



YOU ARE WHAT YOU WEAR

Not to be too pessimistic, but you can only count on escaping a crash with what you have on. If you are wearing a cotton T-shirt and slippers that allow you to feel the rudders, that is what you will be wearing on top of the 11,000-foot peak when you come to rest after the crash. At a minimum, your mode of dress should be something in which you don't mind spending the next few days in the great outdoors.

What you have in your pockets may be your only survival kit. For that reason, I always keep a knife, lighter, chapstick and cellphone on me when flying. I dress for comfort in flight with an awareness of the demands of the terrain I am crossing. In addition to my main survival pack, I keep an "Uh-oh Kit" (a small basic survival kit) within close reach, usually under the pilot's seat.

When I fly over particularly wild terrain, I wear a survival vest, pictured above. A survival vest is simply a clothing layer with pockets for holding all the basics in your personal survival kit. At a minimum, my vest has a PLB, multi-tool knife, lighter, fire starter, bottle of water, extra battery for my cell phone, flashlight, signal mirror, gloves, hat, toilet paper and a towel. The key is to keep it light and comfortable enough that you will actually wear it. If you geek it out to the point that you look like a special forces dude on recon patrol, chances are it will be in the back seat because it is too bulky for comfort in flight.