require instruction manuals.

5 AX

Because you need something to make firewood out of the tree that fell across your driveway.

6 WD-40

If only for the door hinges. A man's house should involve no squeaking.

7 CORDLESS DRILL (DeWalt 18V compact drill/driver, \$219; dewalt.com)

Electric hand tools should be cordless. Eighteen volts—contractor grade—is all the power you'll ever need.

8 WEEKEND SHOULDER BAG (Hogan

Rebel coated-canvas duffel, \$835; 888-604-6426)

Which should fit the following: a cotton blazer, jeans, khaki shorts, swim trunks, two T-shirts, a button-down, flip-flops, white sneakers, a leather belt, two pairs underwear, two pairs socks, one Dopp kit (as dictated by Esquire's Big Black Book Spring 2009).

9 GIANT WOOL BLANKET NEVER REMOVED FROM THE TRUNK OF THE CAR

Because you could freeze to death without one. Also, it's good for a picnic.

10 CHAIN SAW (Stihl MS 390, \$470; stihlusa.com)

Because you need something to prepare the tree for the ax.

11 WORK GLOVES

Without a good pair of work gloves, you blister in five minutes of picking up an ax or a chain saw. You need two pairs: rubber-coated for winter, leather for summer.

12 CARPENTER'S LEVEL

Because with a small one, you can level a picture. With this one, you can level a deck.

13 BOOTS FOR THE SHOP (Red Wing for J. Crew Classic Irish Setter, \$325; jcrew.com)

Sneakers are not for the garage.

14 BOOTS FOR EVERYWHERE ELSE (White's Boots Outdoorsman, \$355; whitesboots.com)

These are custom-fitted to your feet, so you won't go through two weeks of blistering and one week of healing before they're comfortable. And they're guaranteed for life, so you'll never buy another pair again.

15 JACK

Cars come with inferior jacks. You need a better one.

16 CLAW HAMMER

Because gravity. A good heavy hammer changes everything.

17 LANTERN (Coleman kerosene lantern, \$80; coleman.com)

An electric lantern makes your campsite look cold. This one makes it look warm.

18 CHEF'S KNIFE (Wüsthof Classic 9", \$160; wusthof.com)

With a good kitchen knife, you're holding something heavy and well-balanced. The food yields to it. Cooking becomes a craft, not a chore.

19 FLYING DISC (Discraft 175 Ultra-Star, \$10; discraft.com)

This isn't the flimsy, feathery Frisbee you played with as a kid. It's the flying disc sanctioned by the Ultimate Players Association for its championship series.

20 U.S. ROAD ATLAS (Rand McNally 2009 version, \$14; randmcnally.com)

The man who only uses a GPS is half a man.

21 AIR PUMP (Lezyne Classic Floor Drive pump, \$60; lezyne.com)

No electric model has improved on the ease or reliability of a well-built, hand-powered floor pump. And you can't take an electric one tubing on the river.

22 JUMPER CABLES

Not so much for you but for the stranger stuck in the parking lot. For instructions on how to use them, see page 101.

23 CHARCOAL GRILL (Weber One-Touch Silver 22.5", \$99; weber.com)

Gas grills are nice. We like the gas grill. But the metal kettle is crucial. Not because charcoal makes food taste better than a gas grill (it probably does, a little) but because with a charcoal grill you can smoke things. And smoking things can kill

two, three, four hours. Hours of drinking and basting. Beautiful. See page 32 for a recipe.

24 CARD HOLDER (Moore & Giles Brompton, \$60; mooreandgilesinc.com)

To be placed in the breast pocket of your jacket.

25 POCKET KNIFE (Buck model 55, \$56; buckknives.com)

One with a two-and-a-half-inch blade: big enough for most jobs, small enough not to weigh you down.

26 GREASE (Phil Waterproof Grease, \$9; philwood.com)

None of that silicone-based, high-tech synthetic goop. Something made of dinosaurs. Something that smells like God's garage.

27 LUCKY CHARM

Because it gives the comfort of faith to the faithless—like when you really need the chain saw to start.

28 \$1,000 HIDDEN IN YOUR HOUSE Because \$500 is too little and \$2,000 is too much.

29 LED FLASHLIGHT (LED Lenser P14, \$130; ledlenserusa.com)

LED flashlights are blindingly bright, shockproof, and, maybe best of all, run for a hundred hours on four AA batteries, which is at least seventy more hours than an incandescent bulb.

30 MONEY CLIP (Cartier Double C, \$120; cartier.com)

To be placed in the front pocket of your pants.

31 JOY OF COOKING (\$25; amazon.com)

It's the Old Testament of cookbooks. Low on bombast. Heavy on information. Lots of lists. It beget all others. And if you want to cook it, it's in there, including possum. 🐿