How To Make Char Cloth (Emergency Fire Starter)

Categories : Creating Fire, Wilderness Survival

If you are in an emergency or survival situation without matches or a lighter, starting a fire can be very difficult. The most difficult part of starting a fire is initially lighting the tinder material. This is because you usually don't have the ideal tinder material available to get things going. One of the best things to help with this is to make and carry some char cloth. Char cloth is cotton fabric that has been heated to over 400c without oxygen, the absence of oxygen causes the fabric to char instead of burning. Char cloth is extremely sensitive to heat and it catches fire and smoulders very, very easily.

The video above shows how to make char cloth in a tuna can. It also shows how to make char cloth from cotton balls. This isn't something I had considered previously as cotton balls catch fire very easily anyway, but they burn out too quickly (although you can make excellent firestarters with cotton balls), but charring them seems to make them catch fire quickly, BUT burn a lot more slowly. I'll certainly be experimenting with this...

I highly recommend you carry some char cloth with you when heading into the wilderness. A little goes a long way and it can be packed easily and it takes no space. Better to have it and not need it!