

# How to pack an overnight hiking backpack

When packing a backpack, weight distribution is key. You want the heaviest items close to your mid-back for a stable center of gravity, and any items you need while you're actively hiking to be easily accessible.

A properly balanced bag can make for a safer hike. If you lose your balance while hiking with your pack on, a poorly packed bag can pull you down, whereas a well-packed one can help maintain your center of gravity.

A loaded backpacking pack should not weigh more than 20 percent of your body weight. If you weigh 150 pounds, your pack should not exceed 30 pounds for backpacking, or for example, if it's a Cadette who weighs 80 pounds, the pack should not exceed 16 pounds.

A loaded day hiking pack should not weigh more than about 10 percent of your body weight.

Make sure to use a backpack with adjustable shoulder straps and hip belts for a proper fit.

**No Drawstring bags for day hikes or overnight hikes!**



**Outside Pocket**  
Rain jacket

**Top Lid**  
First aid kit  
Water filtration  
Snacks  
Map  
Sunscreen  
Headlamp  
Toiletry supplies

**Heavy Stuff**  
Food  
Stove  
Tent  
Camp Shoes

**Hipbelt Pockets**  
Knife  
Compass  
Whistle  
Snacks

**Lighter Stuff**  
Clothes  
Sleeping pad  
Sleeping bag

If your pack has a way to attach things on the outside, save space by attaching something like your sleeping pad here.

## Packing tips:

- Backpacking bags are measured in liters and for overnight trips, you'll need something in the 40- to 70-liter range. For the average backpacker, 45-65 liters is ideal for most trips.

- It is recommended packing 2-2.5 pounds of food per person per day for an average backpacking trip.
- Backpacking with a group can make packing easier because you can share the load.
- It is important to always check your pack weight while filling the bag and remember your max.
- **Trekking poles can reduce lower limb joints forces by as much as 25%!**