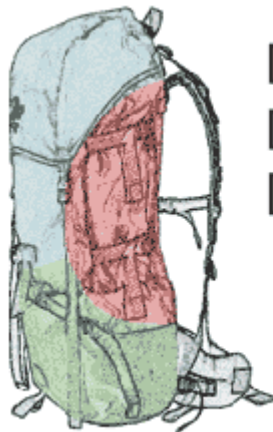


Packing Your Backpack

The key to taking advantage of a good fitting pack is to pack it properly. Even the most meticulously planned trip can turn out to be a painful experience for you and an exercise in patience for your group if your pack is not optimally loaded.

Internal vs. External Frame Packs

Each frame type has distinct advantages. Choose your pack to best accommodate the type of conditions you expect to encounter while on your trip. Each pack type requires a different packing strategy.



INTERNAL - FRAME

- Heavier Weight Items**
(stove, food, cookware, etc.)
- Lighter/Medium Weight Items**
(clothing, jackets, easy access items, etc.)
- Lightweight Bulk Items**
(sleeping bag, sleeping pad, etc.)



EXTERNAL - FRAME

Internal Frame Packs

- ▶ Keep the heaviest items above your sleeping bag and close to your back such as stove, fuel, cookware, food and climbing gear.
- ▶ Keep light-weight gear such as clothing furthest away from your body and use it to prevent other items from shifting in your pack.
- ▶ If you are hiking on moderate trails pack the heavier items higher in your pack so your bones support the load instead of your muscles.
- ▶ If you are hiking in the backcountry or in variable terrain pack heavier items lower in the pack giving yourself a lower center of gravity to reduce top-heavy pack sway.
- ▶ If you do not fill your pack to capacity, use the compression straps to slender the load and bring it closer to your back.

External Frame Packs

Externals are known for carrying large awkward loads well on moderate terrain.

- ▶ Take advantage of the many compartments to organize your smaller items.
- ▶ Pack your heavy items close to your back between your shoulders.
- ▶ You may pack heavier items higher in the main compartment to maximize the load carrying capacity of the rigid frame (see diagram).

General Packing Tips

- ▶ Pack clothing around heavier items to protect and insulate them as well as to take advantage of utilizing every possible square inch in the pack.
- ▶ If you are using a hydration system in your pack remember that water is the heaviest thing in your pack and keep the bladder close to your back centered between your shoulder blades.
- ▶ Try to "compartmentalize" by keeping like items together in light-colored stuff sacks (to easier see them inside your pack) such as small clothing items (gloves, socks, hat) or kitchen items.
- ▶ Use a small waistbelt pouch to keep essentials close at hand such as: compass, sunscreen, knife, lip protector, whistle, lighter, ibuprofen.
- ▶ Pack small items that you may need quickly in the pack's top pocket such as: bandana, camera, extra film, sunglasses or prescription glasses, insect repellent, snacks or lunch and headlamp. It can be frustrating to have to dig through your pack for your headlamp after a long day's approach.
- ▶ Pack long items on the side of the pack underneath the compression straps such as your sleeping pad, tent poles and fishing rod.
- ▶ Get out there! If you have a trip coming up, prepare for it by taking short trips with your pack loaded and experiment with your packing style. Change your load configuration on your short hike to adjust for comfort and center of gravity.