A Free Do-It-Yourself Tip from DisasterGuy.com

Walking in the Dark!

Most people believe they must have a flashlight to walk in the dark. Not true! Our remote ancestors didn't have flashlights. You can walk in the dark on all but the darkest, cloudiest, moonless nights… and perhaps even then!

1. You must give your eyes 5 to 10 minutes with no flashlight to start becoming dark-adapted. Use this time to match what you can see in the dark and what you saw with the light. Take a break until your eyes adapt.

2. Your eyes adapt to total darkness in 20 to 30 minutes. During that time they will lose color sensitivity and will be able to see blue-green better than red.

3. Amateur astronomers use red flashlights with low intensity because this degrades their night vision less. Red flashlights will work for you, too, as long as you shine them AWAY from you and away from everybody else.

4. To see something very dim, such as a dim star on a moonless night, do not look directly at it. Look at it *slightly from the side* instead of trying to focus directly at it. Try this – and watch the dim star appear!

5. The pupils in your eyes adapt to light separately. To experiment with this, get up in the middle of the night and cover one eye. Turn on a light and the uncovered eye will adapt to the higher light conditions. Turn the light off, open both eyes, and note which one sees best in the dark. Blink one eye, then the other, to see the difference. This is a great trick for walking back to a tent at night!

6. When walking outdoors in the dark, put an arm up ahead of you to shield you from spider webs, branches, etc. The darker it is, the slower you should walk.

7. Depth perception at night is poor, it seems to me, because there are fewer visual clues and less visible shadows. Near objects may be closer or farther away than you think they are. Again, shield your face when walking in the dark.

8. If someone is using a flashlight to find the path, he should be in the lead position. He should direct his flashlight FORWARD ONLY, never back toward the other hikers. That would ruin their night vision. His is already compromised.

9. If a bright light, such as a car headlight, is seen, avoid looking at it. If you must look in that direction, cover one eye to preserve night vision in it. You can hike with night vision in only one eye, though you will lose all depth perception.

10. Your night vision may become poorer as you age. Kids see better at night.