

Zone Method of Packing a Backpack

The Zone Method of packing a backpack can make the difference between drudgery and enjoyment during the time spent on the trail and the following will explain what that means.

A few simple principles which are often overlooked can make a difference. Technically speaking the body has a center of gravity located directly over the ankles. When standing normally there is very little forward of the body. However, when a pack is placed on the back, the body leans forward to bring the pack's center of gravity directly over the ankles. Consequently, it is advantageous to keep the pack's center of gravity as close to your back as possible to prevent unnecessary forward lean. As a result the following method is recommended to load a backpack.



Zone A- The area farthest away from the body's center of gravity should be filled with the lightest equipment.

Zone B- This middle area should be packed with medium density objects.

Zone C- This area is the closest to the back and should carry equipment of the greatest density like stoves, tent hardware, water, etc.

HEAVY - HIGHER and LIGHT LOWER

There is also a benefit in placing the densest weight high in the pack as it will be more directly over the center of gravity. A tent should be distributed in Zone C and closer to the top. The sleeping bag can be stuffed in the bottom toward Zone A.

Boots and Socks

Boots and socks that are made for hiking are important. Boots should be ankle height to give support to the ankle. They can be made of leather or a combination of leather and heavy cordura cloth. If your boots do not have any waterproofing ability built in then use waterproofing spray. They sell breathable sprays.

NO COTTON SOCKS! To avoid blisters, try a sock liner (polypropylene) and a wool hiking sock. The liner socks will stick to the heel and foot. The wool sock will stick to the boot. The friction of the foot moving inside the boot will occur between the two pair of socks not between layers of the skin, which causes blisters. They also sell hiking socks made out of synthetics made for trekking