

Before, During, and After — a plain-language checklist from Kemetic Minds

Before an Earthquake

1**Build a 72-hour kit**

One gallon of water per person per day (3-day minimum), non-perishable food, flashlight, hand-crank radio, first-aid kit, N95 masks, a wrench to shut off gas, whistle, 7-day medication supply, and copies of ID in a waterproof bag.

2**Secure your space**

Strap water heaters and heavy appliances to wall studs. Anchor bookshelves and TVs. Move heavy items off high shelves. Add cabinet latches.

3**Know your utility shutoffs**

Locate the gas shutoff valve and keep a wrench nearby. Know how to cut power at the breaker. Gas leaks kill more people after an earthquake than the shaking itself.

4**Make a family communication plan**

Pick an out-of-state contact (local phone lines overload). Identify two meeting spots: one near home, one outside the neighborhood.

5**Practice drop, cover, hold on**

Run the drill with your household twice a year so it becomes automatic.

During an Earthquake

1**DROP**

Get to your hands and knees immediately so you can't be knocked down.

2**COVER**

Protect your head and neck with your arms. Get under a sturdy table if one is close.

3**HOLD ON**

Stay put until shaking fully stops. Most injuries happen when people try to move or run during shaking.

4**If outside**

Move away from buildings, streetlights, and power lines.

5**If near a coast**

Move to high ground immediately after shaking stops. Don't wait for an official tsunami alert.

After an Earthquake

1**Check for injuries and hazards first**

Broken glass, structural damage, and gas leaks cause most post-earthquake deaths.

2**Don't use flames or light switches**

Not until you're sure there's no gas leak. If you smell gas, leave and call for help from outside.

3**Expect aftershocks**

A second, sometimes comparable-sized earthquake can follow within seconds to days.

4**Use official emergency broadcasts**

NOAA Weather Radio, local alert systems, and (on the US West Coast) USGS ShakeAlert.

5**Document damage before cleanup**

Photograph everything for insurance and, if applicable, register with DisasterAssistance.gov.