98.6 Degrees: The Art of Keeping Your Ass Alive

Cody Lundin

Layton, UT: Gibbs Smith, 2003

US \$16.95, 240 pages, soft cover

If you read *Wilderness & Environmental Medicine*, chances are that you venture into the wilderness periodically in search of solace, fun, adventure, photos, or something else only found in the great outdoors. The vast majority of such trips into the wilderness will go well—be they day hikes or multi-week expeditions. Should something go wrong and you find yourself in a survival situation—say, getting injured, getting separated from your pack or your party, surviving a small plane crash, getting lost, or being unable to find your vehicle—then you will need to keep your wits about you, seek shelter and water, and most importantly, keep your body temperature at 98.6°F (37°C)—hence the title.

Cody Lundin lives in Arizona. He has spent lots of time living in a tent and years living in the woods in a lean-to, and he has an aboriginal living school where he teaches wilderness survival skills. He speaks with the authority of one who really knows from experience, albeit with an irreverent and humorous tone. He knows his stuff, and his book goes deeply into the details of just what equipment you will need to survive. For example, there is a 7-page section just on the various types of matches and how to prepare them so they will most likely still be working when you really need them. He goes deeply into the details of why you ought to carry dental floss, duct tape, and a condom in your survival kit (it's a wonderful collapsible water container). He has a section on how to select a knife for your survival kit and what characteristics are most important. He also, of course, gives thorough explanations of just what to do with all these things once you have them, how to use them, and some examples of improvisation.

However, the most important part of the book is not the chapter on how to assemble the things that comprise the survival kit but the other 13 chapters on just what is likely to kill you and what it takes to survive. It turns out that the most important item in your survival kit is right between your ears, and Lundin tries to emphasize that point with chapters on fear, panic, clothing issues, shelter, what to leave behind when you go into the wilderness to aid your rescuers, how to attract rescue, etc. He spends some time reviewing basic physiology and thermoregulation and spends a lot of time talking about attitude, preparedness, and general principles of survival aside from the equipment. He provides a few easy-to-remember mnemonics and principles that can be practiced in the comfort of your backyard.

The book is written with a humorous tone and is re-

plete with cartoon-like drawings of characters (strange little critters that I could have done without!) that try to emphasize the points that Lundin makes throughout. There is a section of color photos of survival kit details and, of course, info on how to contact Lundin and enroll in his survival school. (One of these days. . . . When I have some spare time. . . .)

Overall, this book should prove to be a valuable addition to the library of nearly anyone who ventures outdoors. I would recommend it as such. Read it, think about it, gather up a kit, and read it again. Practice some of the skills regularly as you can (like making a fire out of cold, wet tinder in a windstorm), and you will be prepared to come back from wherever you go alive—which is the ultimate goal.

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The Active Woman's Guide to Pregnancy

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Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press, 2004

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When Aneema Van Groenou asked me to write a book jacket quote for *The Active Woman's Guide to Pregnancy*, I was flattered. One of the joys of being a teacher is watching young authors blossom as writers, particularly when their topic is important and enthusiasm is infectious. Another great feeling is uncovering a new niche in wilderness medicine. Women's health has only recently been appropriately emphasized, so advice for pregnant women lags behind offerings for other special interest groups. With this guide, active women are encouraged and counseled to get outdoors and make the most of it.

As much as any other group, pregnant women are the recipients of varying recommendations about activities, diet, drug use, and travel. Much of what is written is anecdotal. So, it is high time to offer some reasons for our guidance. This book stays within bounds and is conservative in its content and recommendations. For a first effort, that is the correct approach. It is an ambitious undertaking. With the portions that have been well done come some sections in need of improvement. The overall product is worth the effort. I anticipate that the author will receive a fair amount of feedback that will be taken into consideration for the next edition.

The structure of topics is to enumerate the benefits of staying active then to briefly discuss health concerns by trimester of pregnancy, elucidate outdoor gear for pregnancy, move on to first aid, and then enter the major part

of the book. This deals with exercise, staying active (activity by activity), and is followed by a brief concluding section on resuming activities postpartum.

In my reading of the book, I observed the following. The section on staying active is excellent. This should be read by every pregnant woman to assist her in deciding about physical activities during pregnancy. I would imagine that given the choice, most women would choose to be physically active, and this reinforces it. There is not a definitive discussion about how to initiate exercise during pregnancy if you have lived a sedentary life up to the point of conception. Also, there is no mention of immunizations during pregnancy for foreign travel, which is a likely possibility for certain outdoor adventures. When outdoor gear is listed, clothing designed to block ultraviolet (UV) radiation would be important to note. The later mention of a t-shirt to protect your back from blisters does not offer any advice about the transmittal of UV radiation through wet, white cotton. Because there is no real discussion about the day-to-day operations of backpacking, camping, or trekking, the lists of "Outdoor Essentials" and "Emergency Survival Kit" seem superfluous. What is the reason to carry tea bags? I presume to squelch bleeding from a tooth socket, but it is never explained. Because this book is neither a comprehensive guide to outdoor activities nor a field medical guide, it might be better in the future to expand the contents that are unique to pregnant women and to focus more on the specifics of essential topics, rather than cover the waterfront in a superficial manner. For instance, in the discussion on insect repellents, why not describe how to impregnate clothing with repellents? For the prevention of motion sickness, why not mention the Relief Band device, which is a nonpharmacological approach? I also have a few quibbles with assertions such as "reactions to (marine) stings may be more pronounced during pregnancy," and advice like the need to cool down after snorkeling while still in the water.

The section on stretching is a nice touch and applies to everyone, not just pregnant individuals. In this sort of writing, which is common sense and practical, the author shines. The activities sections, which include gar-

dening, walking, running, biking, in-line skating, hiking, camping, mountain biking, rock climbing, mountaineering, horseback riding, swimming, snorkeling, scuba diving, paddling, boating, windsurfing, surfing, waterskiing, downhill skiing, snowboarding, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing are neatly done. Herein lies the real value of the book. For both pregnant consumers and medical practitioners alike, we gain comfort with activities that are safe and accept prohibitions against activities that are not (such as scuba diving and waterskiing). This large section is followed by an equally useful and excellent discussion of recovering and resuming activity, including exercise and breastfeeding, resuming activity after delivery, and postpartum toning exercises.

A written announcement from the publisher that accompanied my copy states that "there may be only one woman physician trained in obstetrics *and* wilderness health who can write on the subject of how to plan for and stay safe. . . ." I know a great many phenomenal women clinicians, explorers, researchers, and authors of wilderness medicine. The publisher's announcement raised the eyebrows of a few women who are simultaneously accomplished health care providers, mothers, extremely active in the outdoors, and knowledgeable about wilderness medicine. Fortunately, I know that Dr Van Groenou appreciates the enormous amount of excellent work being done by her peers, so what is written on the back cover of the book is fairly stated.

The Active Woman's Guide to Pregnancy is important reading for pregnant women who seek to remain physically active during their pregnancies. It is practical and encouraging in promoting exercise and outdoor activities. It is not a first aid or medical book, nor is it a complete guide to pregnancy. It should be used as a prescription for exercise and healthy outdoor activities by women who are able to find the time to maintain these important pursuits during a time of enormous responsibility and concern associated with the gestation and birth of a newborn child.

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