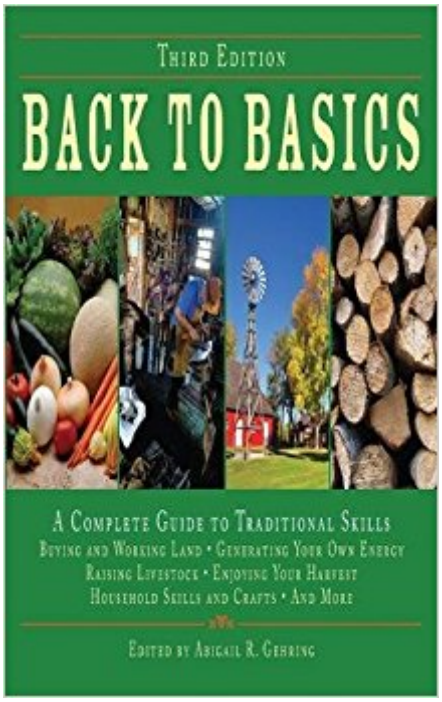
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Back To Basics: A Complete Guide To Traditional Skills, Third Edition



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Synopsis

Anyone who wants to learn basic living skillsâ ”the kind employed by our forefathersâ ”and adapt them for a better life in the twenty-first century need look no further than this eminently useful, full-color guide. Countless readers have turned to Back to Basics for inspiration and instruction, escaping to an era before power saws and fast food restaurants and rediscovering the pleasures and challenges of a healthier, greener, and more self-sufficient lifestyle. Now newly updated, the hundreds of projects, step-by-step sequences, photographs, charts, and illustrations in Back to Basics will help you dye your own wool with plant pigments, graft trees, raise chickens, craft a hutch table with hand tools, and make treats such as blueberry peach jam and cheddar cheese. The truly ambitious will find instructions on how to build a log cabin or an adobe brick homestead. More than just practical advice, this is also a book for dreamersâ ”even if you live in a city apartment you will find your imagination sparked, and there’s no reason why you can’t, for example, make a loom and weave a rag rug. Complete with tips for old-fashioned fun (square dancing calls, homemade toys, and kayaking tips), this may be the most thorough book on voluntary simplicity available. 2,000 color photos and 200 black-and-white illustrations.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

is the editor of, and, and author ofand. Sheâ ™s practiced living self-sufficiently since her childhood in Vermont, being home-schooled, home-canning jams and jellies, and enjoying natural crafts. She

lives in New York City and Windham, Vermont.

Until I checked this book out of the library, I had rarely given a thought to getting "back to basics," that is learning how to be more self-sufficient. After I read the book, I soon bought it, because it opened my eyes to the many ways that I am almost entirely dependent upon others for my basic needs. "Back to Basics" is a helpful guide for those who want to get away from it all and live totally independently on a farm, and even those like myself that live in town, but that want to become more self-sufficient, and less dependent on expensive fossil fuels and foods that someone else has raised or grown."Back to Basics" is a colorful, easy-to-understand encyclopedia of basic skills. There are hundreds of color photos, and most lessons are laid out step-by-step, making the concepts very easy to learn. The book is divided into six basic parts:I. Land: Buying It - Building on it (how to choose land, build a home, develop a water supply, create a sauna, etc)II. Energy from Wood, Water, Wind, and Sun (making your home more efficient, how to use wind energy, setting up a solar-powered house, etc)III. Raising Your Own Vegetables, Fruit, and Livestock (how to properly grow all sorts of fruits, vegetables, and grains, how to farm fish, beekeeping, butchering an animal, etc)IV. Enjoying Your Harvest Year Round (canning, preserving all kinds of foods, making cheese and wine, etc)V. Skills and Crafts for House and Homestead (making natural dyes, weaving, woodworking, stenciling, soapmaking, making homemade perfumes, etc)VI. Recreation at Home and in the Wild (camping, canoeing, kayaking, celebrating holidays, etc)This book definitely has the potential to help all of us live more self-sufficiently, learning to do the things that our grandparents probably learned growing up. However, one possible drawback is that becoming self-sufficient takes a lot of work, and in the case of switching your home over to some type of alternative energy, a lot of money as well. Most readers are probably not going to have the land, time, and money to make some of the more significant changes suggested. However, the book still offers a lot for the rest of us, and at the least, educates us as to what it takes to live in a self-sufficient manner. Another possible drawback is that the book tries to squeeze a lot of information into 456 pages. This means that while you are getting a very concise, and surprisingly detailed, overview, you may need to consult more detailed sources if you need more help than what the book offers.Overall, this is an interesting and useful book that offers practical ways to become more self-sufficient, something that is highly relevant in these times of rising energy and food prices. My family has already used some of the ideas, starting our first garden this year.

A great overview of the traditional skills our generation is lacking.I am reading this book for an

ethnography project. An ethnography project is done by unbiasedly studying a particular culture. Through studying one learns what aspects define the culture of choice. For my project I chose to study self sufficient living. The book Back To Basics edited by Abigail R. Gehring relates to my ethnography topic by explaining step by step how to do basic living skills by yourself. These skills in turn enable a person to live self sufficiently. For example chapter one explains where to buy land and how to build on it, this section includes how to guides for items such as raising a barn, creating a stone wall, and converting trees into lumber.In my opinion Back to Basics edited by Abigail R. Gehring is well worth the money. The book is able to cover almost every basic essential living skill. Each skill is depicted accurately with visual graphics to go along. For example pictures of country plants are shown and below them is a blurb about what plant shows what water, Ã¢Â ÂœSaltbush: Indicates water near the surface, but the quality may be poor.Ã¢Â Â• The only drawback to the book is that since so many skills are covered many skills are not explained as in depth as needed to learn the skill or do the project. While this may seem to be a problem, sources and resources can be found after every skill/project. These sources and resources can provide the depth needed to accomplish the skill. For example in the building a log cabin section a source can be seen as Ã¢Â ÂœNash, George. Old Houses: A rebuilderÃ¢Â Â™s Manual. Needham Heights, Mss.: Prentice Hall, 1979.Ã¢Â Â•Overall I would recommend this book to anyone who is considering starting a self sufficient lifestyle.

This is the coolest book you will ever buy. Everything under the Sun from how to build your house to wear on your land you should build it and where you should plant your trees and what kind of trees, how to cool or heat your house, natural beauty remedies like how to keep your skin clean or soft there’s even a section on natural hair dye. How to make any kind of furniture out of wood and what tools you need, how to make tools, crafts, games, food, how to hunt and prep the kill for dinner so you don’t get sick. It’s amazing I promise just get it

This is an excellent book. It covers many topics and therefore cannot go into great detail on all of them, but it is designed to give the reader a familiarity with practical knowledge about many different skills, crafts, and industries associated with obtaining and running a small, self-sufficient farm. Even though it does cover a huge number of topics, it still has a surprising amount of information about each one of them, presented effectively with lots of color illustrations that are easy to understand and apply to your own situation. As someone who has worked for almost ten years with blacksmithing equipment, it was great to see such a detailed description of tools and step-by-step

instructions for hot forging several useful implements in this book. There are also good sections on gardening, yard planning, owning animals, etc. Overall, I was surprised by the content of this book and definitely recommend it to anyone interested in being self-sufficient and looking after yourself with your own ingenuity. I also recommend it to anyone who isn't yet interested, because it is a good thing to be interested in and this book will help with that.

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