

## Time to pack your bags!

Right so its time to get your bag sorted. This is something that you need to spend time on to get right. This will ensure that your bag is comfortable to wear and shouldn't cause you pain or injuries and also ensure that you equipment is looked after and accessible when you need it

The golden rule is that ALL you equipment, accept your sleeping mat, goes inside the bag. You didn't need to have anything strapped to the outside, if you find yourself in this position then you are taking too much stuff! Also never put tent poles on the outside of the bag as they may seem well secured at home but after 10 hours of walking they come loose and fall off and will cost you up to £130 to replace.

First of all lay out all your stuff to take, this is me packing for a two day expedition:

Tent (I am taking the outer for the tent and another team member taking the inner)

Hat and gloves

Fleece top and thermal top and bottoms

Food organised in two bags, one for each day (see the what food to take document, also on the exped info page)



Sleeping bag

Trangia cooking stove and fuel bottle

Waterproof jacket and trousers

Under the sleeping bag is a torch and spare battery, toothbrush etc, 1 pair of socks, 1 pair of flip flops, first aid kit, survival bag and a whistle.

The next decision to make is how you are going to ensure your kit is waterproof, you basically have a few options:

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This is a large dry bag. It is completely waterproof, you fill it with stuff and then roll down the top and do up the clips. These bags are great as they keep everything dry and are really strong so won't rip or tear when taking things in or out. You can buy dry bags from most outdoor shops or off the internet. This one is 100 litres in size so will fit everything in. If you don't want to buy one this big then you could buy a smaller one, about 40 litres, to put the essential things to stay dry in like your sleeping bag and spare clothes.

I do sometimes have these available to buy, one this size will cost you £10, you must give me plenty of notice if you want one, it's no good texting me the night before!



This is a rucksack liner that you can buy for about £2 or £3 in an outdoor shop. It's basically just a thick plastic bag that you can just about fit the essential things in to keep dry like sleeping bag and spare clothes. They are not nearly good as the dry bag above but will do the job for a Bronze expedition in the summer!



You can also buy rubble sacks from DIY stores or building suppliers. There are incredibly thick plastic bags that won't rip or tear. If you have a few of them then you can organise your equipment in separate bags so have clothes in one, sleeping bag in another etc etc. Make sure you roll the tops down and secure them with some string or a bungee cord etc.

**DO NOT TRY AND WATERPROOF THINGS WITH CARRIER BAGS OR BIN LINERS!**  
**BELIEVE US FROM YEARS OF EXPERIENCE OF WATCHING PEOPLE DO THIS, IT DOES NOT WORK. IT HAS TO BE VERY THICK PLASTIC!**  
**ALSO IF YOUR KIT IS NOT SUFFICIENTLY WATERPROOFED THE ASSESSOR MAY NOT LET YOU DO THE EXPEDITION, ESPECIALLY IF THE FORECAST IS BAD!**

**FINALLY IF YOUR RUCKSACK HAS A PULL OVER COVER THESE DO NOT KEEP IT WATERPROOF SO YOU STILL MUST DO THE ABOVE!**

The next thing to do is to get to know your rucksack and decide how to pack it:



Most rucksacks have a main compartment and a smaller bottom compartment, this photo on the left shows the bottom compartment. There is a piece of material that divides the two compartments that can usually be opened up if you want to create one big compartment.

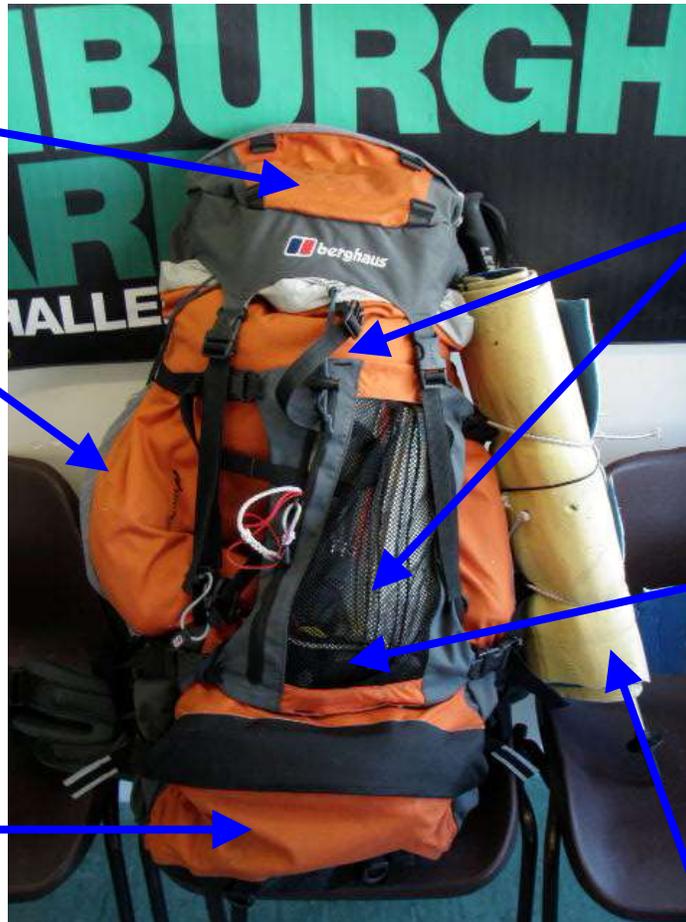
Have a really good think about what you want access to at what times during the day and then plan how to pack your bag so you can get to the things you need when you need them.

The next photo shows my packed bag:

The very top pocket of the bag has got my lunch and snacks for the day so I can get to them easily.

My water for the day is in the side pockets

The bottom compartment has my waterproof jacket and trousers and the Trangia stove and fuel bottle. If it starts to rain I need to get my waterproofs fast so I can unzip the bottom compartment and get them quickly. Also none of the items in the bottom compartment need to be kept waterproof.



Above the tent I have put the big drybag shown in the photo on page 2 which takes up the main part of the bag. It has got my sleeping bag in the bottom, then my first aid kit, torch, food for the evening and day two and spare clothes. Therefore if I want to put on a warm fleece it's at the top and easy to get to.

In the main compartment of the bag I have first stuffed the outer of the tent to the bottom. I will not need this until the end of the day so I don't need quick access to it, also it does not need to be kept waterproof and on day 2 it will probably be wet with rain or dew so I want it separate from my clothes etc.

The only thing on the outside of the bag is my sleeping mat and walking pole

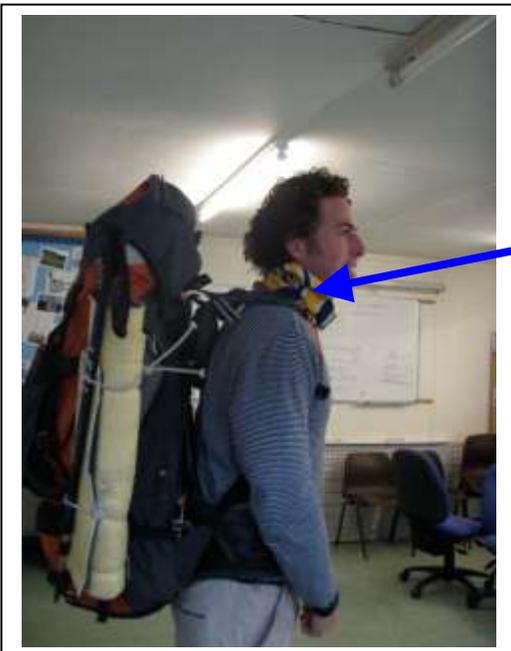
## And Try it for Size!

This next stage is crucial, you must get your bag to fit properly otherwise you will be dropping out of the expedition within the first few hours with shoulder / back pain. The first photo shows how a rucksack should look when its on:



The most important thing to note is that very little weight is on my shoulders, you can see the shoulder strap is coming from higher than my shoulder.

This is because the weight of the bag is mainly going through the waist belt which is firmly done up around the thinnest part of my body above my hip bones.



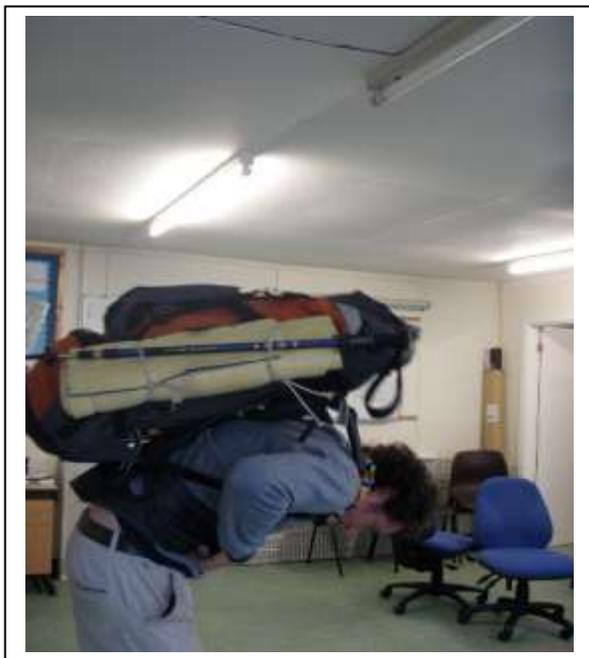
In this photo the waist strap is too loose and all the weight of the bag is going through my shoulders



In this photo the shoulder straps are too loose, you can see the bag is pulling me over backwards.

the end of the strap needs to be pulled tight through the buckle that is about here

In order to get your bag on right what you firstly need to do is to get the waist belt the right size, you need to make it a certain size without the bag on and then put the bag on and lean forward and lift the bag up your body so the waist belt will be around the thinnest part of your waist. The waist belt needs to be tight around the thinnest part of your body, basically your waist just above your hip bones, if its too tight then loosen it off and try again, if when you stand up again the bag drops down and all the weight is on your shoulders then undo the waist belt, tighten it and lean forward, moving the bag up your back, do up the waist belt and stand up again. Keep repeating until it feels just right. This picture shows me leaning forward and moving the bag further up my body and doing the waist belt up.



Alternatively find a friend or family member to lift the bag from behind up your body while you tighten the waist strap:



Once its done it should look like this, tight to the back and **LITTLE WEIGHT** on the shoulders

