

Pack Weight

How much your pack weighs depends on the length of the adventure you have planned, the amount of food and equipment you must carry, and your personal preferences. For comfort on the trail, a pack containing everything you need for a safe trek should tip the scale at no more than 25 percent of your body's weight. If your pack weighs less, so much the better. If your pack weighs more, here are some tips for lightening your pack without compromising your health or safety.

1. Do a shakedown before every trip to "shake out" everything you won't need.
2. Divide group gear so that each person carries a fair share.
3. Gradually replace your heavy equipment and clothing with lighter items. For example, a standard flashlight with C batteries can weigh a pound or more, while a modern LED headlight weighs only ounces.
4. Choose lightweight hiking boots over stiff, heavy footwear.
5. Prepare one-pot meals featuring pasta, powdered sauce mixes, and other ingredients that are dry, easy to pack, and not very heavy.
6. Match cookware with menus. A couple of lightweight pots with lids may be all you need.
7. Get used to your hiking clothes. Wearing the same outfit three or four days in a row can save a lot of space and weight, and nobody in the backcountry is going to mind.
8. Share personal items. One small tube of toothpaste is probably enough for everybody.
9. Carefully consider anything that is not essential. Books, binoculars, camera tripods, and other items can enrich a trek, but remember that you will have their weight on your back every step of the way.
10. Review a list of all your gear and provisions when you get home. See if there is anything you can do without the next time.

