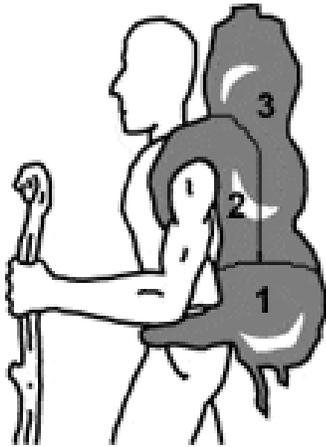


How to Pack Your Backpack

Before packing, spread everything you plan to take on the floor in front of you. Leave behind those things you may not really need, and make sure you haven't forgotten any essentials.

Imagine that your pack is made up of three zones, like those shown in the diagram.



Zone 1 – Put light items, like your sleeping bag, at the bottom of your pack.

Zone 2 – Always pack heavy items, such as water, food, climbing gear, tent, etc. closest to your back. Use a sleeping pad or a fleece as a buffer between sharp-cornered items and your spine.

Zone 3 – Place medium-weight or bulkier items toward the top or down the front of the pack.

Your objective is to avoid having either a top-heavy pack, which would pull you backwards, or a bottom-heavy pack, which will make you feel like you are being dragged down. Packing heavier items close to your center of gravity (middle of the back) will help you keep your balance and make the load feel more natural.

A few more tips:

- Make sure the weight is evenly distributed between the left and right sides.
- Stuff sacks allow you to quickly pack and unpack your gear and find what you need. The highly organized put each category of items (first aid, kitchen, etc.) in differently colored bags for even faster retrieval. Try not to stuff the sacks completely, as a little play makes them easier to squeeze into gaps.
- Avoid wasting space by using your pots as hard metal stuff sacks, and protecting delicate items, such as eggs or soft vegetables, inside.
- Place your Sleeping Bag into a stuff sack lined with a garbage bag (To keep it dry) or a waterproof stuff sack. It should then go into the bottom of your backpack since it is one of the last items you will need during the day.
- Items that you may need frequently or in a hurry should be at the top of your pack or in external pockets. For example, first aid kits and rain gear should always be handy.
- Keep your food above the fuel bottles in case there is a leak. (Trust me, you don't want to eat fuel- soaked food)
- Break down larger items into smaller parts. For example, pack the tent body, the fly, and the poles all separately rather than in one large sack.
- Stuff the tent body and tent fly into the empty spaces that are left in between other items in your pack. The best way to do this is to simply start with one corner of the fly or tent and start cramming it into the bottom of the pack where there is a lot of empty space.
- Leave no dead space. Fill containers such as cook pots, bowls, and mugs with food or spare clothing. For protection and to save room it is a good idea to pack your stove into your cook pot if it will fit.
- Tighten your pack's compression straps to make the load more balanced and compact.