

PACKING YOUR RUCKSACK FOR AN EXTENDED HIKE

Step 5: Emergency and essential items

Lastly at the top of your rucksack should be your essential items and any medications and a first aid kit. Essential items can include a toilet kit, rain jacket, snacks, and water if your bag does not have designated water bottle pockets. These items need to be at the top of your bag to allow for quick access in the case of an emergency and an emergency and for easy access throughout the day. Lastly, any miscellaneous items such as sunscreen, cards, bug spray, a compass, head torch, whistle and map can be stored in the top pocket or smaller accessible pockets to stop them falling to the bottom of the main pocket.

Step 4: Packing lighter, less required items

Items in this area should be lighter than the items packed closest to your back such as lighter foods or a rain jacket. Packing lighter items further away from your centre of gravity stops the bag pulling away from you, making it difficult to carry. Packing softer and less delicate items here can also help to protect the items stored close to your back.

Step 3: Packing the heaviest items.

Next, your 'core' items go in. These items are heavier and include items such as your tent, stove, fuel, water & heavy food. It is best to pack the heavier items (tent and fuel) closer to your back for optimal weight distribution. This helps to keep the bulk of the weight closer to your centre of gravity. If you have other items such as a camp chair or table, this would be a good time to pack them in.

Step 1: Fitting your rucksack. Before filling your rucksack, it is important to make sure you have a bag which is suitable for your torso's shape and size. A quick guide to choosing an appropriate bag size is to hold the bag up to your shoulders. The waist strap should be hugging the top of your hip bones (iliac crest). If the waist strap is too far above your hips, the bag is too small and if the strap sits below your hips, it is too big. Start by tightening the waist strap until it is firm. Next, tighten the shoulder straps. The straps should run along your shoulder blades with no pinches or gaps. Tighten straps evenly to ensure the bag is not lopsided. Next, the sternum strap can be clipped in. This goes across your chest and shouldn't be too tight. Lastly, tighten the load lifter straps on top of the shoulder straps. This pulls the top of the bag towards your neck and centre of gravity which helps to keep you stable when walking. If the bag feels too close to your head, loosen those straps.

Step 2: light - moderate non-essentials.

When packing, it is important to refer to the packing list to ensure you have everything that is required. Before placing items into a pack it is a good idea to install a waterproof pack liner or garbage bag. This will prevent your items getting wet if it should rain or if you cross water. Weight, space and organisation are the key components for consideration. The first items placed at the bottom are items that you do not need access to during the day such as your sleeping bag, clothing, inflatable pillow and sleeping mat. This gear should generally be a bit lighter than your heaviest items and should be in dry bags.



References

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