

# Backpacker Packing & Camping Tips

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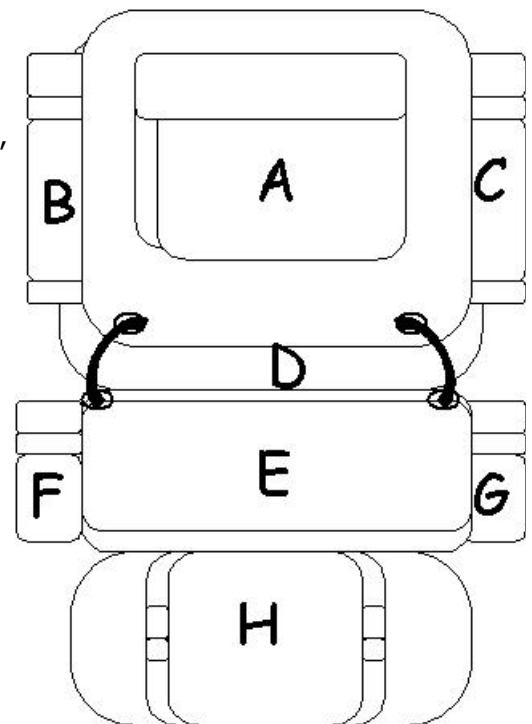
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## Suggestions As To What To Pack And Where To Pack It

This check list is offered as a near minimum for a safe and comfortable backpack outing. Using an adequate pack and sleeping bag the weight should be under 20 lbs. You will need to add 1½ to 2 lbs. per man per day for dehydrated food and 2 lbs. per quart of water. You should be able to pack in for a week carrying under 30 lbs.

*NOTE: This list is not intended to be considered the best or only way to pack a bag. As you gain experience you can shift around to suit your own ideas.*

- **Flap Pocket (A):** Maps, fire permit, notebook, pen, fishing license, identification, guide book.
- **Upper Left Pocket (B):** Canteen, stove fuel, rain gear.
- **Upper Right Pocket (C):** Plastic bowl, matches, plastic bags, cup, lunch, sun glasses, rubber bands, tablespoon, trail snacks, nylon cord 30 ft., toilet kit: toothbrush & paste, soap, dish cloth, toilet paper.
- **Upper Compartment (D):** Cook kit, pot tongs, food, stove, water bag, tent or tarp, ground cloth, sleeping pad, condiment kit: salt, pepper, milk, sugar, coffee or tea (adults only), flavorings.
- **Lower Compartment (E):** Cap, underwear, trousers, windbreaker, wool shirt or down jacket, socks, shirts, gloves, swim suit, bandanna, food (if not in D).
- **Lower Left Pocket (F):** Sun screen, lip balm, water purifier, bug repellent, pack & tent repair kit, extra pack pins & rings, needles, thread, buttons, flash light & batteries.
- **Lower Right Pocket (G):** First aid kit.
- **Stuff Sack (H):** Stuff in your sleeping bag and small pillow. Sleeping pad if not in D.
- **Carry on your person:** Compass, pocket knife, Medic Alert bracelet or pendant (if used), waterproof matches.
- **Pack items in small stuff sacks:** For easy access to your gear, pack all your gear in small stuff bags then pack the backpack. Plastic zip lock bags make excellent small and medium stuff bags especially to keep items dry. Large zip lock bags can be used to pack clothing.



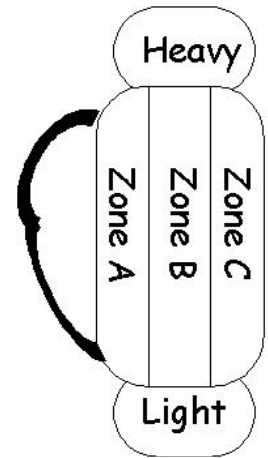
## Zone Method Of Packing A Backpack

The Zone Method of packing a backpack can make the difference between drudgery and enjoyment during the time spent on the trail. A few simple principles which are often overlooked can make a difference. Technically speaking the body has a center of gravity located directly over the ankles. When standing normally there is very little forward of the body. However, when a pack is placed on the back, the body leans forward to bring the pack's center of gravity directly over the ankles. Consequently, it is advantageous to keep the pack's center of gravity as close to your back as

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possible to prevent unnecessary forward lean. As a result the following method is recommended to load a backpack.

- **Zone A** - This area is the closest to the back and should carry equipment of the greatest density like stoves, tent hardware, water, etc.
- **Zone B** - This middle area should be packed with medium density objects.
- **Zone C** - The area farthest away from the body's center of gravity should be filled with the lightest equipment.



### **Heavy—Higher and Light—Lower**

There is also a benefit in placing the densest weight high in the pack as it will be more directly over the center of gravity. A tent should be either distributed in Zone A of the pack or strapped on top. The sleeping bag can be stuffed in the bottom toward Zone C or strapped to the bottom of the pack.

### **Wilderness Backpacking Suggestions**

#### Equipment

Do not be hasty in buying equipment. Talk to experienced backpackers. Try out several packs. Before buying equipment ask yourself:

- Is it light weight and low in bulk?
- Will it be durable?
- Will I use it?

Do not make low cost your only criterion. There is no compromise for quality. There are no stores in the wilderness!

#### Survival

Carry a small survival kit. It could save your life. Leave a trip schedule, preferably in writing with a responsible person, giving the following information:

- Who is going where?
- When you expect to return?
- The type of vehicle you will use?
- Location of the trailhead and route to be taken?

Above all, do not decide to stay an extra day. Search parties cost money and time.

#### Water purification

Boil water or add 1 iodine tablet per instructions on tablet bottle. Let stand for 30 minutes or as directed on the bottle. For cloudy water, double the purifier.

#### Ecology (Low Impact Camping)

- Carry out everything you carry in.
- Do not bury garbage. Animals dig it up and scatter it.
- Never wash in a stream or a pool. Use a wash basin.
- Drown your campfire. Preferably scatter the ashes and rocks.
- Leave your campsite cleaner than you found it.
- Carry away nothing but pictures and memories, and leave nothing but footprints to tell of your passage through the wilderness.

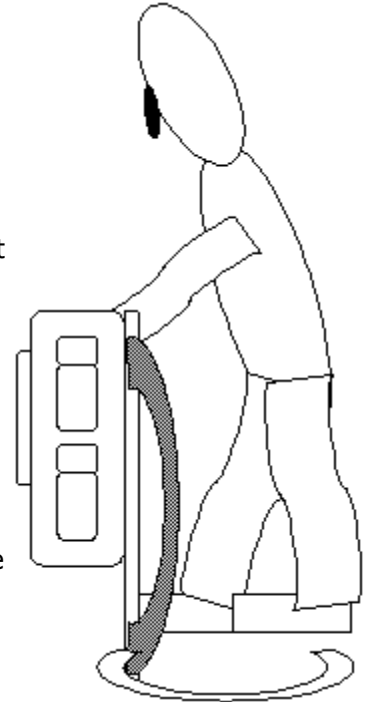
#### Camping

- By using dehydrated foods you add under two pounds per man per day.
- Water weighs two pounds per quart.
- Wherever possible carry your own stove and fuel.
- Leave vegetation for the next party to enjoy.
- Camp away from the only source of water. The animals will not be able to drink as long as you are camped there.

## Getting Into A Heavy Load

Most backpackers develop a method of putting on a pack. However, the following are a few recommendations which have proven to be easy and safe for both pack and packer. Before following the suggestions outlined, start with a realistic weight, by loading the pack as if you were going on a hike.

- Stand by the frame with the load side turned away. If you are right handed, point your right foot toward the frame.
- Stepping backward with the left foot and crouching slightly to slant the right thigh, drag or lift the frame to rest on the thigh.
- Steadying the frame with the left hand, and holding the upper part of the right shoulder strap, put the right arm under the shoulder strap. Reach downward with the right hand to grasp the lower right corner of the frame.
- Twist the upper body to the right and pull the right shoulder strap in place. Lifting the frame with your right hand, swing your elbow back to slide the frame around on your back. While the frame is held high and far to the left, put the left arm through the shoulder strap and pull the strap into place.
- Buckle the hip belt in place and adjust the shoulder straps to hold the frame high on your back. Tighten the hip belt to relieve the pressure on the shoulder straps.
- To remove the pack, reverse the procedure described and shown in the animated diagram. Just remember never let the loaded frame drop on one leg as damage may occur. With practice a loaded frame can be put on or taken off with ease and without injury or damage to the packer or the frame.



## The Importance Of A Properly Fitted Backpack

A properly fitted, well made backpack is extremely important. For new Scouts, an external frame pack that is sized to fit your son is recommended. Important elements to look for in a good external pack are:

- A good pack frame will have welded construction.
- Well padded hip belt that will tighten snugly just above his hips. The belt should be tight enough to support the pack on the belt when loaded with 25 to 30 lbs. The hip belt supports the weight, not the shoulder straps.
- Well padded shoulder pads. The shoulder straps should be attached to the frame high enough above the shoulder that the straps come down from the frame to the front of the shoulder. The straps should not be resting on the top of the shoulder. The straps are designed to hold the pack against the back, not carry the load.
- Good quality sleeping bag and tent straps should also be bought to securely fasten the bag and tent to the pack.
- Straps should be a minimum of 1" wide with a sturdy buckle system. Bungee or elastic cords should not be used to fasten items to the exterior of the pack because these allow the load to shift and bounce around.

*NOTE: When a backpack is fully loaded with all necessary gear and equipment it should not weigh more than 20% to 25% of the total body weight of the person who is carrying the pack. An overloaded, too heavy pack will lead to quick fatigue, possible physical injury, and for certain an unpleasant backpacking experience.*

Recommended brands for new smaller scouts include:

CAMP TRAILS - ADJUSTABLE II MED. *for larger new scouts*

CAMP TRAILS - SKIPPER *for small scouts*

CAMP TRAILS - SMALL OR MED. *for most new scouts*

PEAK I PLASTIC FRAME PACK *several models to choose from*

KELTY YUKON YOUTH PACK - *belt adjusts down to 22"*

**Suggestion:** Buy a pack that fits now and sell it to a smaller scout when your son outgrows it. Packs will not lose their value if cared for properly.

## Other Suggestions For Backpacking Equipment

### Sleeping Bag

A good sleeping bag is a great investment which will last for many years. A mummy style bag is recommended since it is lighter weight and the warmest. The insulation in the bag should be synthetic Hollofil or Quallofil. Down is warmer

and lighter, however, it loses all of its effectiveness when it gets wet. This is not the case with the synthetic insulation. A good bag will be made with offset or slant layer construction which will not be sewn all the way through the inner and outer covering. Recommended bag weight is 4 to 5 lbs. maximum and the bag should be rated for 10 to 20 degrees for this region of the country.

### Sleeping Pad

A closed cell foam sleeping pad is a must for winter camping, since it insulates you from the cold earth. Also the sleeping pad provides some padding against the hard ground. Pads come in 3/4 length and full length, 3/8" and 1/2" thickness. Pads come in smooth and ridge constructions. Also available are self-inflating sleeping pads of various styles and depths. These pads weigh more than a foam pad and are not recommended for new scouts who need to conserve weight.

### Tent

The tent you select should be a backpacking style weighing approximately 7 lbs. or less. It should be fitted with a rain fly which comes almost to the ground, otherwise rain can blow under the fly. Free standing tents work best for the new scouts since they can be easily moved after set up and they can be cleaned out by lifting up and shaking them out. Tents without a lot of guy ropes to trip over are preferred.

### Rain Gear

Good rain gear is important. The weather can change in a matter of minutes. Being wet is most uncomfortable. Do not cut corners. Ponchos provide quick access to rain gear. A coated nylon style, properly sized for the wearer to maximize protection without dragging the ground will last for many years. Rain suits are more expensive, provide better protection but cannot be worn as many years.

### Boots and Socks

Boots and socks that are made for hiking are important. Boots should be ankle height to give support to the ankle. They can be made of leather or a combination of leather and heavy cordura cloth. Leather boots treated with a sealant like "Snow Seal" will be somewhat water proof, yet allow the boot to breathe. The cordura boots are lighter in weight but are not waterproof unless you choose a pair with Gor-Tex, which greatly increases the price. Hiking boots should always be worn with sock liners (polypropylene or silk) and wool hiking socks. The liner socks will stick to the heel and foot. The wool sock will stick to the boot. The friction of the foot moving inside the boot will occur between the two pair of socks not between layers of the skin, which causes blisters. Make sure that you wear hiking sock liners and wool hiking socks when you go to try boots on in the store. Before wearing boots on a hike the boots should be worn around the house for several days to break them in properly.

### Eating Gear

A plastic plate (FRISBEE), bowl & cup conserve weight. A simple knife, fork and spoon complete the eating gear. In most instances, a durable plastic soup spoon and your pocket knife are all that you will need for eating. A mess kit is not necessary unless using for cooking because it is too heavy. A one quart plastic bottle or canteen is needed. Avoid metal canteens since they are heavier.