Checklist for planning a workshop

Aims
What do you want people to learn? What's the key information and key skills to get across?

Who is it for?
What kind of people do you expect to participate? What will their expectation of the workshop be? What kind of skill/knowledge level do you expect people to have (beginners, experienced people, people with only theoretical knowledge, people with lots of practical knowledge or a mix of all of these?). Check people's expectations before or at the beginning of the workshop to make sure you've got it right.

Space
What sort of space will you need (eg, does it need to be in a metal workshop, in a woodland, in a calm room)? How will you arrange the seating to maximise participation? What about lighting and fresh air? Do you have access to loos and to a kitchen space?

Time
What can you realistically fit in? Will it be an introduction or an in depth workshop? Take into account people's concentration levels – these will fluctuate, so it's important to mix activities and have breaks. What will you do if you start late, or things move more slowly than you've planned for?

Tools and Exercises
What tools and exercises will you use? Make sure you have a good balance between theory and practice, and trainer and participant input. Check that you have a variety of activities to cater for different learning styles.

Special Needs
Find out about people's special needs, if possible in advance of the workshop. Do people need large print handouts, wheelchair access, vegan food or childcare? Check that your session plan doesn't exclude people.

Materials
What materials do you need? This can include flipchart paper, pens, coloured cards, blu-tack, and handouts as well as stuff for practical exercises such as arm tubes, bike-locks, radios. It helps to draw up a list so that you can check that you've got everything you need.

Session Plan /Agenda
Have you drawn up a workshop plan, detailing the sequence of activities, methods to be used and the time allocated for each?

Evaluation
How are you going to check that learning has taken place? How can you find out what people liked about the workshop and how it can be improved?

Topics to cover in a direct action workshop

This is a list of topics that could be covered in a direct action workshop. I't's by no means comprehensive and which of these you cover in your workshop will be different every time, depending on your group, the action and how much time you have for your workshop.

TOP TIP: ASK the people you are running the workshop for what THEY want out of it! (before starting to plan.)

Questions to ask: How many people? What level of experience? Is it a general workshop or for a specific action? What skills do people want to learn? How long will it be? Do people already know each other or is it a new group? Are there any specific issues? Any culture related things to know about?

- What is direct action and why take it, historical examples
- Hopes and Concerns about taking action
- What makes an effective action
- How to plan an action
- Research for actions – about the target, the location, action possibilties, getting there and back etc
- Exploring issues around groundrules for actions (eg damage, confrontation, violence, open/closed actions, security)
- Publicity abd outreach
- Affinity groups and buddy system
    - what they are and why work in them, how they work
- Roles on actions
- Quick decision-making on actions
- Dealing with confrontation
- Police tactics

- Staying calm on actions - grounding
- Action techniques: depending on the action:
    - passive resistance
    - blockading
    - mass actions
    - occupations etc
- What to take/not to take on actions
- Communication on actions
    - eg using radios, phones, runners, signals etc
    - security issues involved
- Legal information
    - likely charges
    - Your rights on arrest/arrest procedure
    - consequences of a criminal record
- Legal and arrest support
- Security before during and after actions