

PACKING IN

An advantage of lightweight camping is the increased mobility. As each camper carries in all that is needed in camp, transportation is less of a problem — no large quantities of equipment and gear need be moved. Just one pack for each person — the roadway becomes a gateway rather than the end of the line.

FITTING YOUR PACK

*Choose a pack correct for your height.

- A loaded pack should rest mainly on the hips and lower back.
- Pull at shoulders should be more back than down.
- If shoulder straps cut into you, the pack is too short.

*Ask the dealer to allow trying bag out, loaded.

Weight Distribution

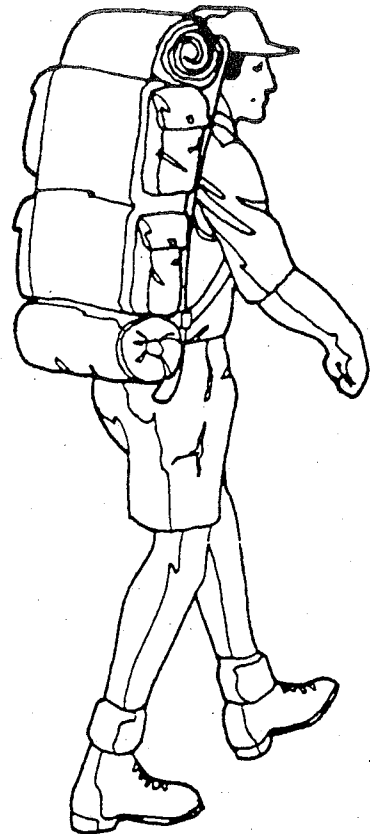
- heavy items at the top and close to the pack frame
- *A Rule of Thumb:* total weight doesn't exceed 1/5 of body weight of packer or 35 lbs. (for adults).

Pack Frame

- light, strong alloy
- shoulder straps padded and wide
- shoulder straps are adjustable
- back bands are adjustable
- joints in metal frame are solid
- waist band (padded is most comfortable)

Pack Bag — (3/4 bag pictured)

- stitching straight and even
- stress points reinforced
- waterproof nylon
- large storm flap
- outside pockets (option)
- heavy duty zippers (nylon preferred)
- compartments within



Hiking Comfort

- Canteen of water
- Avoid sunburn
- Use sunglasses
- Watch for poison ivy and other poisonous plants, insect bites (use repellent)
- Avoid overheating — strip off outer layers of clothing as you warm up, replace when resting to avoid a chill
- Don't rush. Set a steady pace.

Walking and Care of Feet

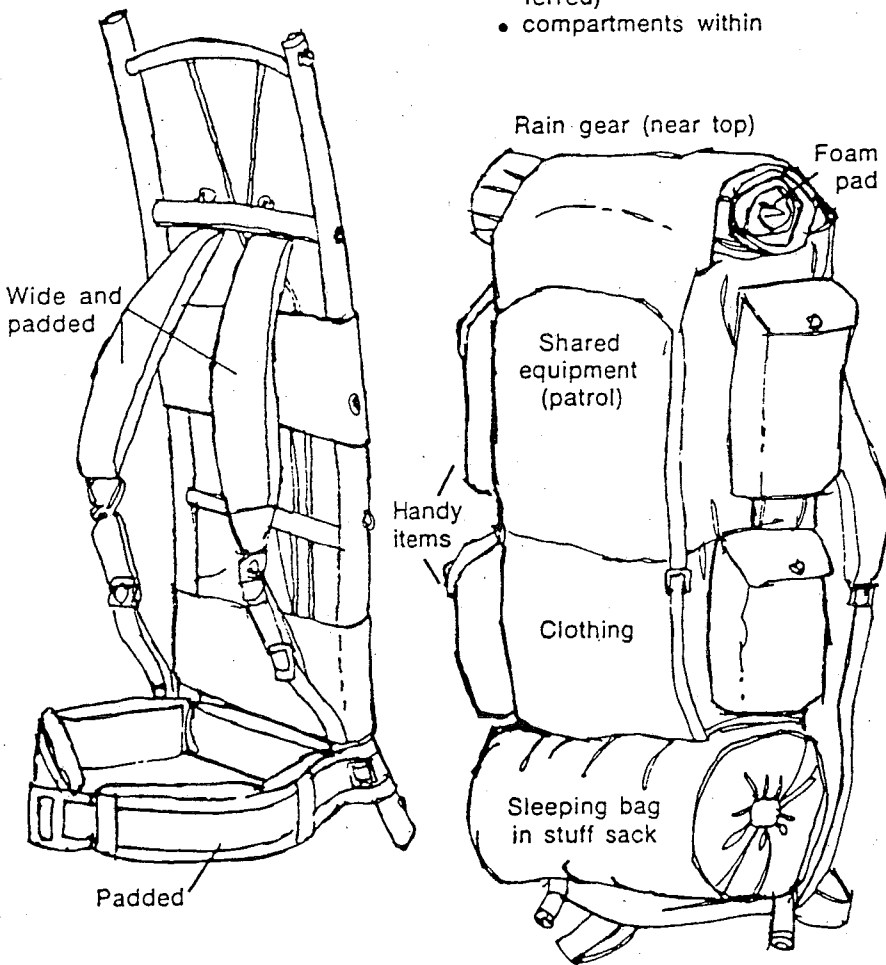
Have spare socks handy to replace sweaty socks. Stop occasionally to rest and air feet. Check feet for 'hot' spots (beginning of a blister) and apply moleskin.

Clothing

- Hat for sun protection
- Layers of upper clothing to assist in heat regulation of the body
- Loose fitting pants
- Rain gear
- Extra socks

Footwear

Socks — two pair heavy over light
Boots — appropriate for terrain well broken in properly fitted waterproof
Extra laces!



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Packing the Beast

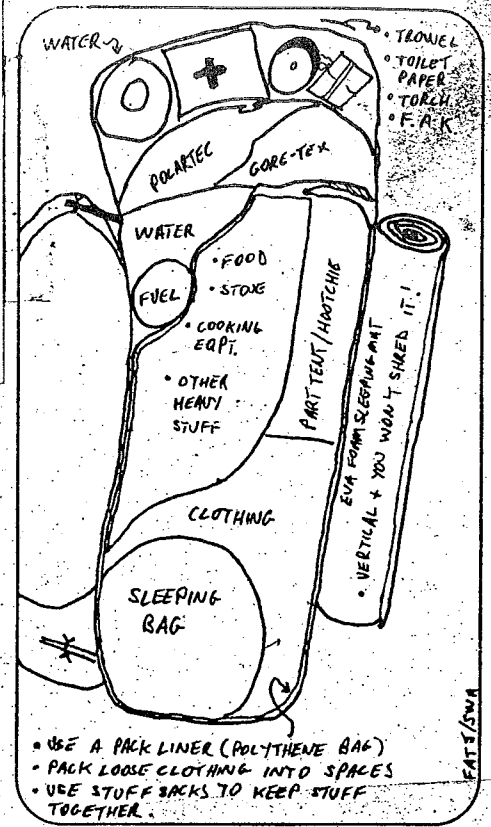
The further the weight is from a body's centre of gravity, the more work the muscles have to do to carry it. All the heavy stuff has to be as high up, and as close to the back as possible. Under these conditions, the person carrying the pack has to lean forward the least to centre the mass of the pack over the body's pelvis (through which the unburdened centre of gravity runs). Practically this can be achieved by packing the sleeping bag and clothing at the bottom and up the back of the pack, and packing the food, water and cooking equipment up high and close to the front of the pack. Of course, the Polartec and Gore-Tex stay at the very top, ready for use.

Fitting a Rucksack

Sometimes I've seen beautifully packed rucksacks hoisted onto willing shoulders, then secured appallingly. How you wear it is almost as important as how you pack it.

- 1 Loosen all the straps.
- 2 Lift your pack into place.
- 3 Do up and tighten the hip belt so that it sits over the hip bone. As much of the weight as possible should be taken on the iliac crests - the hips.
- 4 Tighten the shoulder straps until they are snug over the shoulders.
- 5 Tighten the stabiliser straps between the top of the rucksack and the shoulder straps. This will bring the load closer. If the pack feels uncomfortable at this point it may be necessary to adjust the backlength of the harness, or to adjust the curvature of the staves. A good indicator is the vertical distance between the top of your shoulders and the insertion point of the stabiliser strap into the pack. More than four fingers width high, and you should adjust the back length of your pack, or look for a different pack.
- 6 Do up the sternum strap (across the chest) if the rucksack has one.
- 7 Finally, tighten the bottom stabiliser straps between the hip belt and the bottom of the rucksack.

Right. Off you go. Make a brief stop 20-30 minutes after setting out to make any fine tuning required. It usually takes at least this long to distinguish between the shock of an unusual activity, and genuine discomfort from the pack's adjustments.



Putting it on and taking it off. Be good to your equipment!

Do Not... Do...

Do not swing the rucksack by one shoulder strap when you put it on. This creates excessive force on the stitching.	Lift it by both straps to spread the load, or rest it on something off the ground and put it on from there. Alternatively, ask someone to give you a hand.
Do not drop the rucksack when you take it off. Sharp objects inside or outside the rucksack may puncture or tear it.	Take it off the same way you put it on: with care and respect for the rucksack and its contents.
Do not sit on your rucksack. Not only do you risk damaging the rucksack as above, you may also burst food containers, or bend the frame's aluminium staves making it uncomfortable to carry.	If you can't find somewhere comfortable to sit, sit on your groundsheet, or your foam sleeping mat.