

The 16 Skills of Scouting: What BSA Scouts Learn and Do

Are you thinking of joining Scouts BSA? If so, I'm sure you're wondering what sorts of awesome ways the program can help you grow. Well, look no further! **I'm going to show you all the incredible skills that Scouting teaches its members, breaking down the importance and purpose of each.** By the time we're done, you'll have a clear picture of the skills of Scouting!

The skills in this article fall into three main categories: outdoor skills, life skills, and social skills. **Here's a handy list of all the skills I'll cover, so feel free to jump to whichever catches your eye!**

1. Preparedness
2. Wilderness Survival
3. First Aid
4. Navigation
5. Knots and Lashings
6. Badges
7. Healthy Living
8. Personal Management
9. Organization
10. Citizenship
11. Service
12. Teamwork
13. Communication
14. Leadership
15. Readiness
16. Confidence

Of course, I'd also recommend reading through the entire article from start to finish to get a full taste of what Scouting has to offer! We'll start with outdoor skills, as that's the aspect of Scouting many people think of first. **Now, let's get to it!**

Outdoor Skills

Scouts BSA teaches outdoor skills in so many different ways! From participating in campouts to attending summer camp, there are tons of opportunities to pick up skills that'll serve you well in the outdoors. **Here's an awesome video (16:52) that showcases a BSA campout!** Cooking, tying knots – you can learn a ton of useful skills from campouts alone.

[A Boy Scouts very first camp out](#)

As for me, my favorite outdoor Scouting experience was a sailing adventure out of [Florida Sea Base!](#) That amazing journey taught me so many skills that I'd never have learned otherwise. **I still remember the thrill I felt as I learned the ins and outs of sailing!** Check out this cool video (15:06) to see what Sea Base is all about.

[Sea Base - Sea Exploring with Boy Scouts aboard the Grand Nellie](#)

Preparedness

Now for the first of the outdoor skills! It's hard to think of a Scouting principle that's more highly emphasized than preparedness. Just look at the Scout Motto, "Be Prepared!" **To be prepared is an essential quality in a Scout, and it's an incredibly important skill to boot.** This is especially true of *emergency* preparedness, as dangerous situations can strike at any time.

There's nowhere emergency preparedness will serve you better than outdoors! Rescuers can take days to reach you out in the wilderness, so it's vital that you be prepared for even the worst of circumstances. Thankfully, Scouts BSA offers an [Emergency Preparedness merit badge](#) to show you the ropes! Since it's such an important topic, it's naturally Eagle-required.

Wilderness Survival

Although it's an unpleasant thought, it's entirely possible to end up stranded in the wilderness during an event or outing. **That's why it's essential that you have the skills to survive!** Fortunately, Scouts BSA puts a huge emphasis on teaching Scouts these abilities. That's where the [Wilderness Survival merit badge](#) comes in!

Here are a few of the requirements that Scouts tackle for the Wilderness Survival merit badge! As you can imagine, they go a long way toward building survival skills:

- Putting together a survival kit
- Improvising a natural shelter
- Building a fire

If you ask me, learning how to survive in the wilderness is one of the most empowering lessons there is! The confidence that comes from that level of self-sufficiency is definitely second to none. **Honestly, that feeling alone makes learning these skills more than worth it :)**

First Aid

As a Scout, learning how to properly administer first aid is absolutely vital. **The reason's simple: first aid knowledge makes Scouting activities so much safer for everyone!** As such, there's a huge emphasis on teaching Scouts the skills they need to carry out first aid effectively. In fact, there's even a [First Aid merit badge](#) meant for that exact purpose!

Here are some of the first aid skills a Scout will learn! Each of them has its own unique role to play in case of emergency:

- Administering CPR
- Handling suspected fractures
- Moving an injured person

While first aid is a complex and nuanced topic, there weren't any times during my years as a Scout where I felt overwhelmed by it. **If anything, learning all the different techniques was empowering for me!** I knew that I would respond to difficult situations correctly and effectively, and that understanding made me think more highly of myself.

Navigation

I'm sure you already know that navigation is an essential outdoor skill! After all, you need to be able to find your way around outdoors. That's why Scouting has a special [Orienteering merit badge](#)! **From taking part in exciting events to showing navigation techniques to a group, the badge has all sorts of cool requirements that'll teach you the ins and outs.**

For me, learning the essentials of navigation was one of the most exciting parts of Scouting! **Knowing how to make my way through nature effectively and efficiently made me feel more**

confident during my outdoor adventures. And since my troop spent a whole lot of time in the great outdoors, that gave me plenty of chances to put my new skills to use!

Knots and Lashings

Knowing how to tie knots and lashings is a pivotal aspect of outdoor survival, so it's an essential skill for any Scout to learn. There are [six lashings](#) and [seven knots](#) you need to know to reach First Class rank!

Here are just a few of the awesome knots and lashings taught in Scouts BSA! For every one of them you can master, the number of cool projects you can carry out will grow larger:

- Square knot (a simple binding knot)
- Sheet bend (a more reliable alternative to the square knot)
- Round lashing (for joining two parallel poles)
- Floor lashing (for joining a set of poles into a flat surface)

Knots and lashings were a very important aspect of my time as a Scout. **Learning how to tie them really expanded my abilities and broadened my horizons!** It also boosted my confidence and made me feel that I was taking part in the complete Scouting experience.

Badges

While this may not be an outdoor skill per se, it's still an important topic to cover! In fact, badges are a crucial part of the Scouting experience. **Earning a badge is a symbol of understanding, and wearing it shows that you've learned all the lessons it symbolizes.** This is especially true of merit badges, as teaching you a wide range of cool subjects is their entire purpose!

When it comes to learning outdoor skills, there's no shortage of merit badges for you to explore. **Here are just a few examples:**

- [Camping](#)
- [Fishing](#)
- [Forestry](#)
- [Kayaking](#)
- [Nature](#)

Honestly, the merit badges I loved most were the outdoor ones. Each of them gave me a great chance to learn new skills out in nature – and that meant a whole lot to an outdoorsy person like me! **I had an amazingly fun time chipping away at those badges, and I hugely expanded my outdoor abilities in the process.**

Life Skills

Life skills will help you in just about every aspect of the day-to-day, both as a child and as an adult. And in addition to helping you accomplish everyday tasks, they'll also help you to achieve your dreams! **That's why the Scouting program is specially designed to boost your life skills, setting you on a direct path toward success and fulfillment.**

Scouts BSA offers a ton of merit badges meant to test your knowledge and teach you useful lessons in this area. **It also encourages you to practice these skills in even the most ordinary Scouting activities!** From exercising teamwork on a service project to staying organized at a patrol meeting, there's no shortage of opportunities to practice and learn.

Healthy Living

Now, on to the first of the life skills! Healthy living is essential for everyone, and the benefits it offers are nothing short of incredible. Not only does it make you feel better, but it also helps you avoid getting ill. On top of that, it even boosts your energy levels! **And that's just a small piece of all it has to offer :)**

If you want to see how significant healthy living is in Scouting, look no further than the Scout Oath! “To keep myself physically strong” is a promise every Scout makes, and it's a principle that'll serve you well for many years to come. **In my experience, committing to a healthy lifestyle isn't always the easiest choice – but it's guaranteed to pay off in the long term!**

Personal Management

Here's another life skill that everyone needs to know! Personal management skills allow you to handle your time and money appropriately. **And in doing so, they give you proper control over the course of your life!** Thanks to the importance of this unique skill, Scouting offers a [Personal Management merit badge](#) to all Scouts.

The Personal Management merit badge has a ton of useful and practical requirements specially designed to boost your abilities in this area! **Here are a few that come to mind:**

- Writing a "to do" list
- Studying financial concepts
- Preparing a budget

Completing the Personal Management merit badge gave me a solid foundation on the ins and outs of life as an adult, making it easier for me to do important tasks independently and efficiently. Pretty awesome, if you ask me!

Organization

I'm sure you know just how important organizational skills are! After all, students learn organizational techniques as early as elementary school. There's a huge emphasis on proper organization in society, as you really can't get far in life without it. **Organizational skills allow for more efficient use of time – and they even reduce your stress levels!** Cool, right?

There are lots of great techniques out there to improve your organization! **Here are a few that come to mind for me:**

- Set clear goals
- Prioritize important tasks
- Use a calendar and planner

Thanks to the unique duties that come with being a Scout, the program naturally encourages its members to develop strong organizational skills. This is especially true if you take on an official position within your troop, as each of these special roles has its own responsibilities to go with it. **During my time as a scribe, I learned a ton about how to stay properly organized!**

Citizenship

There's no doubt that this is one of the most important Scouting skills. **After all, the model Scout is also a model citizen!** Since citizenship is so vital to the spirit of Scouting, the program works very hard to teach Scouts the ins and outs. From studying the branches of government to writing a letter to a representative, there are so many cool activities that Scouts take part in!

Did you know there are four merit badges that relate directly to citizenship? Together, they form a complete and detailed picture of the qualities of a good citizen:

- [Citizenship in the Community](#)
- [Citizenship in the Nation](#)
- [Citizenship in the World](#)
- [Citizenship in Society](#)

These badges were a real eye-opener for me! **The most enlightening moment took place during Citizenship in the Community, when I had the awesome experience of attending a town council meeting.** It gave me a look at the importance of public engagement, and it showed me that any citizen can help shape society for the good of everyone!

Service

A key part of being a Scout is to improve your community in whatever ways you can. While it might seem like service only benefits the world around you, it actually does great things for you too! **By giving you chances to form new relationships, it allows you to make good friends and network professionally.** Plus, helping others is guaranteed to boost your confidence!

Scouting gives you tons of opportunities to serve your community through cool and ambitious projects. As for me, my Eagle Scout project was the most exciting and memorable of all! I set up a donation program for a local humane society and collected over 2,000 cans of food. **Even after all these years, I remember just how happy and proud I felt at the project's end.**

Social Skills

Like life skills, social skills are guaranteed to help you in both the short and long term! **They pave the way to all sorts of rewarding relationships, from long-lasting friendships to key**

professional connections. I'm sure you know just how important bonds like these are for a happy life! Close ties with the people around you are sure to make for a more fulfilling future.

Thanks to the group environment Scouts BSA offers, there are so many chances to hone your social skills! **The team-based structure of troops and patrols encourages close bonds between Scouts, which makes a great practice ground for social interaction.** While school also gives you a chance to be social, Scouting offers a tight-knit community unlike any other!

Teamwork

Now, it's time for the first of the social skills! When it comes to making a group effort succeed, there's nothing more important than good teamwork. **By working together effectively, group members can improve productivity, decrease stress, and so much more!** It's no wonder that teamwork is spoken of so highly.

In Scouting, there are plenty of opportunities to experience and practice teamwork. The most obvious of these are special team-building exercises like "All Aboard!" **You might not know this, but troops host [team-based challenges](#) of all sorts.** Here's a short video (2:08) showing one such troop activity in action :)

[Troop Meeting Team Building Challenge: All Aboard](#)

Thanks to the way units are structured, Scouts also have other chances to exercise teamwork. After all, a patrol is very much a team! **As for me, I can say for sure that teamwork played a huge role in my success as a Scout.** I could always count on my fellow patrol members when it came time to tackle tough challenges! They weren't just my friends, but they were also my partners.

Now, here's a quick tip for you: **If you decide to make the leap into Scouting, always remember that you don't have to go it alone.** There are some tasks that'll be a challenge for you, and that's okay! Don't hesitate to rely on your companions in your patrol when the going gets tough. Scouting is a group effort, so your partners will always be there to lend you a hand :)

Communication

As I'm sure you know already, communication is a vital skill that goes a long way! **Communicating effectively reduces conflicts, which helps you maintain relationships.** That's a pretty great

benefit, right? And that's just the tip of the iceberg! Since this skill is so essential, Scouts BSA naturally has a [Communication merit badge](#) to go along with it.

Here are a few of the activities that Scouts take part in for the Communication merit badge!

These important tasks teach crucial life lessons and strengthen social skills:

- Observing a public meeting
- Delivering a speech
- Conducting an interview

There are other ways that the program boosts a Scout's social abilities, too! **As I spent time with my troop, I learned great ways to bond with my peers and form long-lasting friendships.**

And large-scale events like camps and the [National Jamboree](#) offered even better chances for me to hone my social skills, placing me in close contact with a ton of fellow Scouts!

Leadership

If you're looking to hone your skills as a leader, then Scouts BSA is the perfect place to do just that! **By offering a variety of authority positions within each troop, the program gives Scouts plenty of opportunities to develop their leadership skills.** After all, the best way to learn is by doing!

There are four main leadership positions available to BSA Scouts of all ranks. **Here they are, sorted from the lowest level to the highest:**

- Assistant patrol leader
- Patrol leader
- Assistant senior patrol leader
- Senior patrol leader

Of course, taking on a leadership role in your patrol isn't the only way for you to hone your leadership skills! **Back when I was a Scout, I attended an awesome program called [NYLT](#) (National Youth Leadership Training).** It's a one-of-a-kind course that delivers a ton of important lessons to aspiring leaders! Here's a quick video (2:04) if you'd like to learn more :)

[What is NYLT?](#)

Readiness

Did you know? **The Scout Motto doesn't just refer to emergency preparedness, but it also applies in an interpersonal context!** Being prepared for social interaction involves learning social techniques and strategies. There are lots of excellent tips and tricks out there to boost your conversational skills, and they'll serve you well both in and out of Scouting.

Here are a few awesome techniques to practice in your daily interactions! Mastering them will make it easier for you to bond with others and establish strong relationships:

- Asking questions
- Giving compliments
- Using manners

It's important to never underestimate the value of interpersonal skills in today's world! Having strong bonds is essential, as we all rely on others throughout our lives. **By treating those around you with respect and class, you'll win long-lasting relationships and lead a more fulfilling life.**

Confidence

Everyone knows that confidence is essential, right? **Being confident makes you less likely to back away from life's challenges, giving you more opportunities to find success and grow as a person.** Confidence also puts other people at ease and makes them more likely to enjoy your company, strengthening your relationships and tightening your bonds!

By completing tough challenges and exciting activities, Scouts gain self-esteem and learn to think more highly of themselves. For example, during my 50-mile trek, I rappelled down a rock face from a very high place! **Discovering I could achieve such an impressive feat was a real confidence builder for me, and it's one of my proudest Scouting memories.**

Conclusion

And there you have it! I'm sure you can see by now that Scouts BSA has an incredibly wide range of skills to teach you. **While the program might seem purely recreational at first glance, there's no doubt that it's an extremely productive way to spend your time!** Not only are the activities fun, but they also give you a chance to develop important abilities.

As an Eagle Scout myself, I can say for sure that Scouting will take you a long way in life! Whatever goals or dreams you might have, the skills you'll gain in the program will make them that much simpler to achieve. I'm so glad you stopped by, and I hope you learned a bunch. **Thanks so much for reading!**