

## Underwear

A touchy subject perhaps, but an important one. I normally just go with my nylon shorts (lined with some type of mesh) and my lower-body layers. They seem to work just fine. There are polypro boxers and tighties out there now for the faint of heart, but don't weigh your pack down with multiple pairs. While this works for males, I usually recommend women bring two or three pairs of cotton underwear. They can rinse them out on longer trips and continually rotate in a clean pair. Doing this will lessen the risk of a yeast infection (polypro underwear does not clean as easily).

## The ABC's of Pack Packing

Whether you're packing your pack for the first time or the hundredth time, there are a few techniques to make your day go a lot smoother and keep you happier. Access, Balance, Compression, and Streamlined are easily

remembered principles to keep in mind as you figure out a packing system.

Mary Poppins had an amazing knack for getting just what she needed out of her bag. While I certainly don't hold a candle to her, I do strive to pack in a way I can get at what's needed without hassle. Access to rain gear, extra layers, water, and food all depends on your organization. It's a matter of keeping the stuff you might need during the day handy and knowing where it is so you can find it with ease.

The first thing I do when getting ready to pack is lay everything on the ground around me. That way I can see what I have to pack. I can then triage the things I will need during the day, the things I most likely won't need (but you never know so don't bury them too deeply), and the things I won't need until camp. Examples of stuff to keep close by include sunglasses, sunscreen, extra warm layers, maps, food, and water. If it looks like it might rain, I keep my rain gear handy as well. Otherwise rain gear falls into the category of stuff I may not need—but one never knows. Other things in this

# PACK PACKING ABC's

Accessability

Balance

Compression

Streamlined

WEIGHT  
DISTRIBUTED  
EQUAL SIDE to SIDE  
and heaviest  
stuff against  
your spine  
(etc.)

No  
EMPTY  
SPACES!  
(etc.)

water bottle  
EASY to GET,  
near the top!  
(etc.)

EVERYTHING  
IS INSIDE,  
nothing to catch  
on a branch;  
it's SMOOTH!  
(etc.)

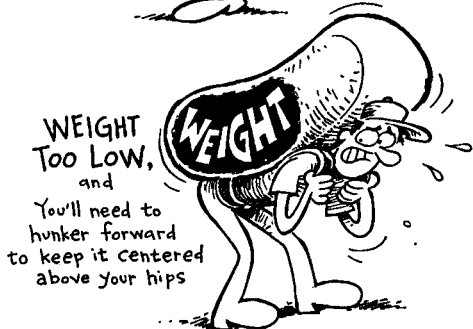
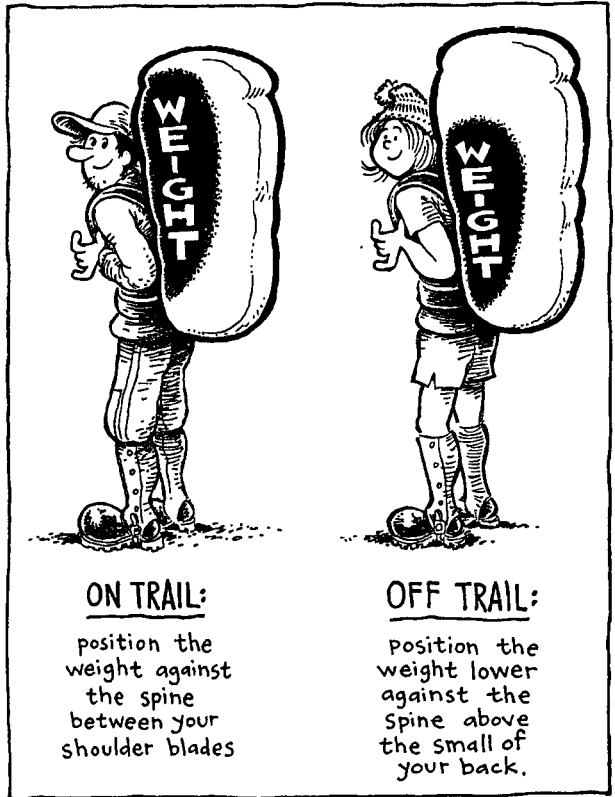


"maybe" category include the rest of my top and bottom layers, and my first-aid kit. Lastly, there are the sleeping bag, extra socks, cooking gear, food, and fuel. These items I bury down deep in the pack because I won't need them until I decide to make camp.

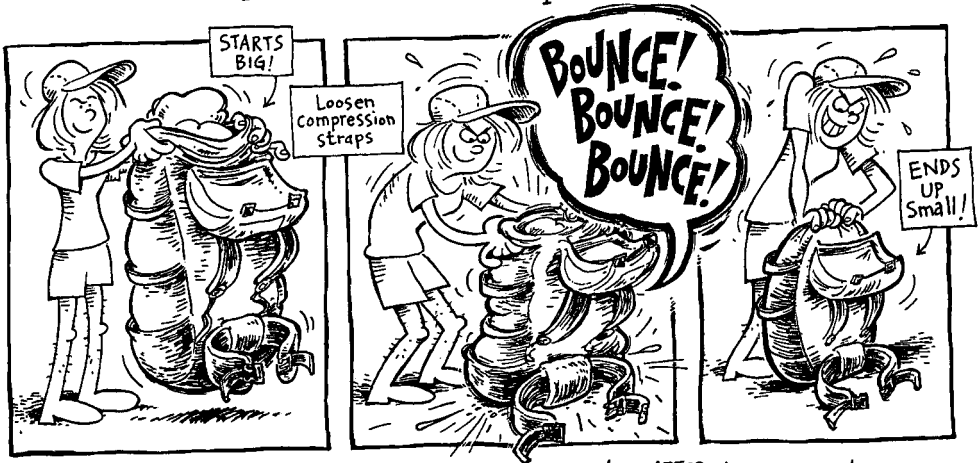
I put small items (toothbrush, floss, knife, etc.) into a stuff sack so they don't get lost in the void of my pack. The top pouch of the pack is a good spot to keep small items, and since it is easily accessible it is a great spot for sunglasses, sunscreen, hats, water bottles, and snack food.

The next principle of pack packing is *balance*. You want to keep heavy items as close to your back as possible. Carrying your pack is easier when the weight is in line with your body, versus out away from it. Also beware of making your pack too top or bottom heavy. Too much weight in the top and the pack takes control, pulling you over. Too much in the bottom and you wind up having to lean forward as you walk to balance it out. Try to get the heaviest items, like food, in that part of your pack that rides at or just below your shoulders. Keep it close to your spine, as well, and think about side-to-side balance. Avoid putting a heavy item on one side of the pack without balancing it out on the other.

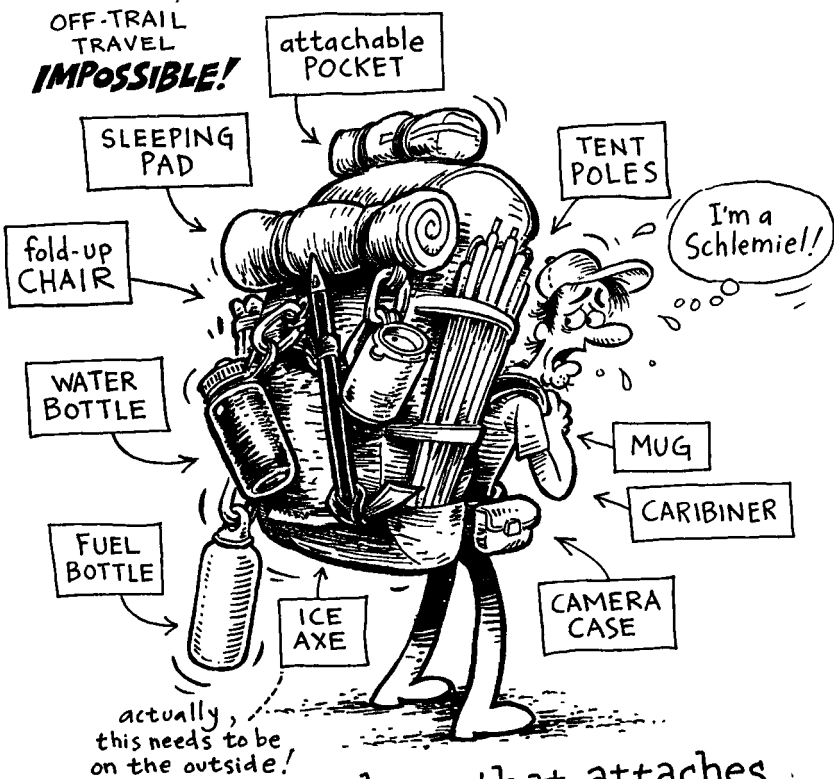
The third principle is *compression*. The key here is to really cram things into your pack. No holds barred. Fill up all those dead air spaces in your pack. Stick food into your pot; cram some socks in your tennis shoes. Shove that wind layer into an empty space.



The BOUNCE method of pack compression:

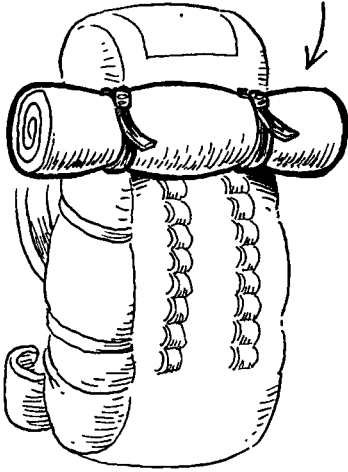


\* PLEASE REMEMBER ... don't pack your camera 'til AFTER the bouncing!



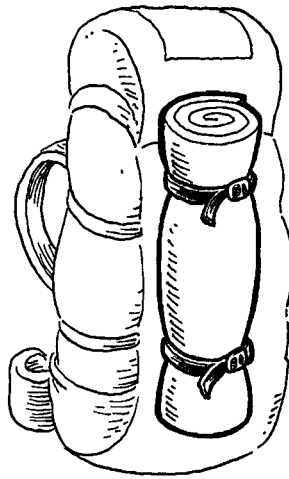
It's the greenhorn that attaches everything to the outside of his pack!  
**PUT IT INSIDE!**

Gets caught on trees & branches



(NOT BAD)

STREAMLINE!

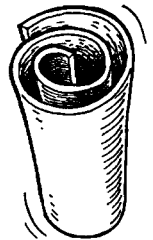


(BETTER!)

## Sleeping pad attaching position!

Packing a pack is an art, and a well-packed pack looks solid from the outside, no dimples or bulges showing where the fry pan or some such item is or isn't. Your pack should look like it did in the shop when it was stuffed with all that cotton wadding. This allows you to fit everything inside your pack and avoid the syndrome of having the pack look like there is more strapped to the outside than there is packed inside.

Which brings me to our last principle—*streamlined*. Now maybe I am just finicky, but I like to get as much stuff in my pack as possible and avoid strapping stuff to the outside. This includes my sleeping pad, which I often roll up, stick in the pack first, and then unroll so it makes an empty tube inside the pack. I then pack everything inside this tube. You need a big pack to do this, but it has the advantage of weather proofing your pack because water will run down the outside of your pad instead of penetrating deeper into the



ROLLED SLEEPING PAD stuffed into the pack body



(lumpy!)



adds a nice shape, padding & water protection