

Purchasing the



Right Rucksack

A rucksack's a rucksack, surely? Go to the shop or online store, pick one you like the look of, pack it, pick it up and go – then suffer back ache and shoulder pains for the rest of your hike!

A rucksack needs to be fitted properly, similarly in the way you would be measured and fitted for a pair of walking boots. You wouldn't pick any old size would you? So why do it for a rucksack?

See the chart below for size recommendations for each activity:

| Activity | Recommended Rucksack Sizes (litres) | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| | 0 | 10 | 20 | 30 | 40 | 50 | 60 | 70 | 80 | |
| Day Walking | | | Short / summer walks | Long / winter walks | | | | | | |
| Multi-day Walking | | | | | | Hostels huts & bivis | | | Camping & expeditions | |
| World Travel | | | | | | Warmer climates/ hostels | | Cooler climates/ camping | | |
| Climbing/ Mountaineering | | | | Summer rock climbing | Winter mountaineering | | | | | |
| Multi-Activity | | Shorter outings | Longer outings | | | | | | | |

This list will help you look for things when trying on backpacks:

- Load the pack with the amount of weight you think you will carry.
- Hipbelt: hug the hips with the upper edge being a couple of centimetres above the hip bone. A large number of people have been found to wear the hipbelt either around their middle or around their upper thighs.
- The frame should come between 5 and 10cm above the shoulders – too high and the pack is unstable; too low and the pack pulls backwards with too much weight on the shoulders.

- Does the pack have tension straps? These need to be at a 45 degree angle so when pulled tightly, they lift the shoulder straps off your shoulders. The padded part of the shoulder straps should curve under the arms, yet shouldn't touch the body.

Don't be afraid to ask the shop assistants for help when trying on rucksacks – there are so many different types, they will ensure you pick the right one for your activity.

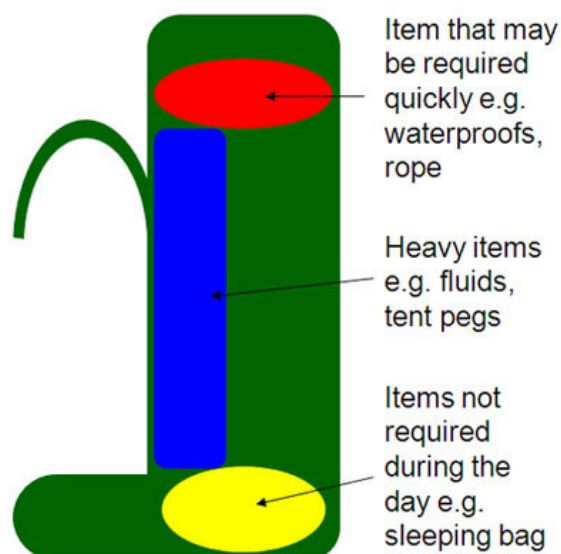
So, now that you have purchased a perfect rucksack to fit your body shape, you now need to pack it correctly to avoid back ache, body imbalance, shoulder pains, soreness and possible bruising. The diagram on the right should help you:

Tension straps:

These are thin straps that run from the top of the shoulder straps to the top of the pack. Tightening these, along with adjusting the shoulder straps to pull the pack closer to your body – this should remove pressure on the back and shoulders, adjusting the weight more evenly.

Top of the rucksack:

Anything you will need to get hold of during the day will go at the top – spare clothing for example.



Bottom of your rucksack:

- Sleeping bags and clothing should go at the bottom of the sack – it doesn't matter if these become crushed; they can also spread out at the bottom of the rucksack.
- Heavy items – GoSystems gas packs and food are placed towards the back. Place a piece of clothing or roll mat down the back of the rucksack inside to protect your back – there's nothing worse than a handle or lid sticking out and digging in your back!
- Saucepans and empty Sigg bottles are towards the outside.

Hanging items:

- Try not to strap heavy, bulky items to your rucksack. However, as roll mats are quite light, strap them to the top of your pack.
- Always think about balance. Once the rucksack is packed, hold it by its hanging strap – if it leans to one side, you may need to adjust the way you have packed your bag.