

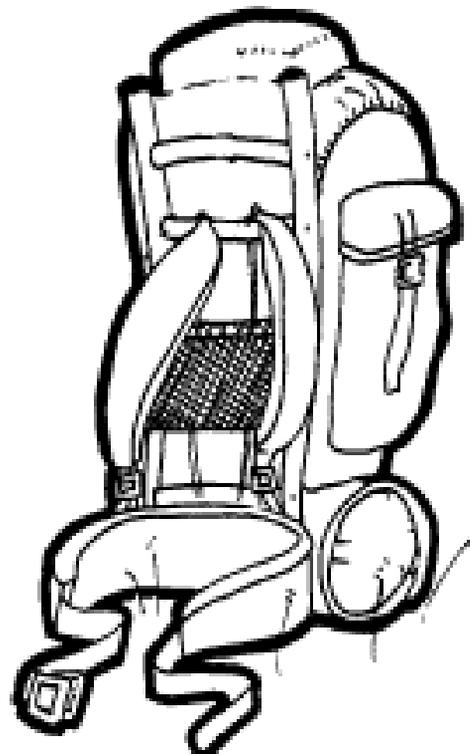
How to Pack a Rucksack for an Expedition

Some important things to consider when packing your rucksack are:

- **Weight-** Can I carry this weight over the required distance for long periods? Is there any way I could cut down on gear? Have I distributed the weight such that the pack will be comfortable and provide me with good stability?
- **Contents-** Do I have everything that I need to undertake this expedition? Is everything that I am carrying absolutely essential (if it's not- don't bring it!)?
- **Accessibility-** What items do I need quick access to? Are they easy to reach or unpack?

The Right Rucksack?

Choosing the right rucksack for your expedition is essential. It is important that you choose a rucksack of a suitable size. Where possible, you should avoid carrying a rucksack that is too small, forcing you to attach a lot of equipment to the outside of your pack. Conversely, using a rucksack that is too big may only encourage you to carry more gear, thus adding to the weight of your pack!





The ideal size of rucksack for your adventure will depend on a number of factors such as whether or not you can split shared gear amongst a patrol, what the weather conditions can be expected, the type of clothing you will need and the duration of your expedition. As a very rough guide, many scouts find a 60 litre pack suitable for 2-3 day expeditions such as MPCs, Sionnachs or PEAK and an 80 litre pack necessary for anything longer.

Most importantly, you should make sure your rucksack fits you properly and that the straps are comfortably adjusted to minimise the pressure and weight put on your shoulders and back. Waist straps should be fitted in such a way that the bulk of the weight of the pack is carried on your hips rather than your shoulders. Chest and shoulder straps should then be used to maximise stability.

Rain covers are also a handy extra to have stashed away in any easy to reach place so that you can quickly cover your rucksack when the weather takes a turn for the worse! Lining the inside of your rucksack with a large dry bag or heavy duty plastic bag is advisable to add some level of waterproof protection to your clothing and equipment.





The Right Gear?

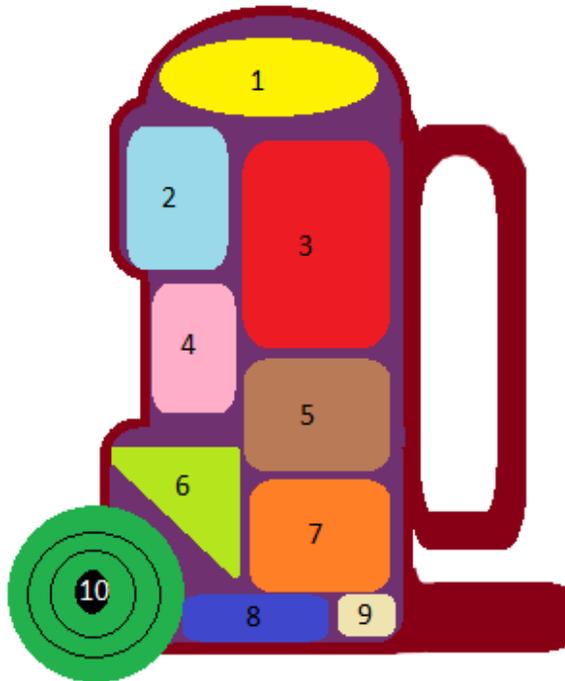
The type of gear, equipment and clothing you carry with you will depend on what weather and temperatures you can expect on your expedition but as a minimum, any scout or patrol undertaking a hill walking expedition should have with them:

- A map, a compass, a waterproof map case and a detailed route card (including emergency contact numbers and expected start and finish times) of their intended hike- a copy of this route card should **always** be left with a scouter or someone else who is not travelling on the expedition with you,
- A survival bag, a first aid kit and a whistle,
- If you or your patrol are going on a day hike from a standing camp, you should always bring with you at least one sleeping bag and storm shelter for emergency situations.

In addition to this, each scout should bring with them:

- A good waterproof jacket with a hood and waterproof trousers,
- Hiking boots and multiple pairs of thick hiking socks,
- Walking trousers (**not denims**),
- Multiple lightweight top layers (preferable to hoodies or thick fleeces),
- A hat, scarf and waterproof gloves,
- Insulating thermal layers for night time,
- A sleeping bag and ground mat,
- A small toiletry bag,
- An adequate supply of water,
- Lightweight and unbreakable cup/bowl/plate and eating utensils,
- A penknife,
- A head-torch with spare batteries,
- Plastic bags or dry bags,
- Gaiters (optional)
- A suitable, lightweight hike tent,
- A lightweight camping stove (such as a Trangia) with sufficient fuel and waterproof matches.





1. Essential Items (First Aid Kit, Penknife, Map etc)

2. Water and Waterproofs

3. Tent

4. Food Stuffs

5. Cooking Stove

6. Dry Clothes and Warm Layers

7. Sleeping Bag

8. Dirty/Wet Clothes

9. Fuel for Cooking

10. Groundmat (may also be attached above or below rucksack)

The Packing 'Technique'

Like Tetris, packing a rucksack to maximise effectiveness and comfort requires a bit of practice and patience. As a rule of thumb, heavier items should be carried near the top of the pack and close to your back for the best stability and distribution of weight. Remember- the higher the centre of gravity, the lighter the rucksack! Important items such as first aid kits and waterproofs should always be packed such that they are easily accessible when urgently needed. Dry bags or small plastic bags should be used to separate equipment and clothing into categories such as clean socks, warm layers, dirty clothes etc. This will add another waterproof protection to your gear and will make things easier to find and organise. Foodstuffs, where possible, should be organised into individual portions within ziplock bags and contained in one large lunchbox. Use any spare space in the lunchbox to carry items such as tissue paper or spare plastic bags to avoid your food rattling around and to maximise your usage of space. Fuel for your lightweight stove and any wet gear you have should be carried at the bottom of your rucksack in case of spillage or leakage.

