



Outdoors with your POCKET KNIFE

The small guide for on the go

Felix Immler



VICTORINOX

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Photography Matthew Worden



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This book was created in conjunction with Victorinox AG, Ibach, Schwyz, Switzerland.

Note

By its very nature, working with blades, saws and other pocket knife tools entails a certain level of risk. The author of this book has tried, to the best of his knowledge and belief, to set out the safest techniques and to point out all possible dangers to the reader. The author, the publisher and the company Victorinox cannot guarantee that the techniques described here will be safe for everyone to perform. As such, they assume no responsibility for losses or damages, nor any liability for claims that may be raised in direct or indirect connection with the contents of this book.

Note that, for all outdoor activities, the respective regulations relating to the protection of nature, plants and animals apply, as does the weapons legislation in force.

Take a look at Felix Immler's website and YouTube channel:

 www.feliximmler.com

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FOREWORD

There are books, videos and workshops that will tell you how to survive extreme conditions in the Himalaya or the Sahara, or how to get through a disaster in a major city. Finding inspiration for exciting adventures in the woods is somewhat more difficult.

I hope to bridge the gap with this book, by showing just how much fun you can have by making everyday objects for yourself, using only natural materials and your pocket knife as tools. This book isn't about building a camp from scratch. That said, I will show you some fantastic projects that will make your time at a ready-made camp more comfortable, while giving you fun things to do outdoors. While luxury is something that we take for granted within our own four walls, making it for yourself out in the open is ten times as much fun. Discover for yourself just how good soup tastes when sipped from a spoon that you've carved yourself, and how welcome a comfortable seat with a backrest is, pulled up to a blazing fire.

As a nature instructor I'm particularly keen to pass on a love of living with and alongside nature to young people. Going 'back to nature' is something you hear a lot about, but it's more than a matter of simply roasting a sausage over an open fire. You need much more exciting tasks than that, or the PlayStation and other such attractions will invariably gain the upper hand. There are lots of exciting yet comfortable activities to be enjoyed at home, and these compete with the experiences that the outside world has to offer. This makes it all the more important for parents, educators, teachers, youth group leaders and other caregivers to have a stash of fascinating ideas in their arsenal. By gathering a wide range of project ideas together in this book, I also hope to appeal to hunters, rangers, walkers, camping enthusiasts, canoeists, mushroom pickers and all kinds of other nature-lovers who want to expand their outdoor repertoire.

There's no need for expensive outdoor equipment to do the projects in this book. A pocket knife with a wood saw will be quite sufficient to tackle many of these bushcraft ideas. Of course, having an axe, folding saw and a survival knife will hardly put you at a disadvantage. Personally, I enjoyed the challenge of doing these projects with as few shop-bought tools and implements as possible; after all, these additional tools aren't normally among the equipment carried by your average forest walker or hiker. If you're prepared to pare things back and have a few tricks up your sleeve, this pocket-sized workshop will provide everything you need to achieve your objective. You can find more information on how to use your pocket knife on pages 116–123.

So what are you waiting for? Pack your knife and let's get outdoors!

Felix Immler





INTRODUCTION

What is bushcraft, exactly?

There's no set-in-stone definition of the term 'bushcraft'. Generally speaking, it is understood as knowledge, skills and handcraft techniques that make life outdoors and amid nature more comfortable. As such, the trappings of civilisation are avoided as much as possible, and natural materials and simple tools used in their place.

Unlike survival techniques, bushcraft is not about outright emergency situations in which it may be a case of life or death. As such, there's no need to agonise over the time and effort spent on every single action. Bushcrafters actively plan to spend time in the woods and set about making nature their refuge for the sheer joy of it. They don't start off by asking themselves how much time and energy it's going to take. In a survival situation, a person is likely to choose the shelter of a fir tree bristling with branches, rather than unnecessarily wasting energy on building a roof. In those circumstances, the aim is often to return from the wilderness to civilisation in one piece and as quickly as possible. By contrast, bushcrafters are looking to escape civilisation for a while and settle comfortably into nature. They will normally carry food, drinks and other essential equipment in their backpack. When compiling this book, I therefore deliberately omitted survival-specific topics such as trap-making, hunting, emergency foraging for edible plants and drinking water treatment.



BENCH

If you want to be able to sit comfortably at your table, you will need a bench. You need four sharpened posts for each side of the bench, each at least 3 cm (1¼ in) in diameter. Two posts are beaten into the ground next to each other, about 5 cm (2 in) apart. The branches that are slotted between these posts should be trimmed to 50 cm (20 in). Once you have your sticks at the right height (in this case about 35 cm/14 in), bind the pairs of posts together at the upper end **1**, **2**. To make the

seat surface, use sturdy lengths of wood with a diameter of at least 4 cm (1½ in) **3**, **4**. In our example, the sturdiness of the branches used for the seat meant that we only needed the two supports at the ends; a third in the middle of the bench wasn't necessary.





THREE-LEGGED STOOL

The three-legged stool is quick and easy to build. Remo, a friend and project partner at the Buchhorn Adventure Garden, showed me how to construct a quick three-legged stool using simple materials.

Saw three sturdy, straight branches with a diameter of at least 3 cm (1¼ in) to a length of about 50 cm (20 in) **1**. Lay them on top of each other (two on the bottom, one on the top), and wrap a strong cord four times around the bundle, about a third

of the way down from the top. Tie the ends of the cord together using a reef knot **2**. Place the framework on the ground and spread the legs apart. You will notice the tautness that the knot gives the structure. Press the ends of the legs into the soil a little. You can now place either some horizontal branches **2**, a small flat stone **3** or a large flat rock on top **4**. And *voilà* – your three-legged stool is finished!





POTHOLDER



If you want to cook something in a pan over an open fire, a potholder will be very useful. The tripod is the classic potholder. This height-adjustable structure does, however, require rather a lot of twine **1**, **2**, **3**. The string is attached to a hook (made of a forked branch), and the pot handle is then hung from the hook. If the cords that allow you to adjust the height are simply slung over the tripod **4**, then the weight of a heavy, completely suspended cooking pot on the other end will create a lot of frictional resistance. Ideally, the twine enabling you to adjust the height should instead form a loop around the crossing point of the three supports like a carabiner, thus reducing attrition and minimising the resistance due to friction.

Opening and folding the tools

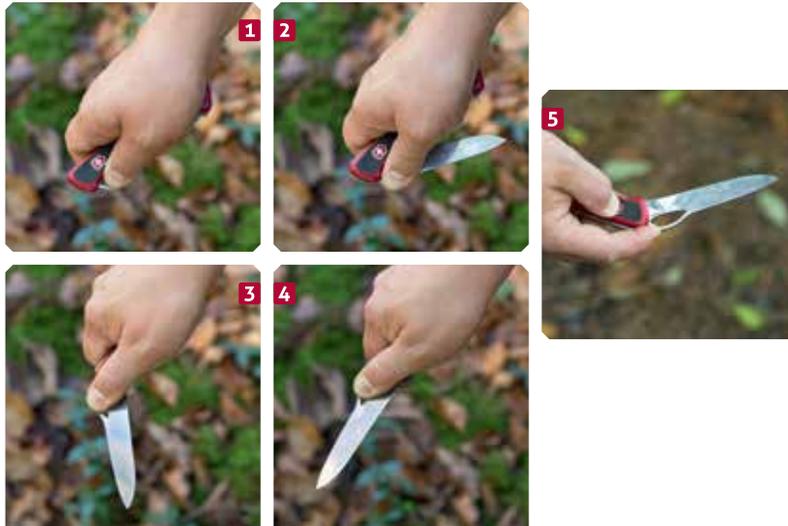
The Victorinox Ranger Grip 79, which I used for this book, is a one-handed knife. The means that you can open it and close it again with one hand. Of course, you could also use both hands to fold a one-handed knife in and out. However, I will take the time here to explain the exact technique for opening and closing it with one hand. If you can operate your knife with one hand, you will have the other hand free for holding or attaching something else.

Opening

To open your knife, hold it in your dominant hand. Place the tip of your thumb in the opening loop **1**. You can now open your knife by bringing your thumb up with a semi-circular movement in a clockwise direction **2**, **3**, **4**.

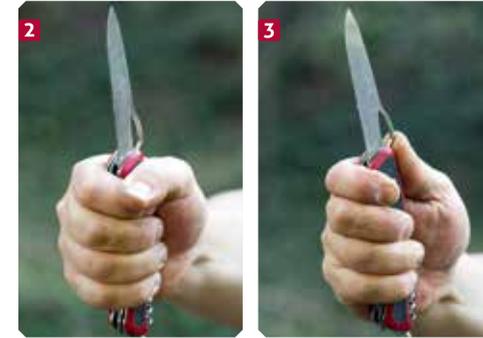
Folding

Hold the knife in your right hand and press down on the release button – the Victorinox Cross & Shield on the gripping handle – with your thumb. With the index finger of the same hand, push the blade from the base about 90 degrees towards the casing **5**. Now use your thumb to push the knife the rest of the way into its bay.



How to hold your knife when carving

If you're carving something, you will need to be sitting down – always abide by this basic rule. Make sure that your seat is sturdy and will not wobble. Place your feet on the ground, a little more than shoulder width apart. Start carving with your legs apart, so that you are working in front of them, or to one side of your legs. Hold the piece of wood firmly towards the back, and support the lower arm of the hand that is holding it against your knee **1**. This will give you a firmer grip on the piece of wood. The hand that is holding the wood should always be behind the knife, never in front of it. Carve towards the ground. Your tapering movements with the knife have to end in open air. Never support the wood against your thigh and carve towards your lap; major blood vessels run along the inside of your thigh. You should only carve if the wood is in front of your knees.



The fist grip

In order to ensure that the force of your arm is effectively transferred to the cutting edge, the knife has to sit firmly in your hand. People often hold their knife too tentatively, so that it is loose within their fist. If you want to be able to carve effectively and safely, you need to grip it so that your hand is firm but not cramped. Don't hold the knife too far down the grip, as this will mean that less of your force will get transferred. If there's just a little bit of the casing sticking out of your fist, you are holding the knife correctly **2**.

The fist grip is the basic grip for working with a pocket knife blade attachment. In order to get a better feel for the carving motion and better leverage, lots of people also place their thumb on the back edge of the knife **3**. Try it out and see what feels best for you!