

## Using a Tarp as a Basic Camping Shelter

In Backyard Bushcraft issue #7, I shared some tips for buying a high-quality tarp. Here in this issue, I talk about ways to set up your tarp for use as a camping shelter.

Tarps are a super-versatile! Did you know there are at least 50 to 100 ways you can set up a tarp? Here are two resources where you can learn some of these designs:

- This YouTube video from the "TA Outdoors" channel shows five tarp setup options:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4W76LyJdNYU>

- Here is a link to a website that illustrates 25 different setup designs:

<https://rollingfox.com/how-to-make-a-tarp-tent-with-designs>

Here are some more tips:

- Always stake and tie your tarp to the ground as securely as possible. You do not want wind to blow it loose or for rain to get inside. The best practice is to stake all your gromets and use your external tie-outs. This same tip applies for when you use a tent. I have seen strong winds do considerable damage to improperly secured tarps and tents.
- With some setups, you may need to have an interior pole to create headroom. Consider using collapsible tent poles, sturdy sticks, or trekking poles for this. To avoid having the top of the interior pole damage the tarp, put some rolled-up socks on the end of the pole, as shown in the photo below on the left. Alternatively, avoid needing the interior support pole altogether and use one of the external tie-outs, as shown in the photo on the right:



See the 3 photos below. This is one of the simplest ways you can use a tarp as a camping shelter. When I was a Scout many years ago, my Troop frequently used this design on our weekend campouts. There is plenty of room for at least two people, plus a most or all their personal gear. Of course, it is a very good idea to point the opening away from the direction of the wind, in case you get rain. My Troop also used this design when we did our backpacking adventure at Philmont. In the interior photos shown below, notice how I used the "sock-on-the-pole." Also notice how I set the interior pole at an angle with the bottom end pointing toward the front opening:

