

## **Make a Fire**

### **Background:**

One of the training exercises for the G.I.S. was to “light three consecutive fires in the open using one match for each, and cook three good two-course meals in the wet without artificial shelter.” They were clearly expected to be able to cope in a variety of difficult conditions and possibly without any shelter. Fires would have been needed for warmth and cooking. Indeed, several of the GIS units spent months or even years cooking meals for hungry refugees.

Before their training, the girls would have had experience of helping to light fires at home as many 1940s houses had open fires for heating. However, outdoor fires require a slightly different approach, particularly in damp conditions. Do you think you could manage? What might you need to carry with you to assist in fire-lighting?

### **Make a Fire challenge**

Remember that this training was to help increase skills. Think about ways that your skills can be extended by this challenge – make sure that you include something a little more complicated or challenging than you have managed before. I look forward to hearing about your personal challenge.

Your **Make a Fire** challenge can take one of many forms:

If you have a suitable outdoor space, or perhaps a fire pit or barbecue then you can challenge yourself to lay and light a fire. **Talk to an adult about your plans before you start. An adult should be with you for all the time that your fire is burning. Make sure that you have a bucket of water on hand.**

If you have an indoor fireplace or woodburner, can you lay and light a fire there? **Talk to an adult about your plans before you start. An adult should be with you for all the time that your fire is burning.**

If you do not have a suitable place for an actual fire, your challenge could involve making a fire of some kind from craft materials or food.

Or an indoor fire could be a tea light. Can you cook something other than a marshmallow over it? **Talk to an adult about your plans before you start. An adult should be with you for all the time that your tea light is burning.**

Or perhaps you have another idea!

### **Time Taken to Complete:**

This will depend on which challenge you undertake.

If you are planning to make an actual fire, allow plenty of time for preparation of the area, wood, etc and also consider the clearing up once the fire has been put out.

If you are planning a craft or food fire, allow time for tidying away afterwards!

### **Equipment Required:**

For a fire:

- Safe place for the fire. This must be **checked by an adult**.
- Dry wood (or other fuel) Break or cut your wood to reasonable sized pieces before you light your fire. If you are cutting wood then **an adult should be present**.
- Tinder – something that will easily catch light from your match. Dry birch bark, holly leaves, gorse are all good types of natural tinder. Alternatively, newspaper and/or cardboard.
- Sort your wood into size – kindling (twigs pencil-sized or smaller) needs to be very dry to catch fire from your tinder. You will need slightly thicker sticks above the kindling in a pyramid to keep the fire going.
- Matches
- Bucket of water

For a craft fire:

- a variety of craft materials – card, fabric, glue, needle and thread, felt pens or crayons, scissors, actual sticks or anything else you have
- Good imagination! Plus Lego or other play people to gather round your fire to cook and sing!
- You can Google “Fake campfire” for some ideas of what is possible

For a food fire:

- biscuit or other base
- sticks – chocolate sticks, bread crusts, bread sticks etc
- flames – carrot slices, red pepper, sweets, icing etc

- something to stick it all together – peanut butter, icing, cream cheese etc

For a tea light fire

- tea light
- fire-proof, secure surface to place tea light on
- matches
- kebab stick and something to cook – small piece of bread, marshmallow, etc

Safety Precautions:

- **Prepare thoroughly for an actual fire. Ensure that an adult has approved your choice of site.** Consider what you should wear – wellies or strong shoes, long trousers, long sleeves. Tie back long hair. Have your supply of wood within easy reach but at a safe distance from the fire. Have a safe place for the box of matches (in a tin?). Have a bucket of water nearby.
- **Take care when striking matches** Ensure that an adult is with you. If you have never struck a match before, ask to be shown how to do so safely.
- **Fires will be hot!** Keep a safe distance from the fire. Never leave a burning fire unattended. Never pick up a burning stick, even at the unburnt end. **An adult should be with you for all the time the fire is burning.** Allow your fire to burn down and then thoroughly soak before you leave it.
- **Beware of Burns!** Take extreme care around flames. If you do burn yourself, plunge injury into the bucket of water or hold the injury under cold running water for up to 10 minutes (and repeat after 5 minutes break if necessary).
- **Take care with knives, scissors etc.** For craft and food fires, you may need to use knives or scissors. Take care when cutting and always keep your fingers away from the blade. **Have a first aid kit with plasters in to hand in case you do cut yourself.**

### Challenge Yourself!

Perhaps light your fire without firelighters or newspaper?

Or decide beforehand how many matches you will allow yourself to use?

Is there somewhere local that you could collect wood on an exercise walk?

Can you include a torch or other small light in your craft fire?

Can you make a fake fire that could be used indoors at your Guide Unit?

Can you find something else to cook on your tea light? Perhaps a small pancake in a foil dish (use a wooden peg to hold it) or a tiny veg kebab (might be best to use veg that can also be eaten raw! – pepper, mushroom, tomato etc.)

### Photos:



A successful fire!



Edible Fire Challenge!



Tools for Indoor Fire



Indoor fire 'burning'



WAGGS Campfire



Wood-burner laid



Wood-burner alight