

How To Pack Your Backpack

Packing your Backpack correctly is really important to how comfortable you are on the trail. There are many theories on packing your backpack and the methods shown on the next page are some suggested ways. There are many ways it is done and here are few ways from the manufacturers of the backpacks themselves.

The four area system (best)

The pack is divided into four areas; top, inside middle (against your back), outside middle, bottom. You want to have the lightest stuff on the bottom (e.g. sleeping bag) The middle is divided into two areas; inside and outside. The middle inside is where you want your heaviest items. (e.g. water, fuel) The middle outside is where you want your average weight items (e.g. clothing, water filter) The top area is where the heavy items are going to go (e.g. stove, cookware, food, tent) Often times you can put your tent on the outside of the main compartment by fastening it under the lid. This will work on most internal frame packs and some external. Your sleeping pad would go on the outside of your pack. Most packs will have straps built in for the pad. I recommend against putting things on the sides of your pack other than light or bulky items some thing will work best there though (e.g. tent poles, camp chairs, trekking poles)

The three area system (good)

Some times it isn't practical to divide the pack into four areas. This is a variation of the four area system. The pack is divided into three areas; the bottom, middle, and top areas. You want to have the lightest stuff on the bottom (e.g. sleeping bag) The middle is where the average weighted items are going to go (e.g. clothing, light pots, water filter) The top area is where the heavy items are going to go (e.g. food, water, fuel, tent) Often times you can put your tent on the outside of the main compartment by fastening it under the lid. This will work on most internal frame packs and some external. Your sleeping pad would go on the outside of your pack. Most packs will have straps built in for the pad. I recommend against putting things on the sides of your pack other than light or bulky items some thing will work best there though (e.g. tent poles, camp chairs, trekking poles)

There is a lot of good information on the Internet also. Here are just a few sites:

http://www.troop876.org/resources/backpacker_packing_camping_tips.htm - Importance

<http://www.wildertrails.com/choosepk.htm>

http://www.hikingandbackpacking.com/hiking_tips.html

Packing tips and suggestions

This side view shows the weight distribution for a loaded pack. Keep the heavy items towards the upper center, and pad sharp items by placing clothes against your back.



PACK ITEMS IN SMALL STUFF BAGS: 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.

