

FIRE BUILDERS

THE CALL OF THE WILD is the story of Buck, a big hearted dog who experiences the adventure of a lifetime in the exotic wilds of the Canadian Yukon. Together with his companion John, he must learn to battle the elements and survive against the odds. Scouts too can learn vital survival skills for outdoor adventures. With adult supervision, use the instructions below to learn how to build a fire and stay warm and dry even in the harshest conditions.

YOU WILL NEED:

Kindling (for example, small sticks) • Firewood • Cardboard tubes • Cotton wool balls • Matches
Shredded newspaper Petroleum jelly • Tortilla chips • Fire bucket • Sand

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

- Find a safe space and build a circle of large rocks to contain the fire(s). Have sand and/or a bucket of water on hand in case the fire gets too big.
- You'll need plenty of adults for this activity – one to supervise each fire. You could invite parents and carers along to help.

COLLECT WOOD

1. In small groups collect tinder, kindling, and wood. Natural tinder includes small twigs, wood shavings, and very dry leaves. Kindling is slightly bigger; it burns for slightly longer and includes thin sticks, bark, and pine cones.
2. Once each group has collected enough tinder, kindling, and wood, they should sort it into four piles according to size. As a guide, aim for a pile about the width of spaghetti, a pile about the width of a finger, a pile about the width of a wrist, and a pile wider than a wrist.

MAKE A FIRELIGHTER

- Each group should work with an adult to make a firelighter that will burn for long enough that the kindling has time to catch.

FIRELIGHTER IDEAS:

1. STUFFED TUBE

Stuff a cardboard toilet roll tube with cotton wool, wood shavings, or dried grass. Squeeze or fold the ends to stop the filling coming out.

3. STUFFED EGG BOX

Tear newspaper into thin strips and stuff it inside a cardboard egg box.

2. JELLY COTTON WOOL

Smear petroleum jelly on cotton wool balls. Petroleum jelly isn't flammable until the cotton wool heats it up, so it makes the firelighter last much longer.

4. CRISPS

Use tortilla chips – they burn well because of the fat in them.

5. NEWSPAPER TUBES

Roll newspaper into a tube shape, flatten it, and tie a knot (or fold it) in the middle.

BUILD A FIRE

1. Each group should put some of their tinder in the middle of their campfire.
2. Each group should surround the tinder with some kindling. They should leave some spaces for their firelighter to reach the tinder.
3. With adult supervision each group should use their firelighter to light their tinder. They should blow lightly and slowly onto their tinder until the kindling also catches fire. They should use short and strong breaths to help the fire get going. If the firelighter doesn't work, try again! Make another or try a different idea.
4. Each group should slowly add bigger and bigger pieces of kindling, and then pieces of wood, on top of their fire.

Once the wood is burning, everyone should enjoy the warmth and light from the fire they've made.

SAFETY

Fires and stoves

Make sure anyone using fires and stoves is doing so safely. Check that the equipment and area are suitable and have plenty of ventilation. Follow the [gas safety guidance](#). Have a safe way to extinguish the fire in an emergency.

Rubbish and recycling

All items should be clean and suitable for this activity.

Gardening and nature

Everyone must wash their hands after the activity has finished. Wear gloves if needed. Explain how to safely use equipment and set clear boundaries so everyone knows what's allowed.

Outdoor activities

You must have permission to use the location. Always check the weather forecast and inform parents and carers of any change in venue. All activities must be safely managed. Do a [risk assessment](#) and take appropriate steps to reduce risk. Always get approval for the activity and have suitable [supervision](#) and an [InTouch](#) process.

FIND MORE ACTIVITIES LIKE THIS AT [SCOUTS.ORG.UK/ACTIVITIES](https://www.scouts.org.uk/activities)

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