

“On My Back”

Back Packs and Equipment

This session qualifies for Voyager outdoor Skills award requirement No. 4 on page 77 in the Scout Handbook.

Select the appropriate Backpack:

Day-Packs:

- Padded Back / Belt required

Overnight Packs:

- 50-70 Liter sizes are best suited for Scouting.
- Padded Back pad
- Top Stabilizer Straps
- Solid Construction
- Adjustable Rigging

Kit Lists:

- Copies of standard Kit List are provided.
- Group your clothing in layers.
- How to Bag your clothing

Packing your Back Pack:

- Use re-sealable plastic bags.
- If you won't use it loose it!
- Only bring what you need
- Your Pack Zones 1-3

Zone 1 - Sleeping bag or Blanket

Zone 2 - Heavy items such as water, food, tents.

(Heavy items should be close to your back with a blanket or fleece as a buffer)

Zone 3- Lighter bulkier items should go on top or down the back of your Pack.

Adjusting your Pack for the right fit:

- Make sure you have the right size pack for the journey.
- Most of the weight should rest on your hips.
- Wear the Pack tightly against your body.

Post Trip Check:

After each trip empty your pack and check your pack for any missing straps, rips or damage from the outing. Take all the articles that were in your pack and make 3 piles.

1. Pile of items used every day
2. Pile of items used sometimes
3. Pile of items not used at all

Are there any items in the third pile you can leave behind next time?

References: www.mec.ca
Field Book for Canadian Scouting Pg. – 90

BACKPACKS

For many people, the backpack is the icon of backcountry travel. A backpack can give you the mobility to access places that would give a Range Rover a nosebleed! But what should you look for when searching for the right backpack? Focus on design, materials, and quality of construction that best match its intended use. Some key factors to consider are terrain to be encountered, mode of transport (hiking, skiing, unicycling), and weight or volume of load to be carried.

Types of Backpacks

To accommodate a variety of users and conditions, backpack manufacturers build their packs in a dizzying variety of shapes and sizes. Before looking at specific packs, figure out which type of backpack will best suit your needs.

Daypacks (15-35L)

These are small fabric packs with little or no internal support. They are great for short, low-capacity outings such as day hikes. The small capacity means the weight of a loaded daypack is carried on the shoulders. Some features to consider are a waist strap for stability and padding along the back for comfort.

Alpine packs (30-55L)

These medium-sized packs usually have some internal stiffeners and a weight bearing hipbelt. Their larger capacity make them useful for equipment intensive activities like ski-touring and climbing, or even light overnight jaunts.

Backpacking packs (55-75L)

These packs are designed for multi-day tripping. Due to their large carrying capacity, these packs incorporate a frame to provide the structural rigidity required to transfer the load weight from the back and shoulders to the hips.

Expedition packs (75-100L)

Imagine a backpacking pack on steroids! The colossal capacity of these packs makes them ideal for extended backcountry travel. Expedition packs are particularly useful for winter trips where extra gear may be required.

Travel Packs

Travel packs have a flap which zips over shoulder straps and waistbelts. This feature reduces hang-ups on airline luggage conveyor belts, and may increase your apparent respectability when checking into hotels or crossing borders. Travel packs vary all the way from soft-sided suitcases designed to be briefly toted on the back (identifiable by their rectangular shapes and rudimentary shoulder-and-waist suspension systems) to true backcountry packs (distinguished by their contoured shapes, lushly padded and fully adjustable shoulder and hip belts, and full internal frames).

Design Features and Construction

So you have decided what type of pack you are looking for. What is the next step? You can narrow the field down again by considering some design features, such as how you access the carrying compartments and how the pack is built.

Panel-loading (a.k.a. front loading) packs allow easy access to gear. This design is popular for travel packs. The panel zippers, however, can leak in the rain and are potential weak points. Look for compression straps to take the pressure off the zippers.

Top-loading packs are inherently stronger and more weather resistant than front-loaders, but to reach something that is packed at the bottom, everything must be unpacked. This design is popular among backcountry packs because many items do not need to be accessed during the day, but durability is a priority.

Construction should be bombproof because packs take a lot of abuse. Look for tough fabrics like packcloth or Cordura (especially in high wear areas). Seams should be joined with closely spaced stitching, and all stress points should be reinforced with bar-tacked stitches. A urethane coating will provide some protection from the elements, but expect some leakage through the seams in any backpack.

Fit and Suspension

Fit is the last, and perhaps most important, factor to consider when choosing a backpack. It doesn't matter if the pack is the right capacity with all the features you are looking for if it turns you into a hunchback on the trail! The correct fit of a pack is dependant on two crucial components: pack size (not to be confused with capacity), and suspension system.

Pack size

Backpack size is a function of torso length. To find your pack size, measure the distance from your most prominent neck vertebra to your hipbone, along your spine. This measurement is a more accurate than overall height for determining what size of pack you will wear.

Suspension system

Wearing a pack should feel as though your own body has become somewhat heavier, not as though you are wrestling with an overweight parasite on your back. The suspension systems of modern packs are designed to transfer most of their weight to your hips, reducing back strain.

For comfort and weight distribution, the hip-belt padding should wrap completely around your hipbones. Shoulder straps should be far enough apart that they don't squeeze your neck. When properly adjusted, the padded sections should wrap around the top of your shoulders comfortably and attach to the frame three or four inches below them.

Finally, load the pack up with 20-30lbs and go for a hike (around the store before you buy!). Play with the adjustments to fine-tune the fit. The bottom line is, if a pack doesn't feel right now, it won't feel right after ten hours on the trail.

For product specific information on our packs, check out the [Serratus website](#). Serratus is a wholly owned subsidiary of MEC

HOW TO PACK YOUR BACKPACK

Before you even start packing, spread everything you plan on taking on the floor. Be ruthless with things you may not really need (12 pairs of underwear), and make sure you haven't forgotten any essentials (matches).

Once you start packing there is a simple structure to be followed:

- Pack light items on the bottom, heavy items close to your back and medium weight items elsewhere.
- Make sure the weight is evenly distributed between the left and right sides of the pack.
- Place important or frequently used items in a handy place, such as external pockets.

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.

Zone 1 - The bottom of your pack is a good place for a sleeping bag. Heavy items such as water, food, climbing gear, tents, etc. should always be closest to your back. It's a good idea to use a sleeping pad or fleece as a buffer sharp, cornered items and your spine. Lighter or bulkier items would go toward the top or down the back of the pack.



Zone 2 - packed between
Zone 3 -

your body
A few

Last, but not least, always use your compression straps! They help bring the load closer to and keep everything in place.
more tips:

- When hiking on easy terrain, you can pack heavier items a little higher up your back for better posture.
- For harder terrain, place heavier items a little lower down for better balance.
- Pots are great containers! Place delicate items (eggs or soft vegetables) inside. They will be protected from being crushed and you will avoid wasting space.
- Stuffsacks allow you to quickly pack and unpack your gear by category - you can even colour code them! In this case don't stuff sacks completely; a little play will let you squeeze them into gaps.
- Place your food above your fuel bottle in case of leaks and avoid that lovely gasoline flavor.

PACKS - Cleaning and Care

Some tips for caring for your pack:

- Store your pack away from dampness, extreme heat, acids, alkalis, oxidizing agents, bleaches, and direct sunlight. Mildew, caused by storing a damp pack, destroys nylon coatings and weakens threads.
- Backpacks can be washed by hand with mild soap, rinsed well, and left to air dry. Never machine wash or dry a pack – straps caught in washers can damage your appliance and your pack, and subjecting your pack to high temperatures damages fabric coatings.
- Renew your pack's water repellency by applying a waterproofing product to your clean pack.

BROKEN ZIPPER REPAIR: Tightening or Replacing Broken Zipper Sliders

Over time, a zipper's sliders, which are cast from a soft alloy, become loose. The zipper's coils, or teeth, pass through the slider, but the slider does not properly force the two lengths of zipper coil to become engaged. If when the slider is pulled up, the rest of the zipper disengages behind the slider, the slider should be tightened or replaced.

This repair will only fix zippers if there is no damage to the zipper's teeth. A new zipper is required if the coil of the zipper is damaged, the coil edges are very worn, or the stitching between the plastic coil material and the fabric backing is worn away. Evaluate if the cost of installing a new zipper is reasonable considering your product's remaining use and its replacement cost.

Please read the full instructions over once before beginning this repair.

You will need:

- Hinged or adjustable pliers (not needle-nose pliers).
- A new metal top stop, found at most fabric stores or at MEC.
- Wire cutters (specifically side cutters).

You may need:

- A zipper bottom stop, or a needle with a large eye, dental floss or nylon thread, and scissors.
- A new zipper slider, found at most fabric stores or at MEC.

Tightening Old Sliders

Tightening the zipper slider is only a temporary fix, but will last a while until you have a chance to buy a new zipper slider.

1. Bring the slider back to the bottom stop of the zipper.
2. Place the hinged or adjustable pliers on the front of the zipper slider and the back squared area, (where the slider has straight sides). To access it you may need to undo some stitching. Do not use needle-nose pliers, as they will place uneven pressure on the slider, and can wreck it.
3. Squeeze the left side of the slider gently with the pliers from front to back, then the right side. Try the zip. If it isn't fixed, squeeze the slider again gently, one side, then the other, and repeat until you get results. If you squeeze too hard, the zipper may jam or break.
4. On a zipper that does not separate at the bottom (like a pants fly zipper), a few of the coils at the beginning of the zipper may no longer properly engage. Either install a new bottom stop across the zipper coil at the point at which it does close, or sew across that area.

Replacing Zipper Sliders

There are two ways to replace a zipper slider.

- Use method one if the zipper does not come apart at the bottom stop, for instance, the fly zipper on a pair of pants.
- Use method two if the zipper comes apart at the bottom stop, as it does on a jacket.

A zipper slider can only be mounted going forward. It is impossible to engage the back (flat) end of a slider with a zipper. This means that you must access the beginning of the zipper coil.

Method 1: For zippers that do not separate at the bottom.

1. Either unstitch the seam that contains the beginning of the zipper, or, more simply, avoid opening up the seam, and cut about half an inch of coil away on either side with scissors or your side cutters.
2. Place the two ends of the zipper coil into the front two openings of the slider.
3. Fiddle with the zipper, holding the coils in one hand, and try to begin the forward movement of the slider. It may require a couple of attempts to get the two sides even.
4. After the zipper slider is mounted, you will need to sew up the seam you unstitched, or attach a bottom stop, or sew across the bottom of the zipper coil. Otherwise, the slider will zip right off the zipper when it's opened.

Method 2: For zippers that separate at the bottom.

1. Remove at least one of the top stops with a side cutter, if possible only the top stop on the side the zipper pull (or slider) moves on, so that you can pull the slider right off the zipper.
2. When the slider is removed and both sides of the zipper are free, mount a new slider onto the same side of the zipper, or both sides if necessary, by wriggling the back end of the top slider back onto the zipper.
3. Once the slider is remounted, draw it down to the bottom, and start the zipper properly.
4. Finish the repair by placing a new metal top stop at the top of the zipper.

To prevent zipper breakdowns

- Keep your zippers clean - if they get dirty, rinse them with water.
- Zip slowly, especially around corners.
- Help your zipper by pulling the zipper sides together before zipping them up.
- Never force a stuck slider - unjam the fabric or rinse out the dirt first.



Troop Camp Kit List

All items must fit in to one Back Pack.

(Be sure to pack clothing into plastic bags before inserting into packs this will insure dry equipment.)

Clothing (*Dress and pack for the weather. Winter Camps need more warm clothes. Use common sense*)

- Scout Uniform (Sash should be brought to camp but only worn during ceremonies.)
- Warm Jacket(s) (water resistant)
- 4 pairs socks
- 3 shirts warm
- 1 wool sweater
- 4 pair underwear
- 2 pair loose pants (cords, poly or as last resort jeans -Wool is best)
- Hiking boots (waterproof)
- 1 extra pair shoes or boots
- Rain gear (or large plastic garbage bag minimum)

Sleeping Gear (*keep in mind that the Scouts will be in Tents regardless of the weather*)

- Sleeping clothes
- Extra Toque and socks for sleeping
- 'Closed cell' [Ensolite] foamy or air mattress (air mattress - Summer only)
- Warm sleeping bag minimum -25 (Winter Camps - Liner may be necessary)

Other

- Towel, wash cloth and soap (in container)
- Tooth brush and paste
- Mess kit (Non metal plate, bowl, cup, knife, fork spoon in mesh bag)
- Flashlight with extra batteries
- Plastic water bottle (to carry drinking water on hikes)
- Day Pack
- Emergency/Survival Kit
- Scout Handbook

Remember:

Label everything you own and bring only what you need!

Weight is always a factor when you are hiking with a backpack.
Troop follows lightweight camping Guidelines.

DO NOT bring any ELECTRONIC entertainment devices!





This kit list is designed for cold weather camping.

Please use common sense when selecting your clothing!

- Clothing** (*prepare to dress in layers, pack to ensure at least Two complete changes of clothes*)
- Warm Jacket** (wind proof/water proof breathable). Outer shell parka style.
- Insulated vest (down or synthetic)
- 4 pairs socks (Wool/propylene)
- 2 shirt/sweater (wool or fleece)
- 1 wool sweater or fleece
- 2 pair underwear (long johns and top)
- 2 pairs loose pants (wool/ski type or fleece with wind/water proof shell Please, no blue jeans)
- Snow boots or other winter foot wear
- Toque (wool /fleece)
- Light weight gloves
- Mitts with wind/water proof shell (packing spare pair is advisable)

- Sleeping Gear** *Keep in mind that the Scouts will be in tents & outside temperature may be as low as -25°C. All clothing items listed here must not be the same as those worn during the day.*
- P Js (extra long johns/fleece pants & top)
- Wool/fleece toque
- Socks (Wool/fleece)
- "Closed cell" foamy
- Sleeping bag [suitable for -25°C or consider two bags and liners.**
- Extra blanket (campfire blanket)

- Other**
- Mess kit (plate, bowl, cup, knife, fork spoon in mesh bag)**
- Water bottle (1 liter)**
- Bag for dirty laundry
- Survival Kit/First Aid Kit*
- Pocket Knife*
- Compass*
- Flashlight with **extra batteries**
- Toiletry Kit -Towel, wash cloth, soap (in container), tooth brush and paste
- SCOUT HANDBOOK & FIELDGUIDE



Label everything you own! Pack everything into ONE bag!
DO NOT bring any ELECTRONIC entertainment devices or "snack foods"!

Every Scout must bring a snow shovel!