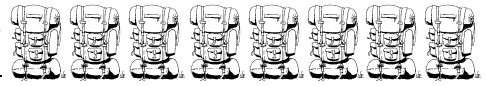
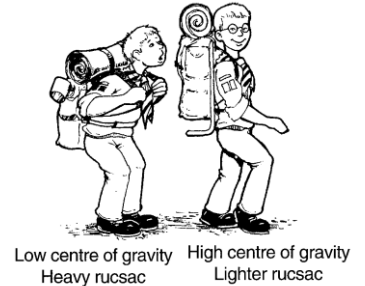


## Packing a Rucksack

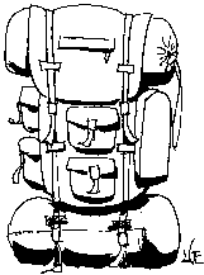


Being able to pack a rucksack correctly is an important skill, the way a rucksack is packed can affect your balance, your posture, and your breathing. In an emergency situation being able to reach the first aid kit or waterproofs without having to throw all your other gear out could save someone's life. There is no definite way to pack a rucksack but there are certainly some useful rules of thumb that can be applied.

The main rule is to pack the light things in the lower part and the heavier things in the upper part. Most rucksacks are designed to be comfortable with the load high up on the pack (near your shoulders). This means that the centre of gravity is high on your back and the rucksack is much more comfortable to carry. A lot of rucksacks have a separate compartment at the bottom for sleeping bags and other light items. The total weight will be the same however you pack it, but it is much less tiring when the rucksack is packed in such a way that it helps your posture. As you pack check the weight. You will be the one carrying it so ditch what you don't need. The lighter the pack the greater the enjoyment.



You need to be absolutely certain that you items you are packing are needed! You are going to be carrying all this gear and you may regret taking everything but the kitchen sink. Regard should also be given to the type and size of items of equipment taken. Two-day expeditions do not require a family size bar of soap or a jumbo toothpaste tube or a bath towel. A small head torch or "Maglite" is preferable to a large rubber covered flashlight. If you are travelling as a group (and you should always do so!) spread things out amongst you all. Sharing means you all carry less.



There is no such thing as a waterproof rucksack. Make sure that everything is packed in waterproof bags. This keeps all your things dry even if the rucksack leaks in heavy. Your rucksack should have a heavy gauge plastic bag preferably, but a bin liner will do so that you can keep all your gear dry.

Pack the bag yourself. This way you will know where everything is and it is your own fault if you have forgotten something. If anything is carried outside the pack it must be well secured and wrapped. Items likely to be required en route – lunch meal, first aid kit, water bottle, compass – should be quickly accessible. Most rucksacks have numerous side pockets and hanging points, make good use of them! Make sure when packing that the pack is evenly balanced i.e. don't put all your drink on one side as you will soon find it uncomfortable walking.

Don't try and struggle to get a pack on or off alone, get help or you may pull a muscle. Remember to pack the outer pockets neatly before you pack the inside of the main rucksack (otherwise you will not be able to get anything into the outside pockets once the inside of the rucksack is bulging full!). You must pack neatly. Small items like socks can be used by leaving until last and squashing down into all the little gaps. Think carefully about which items you will need first and pack these last so that they are on the top.