

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PE 405</b> <b>ADVENTURE EDUCATION</b></p>
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## Packing the Backpack

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### Loading your pack.

The major consideration is weight distribution in the pack.

- ✓ Flat terrain
  - Higher center of gravity
  - Load light gear in bottom of pack; stack heavier gear on top.
- ✓ Steep terrain
  - Lower center of gravity
  - Load heavier items lower in pack & closer to body

### Suggestions for loading internal & external frame packs.

- ✓ Stuff (don't fold) your clothes into the pack or pack items into stuff sacks. It allows you to utilize the entire area inside the pack.
- ✓ Generally, the most usual weight distribution has the larger and lighter items on the bottom of the pack.
  - Lighter items: The sleeping bag and pad are usually strapped to the frame below the pack with the clothes stuffed into the bottom of the pack.
  - Heavier items: Items such as food, stoves, and fuel go into the upper section of the pack with the heaviest items closest to your body. The tent should go on top of the pack.
  - *Rule of thumb*: 50% of the weight should be in the upper third of the pack.
- ✓ Horizontal weight distribution should be balanced.
- ✓ Hip belt should have enough room to allow for adjustment as you change layers of clothing.
- ✓ Avoid hanging things all over your pack. Lots of noise and snagging on branches and trees can occur as a result. If you find that you have to do this then your pack is too small or you've over-packed for the trip.
- ✓ Have the things that you need during the hike readily available in outside pockets or on top of the pack.
  - Examples: trail food, lunch, first-aid kit, rain gear, etc.
- ✓ Group or pack items according to function and use. Stuff sacks help you organize your gear.
- ✓ In case of rain, protect your gear by lining your sleeping bag stuff sack and your pack with a plastic bag. Pack covers are very useful and work very well.
- ✓ Use a separate bag for food storage. Always use the same bag, particularly when camping in bear country.
- ✓ Fuel bottles should be stored in a leak proof bag and stored separate from food.

### Weight of the pack.

Just how much weight to carry will depend on your size, weight, and physical condition. A *general rule* is to carry up to 25% of your body weight for a multi-day trip. On longer trips, you may have to carry more, but never try to carry more than you can handle.

✓ Before your trip:

- Try on your pack.
- Notice the weight and balance.
- Adjust the straps to create the best fit.
- Weigh your pack and compare to your body weight.
- Make careful consideration of what you've packed and get rid of the non-essential items.
- If hiking with a group, share the load!
- Check all straps, bunji-cords, buckles, and zippers. On external frame packs check all clevis pins and split rings.