



# Exploring 4-H at Home



Environment & Healthy  
Living

**Pillar:** Environment & Healthy Living

**Project:** Outdoor Living

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CANADA  
4-H Saskatchewan

**Outdoor  
Living**

Activity  
Guide

## **Make a Lean-To**

*Adapted from Drake & Love, The Kids Cottage Book*

Topic: Survival skills

Learning outcome:

- To build a shelter.

Materials needed: One long ridgepole, two trees as end poles, and lots of dead branches covered with mosses.

Time: 3 hours

Instructions:

1. Select an area where the wind blows across the two end trees not through them.
2. Attach the ridgepole between the two end poles (trees) four to six feet high.
3. Construct the lean-to like a large hockey net with sticks lined up leaning against the ridgepole. Cover with lichen covered branches and sticks with leaves.
4. Pad the ground with mosses and lichen.

Safety considerations: Junior members will need additional leader supervision when placing the pole.

Processing prompts:

- Would you like to sleep in your shelter?
- Have you ever slept outside without a tent? Would you like to?
- Why do people build shelters?
- Did you discover a different way to build a shelter?

## Tarp Shelter

Topic: Survival skills

Learning outcome:

- To build a shelter.

Materials needed: A tarp or sheet of plastic, rope or cord, and tent pegs.

Time: 20 minutes

Instructions:

1. Tie the rope between two trees. The trees should be at least two or three metres apart, and the rope should be tied as high as possible (at least shoulder height).
2. Drape the tarp over the rope so that sides on either side of the rope are of equal size.
3. Large rocks can be used to hold down the corners of the tarp. If rocks are not available, you can use tent pegs.



Safety considerations: N/A

Processing prompts:

- Would you like to sleep in your shelter?
- Have you ever slept outside without a tent? Would you like to?
- How long do you think you could live in a tarp shelter?

## Debris Shelter

Topic: Survival skills

Learning outcome:

- To build a shelter.

Materials needed: A long pole, branches, deadwood, and other debris.

Time: 1 hour

Instructions:

This is an excellent shelter to build if you are in an area with a lot of branches and leaves that have fallen from trees. The fall season is a great time to try this shelter.

1. Lean a long pole or branch against a tree.
2. Branches and deadwood are leaned against the long branch to form a sloped roof.
3. The shelter is then covered with leaves, grass, sod, pine boughs or anything else you can find on the ground. Pile these materials as thick as possible. The thicker it is, the more waterproof the shelter will be.

Safety considerations: It is important not to have a fire close to this shelter, as it will be very flammable with all of the dried leaves and debris.

Processing prompts:

- Would you like to sleep in your shelter?
- Have you every slept outside without a tent? Would you like to?
- What other creatures build shelters?