LIGHTING A FIRE WITH A FERRO ROD

A spark-maker that works when wet, with no fuel to run out.

GET THREE THINGS READY

Tinder
Catches the spark

Cotton wool rubbed with petroleum jelly, dry grass, birch bark, or shop-bought tinder.

Kindling
Catches from the tinder

Dry twigs, from matchstick to pencil thick. They should snap, not bend.

Fuel
Keeps it going

Dry sticks thumb-thick and up, then bigger wood.

SIX STEPS

1. **Get everything ready first**
   Tinder, kindling and fuel sorted into piles before you strike.
2. **Fluff the tinder**
   Make a loose nest the size of your fist on a dry base.
3. **Scrape a new rod**
   New rods have a black coating. Scrape it off until bare metal shows.
4. **Hold it low**
   Rod tip in the tinder. Hold the striker at a steep angle against it.
5. **Pull the rod back**
   Keep the striker still and pull the rod back hard, so the sparks land in the tinder.
6. **Feed it slowly**
   Blow gently. Add kindling from thinnest to thickest, then the fuel.

Stay safe

- Outdoors only, on bare ground or in a fire bowl, away from buildings, fences and branches.
- Keep water or soil close by. Never leave a fire unattended.
- Dry grass and moorland catch easily. Don't light fires there, and check local rules.
- Only light fires on land where you have permission.

Putting it out

Drown, stir, drown. Pour water on, stir the ashes, pour again. If it's too hot to touch, it's too hot to leave.

Practise on a dry day. A ferro rod lasts for thousands of strikes, but it takes practice. Once you can light cotton wool first time, try natural tinder.

Important. General guidance, not professional advice. In an emergency, call 999 and follow the emergency services and local authorities. Fire safety advice from the UK fire and rescue services.