

# How To Reduce The Weight Of Everything

Supplement to:

Ultralight Backpacking Secrets

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# **How To Reduce The Weight Of Your...**

## **1. Backpack**

Frame packs are heavier than frameless ones. Consider whether you can get your weight down enough to use an ultralight pack. Mine, for example is a GoLite Breeze (not sure if they sell this any longer) that weighs just 13 ounces. Many that weigh a pound or less can still comfortably carry up to twenty pounds.

Remove extras from the pack. If the padding in the shoulder straps is accessible, for example, see where it contacts your shoulders. Then trim off the extra and put the padding back into the straps. Cut off extra tags too. You don't need to advertise the pack for the manufacturer. Remove extra strap pins on frame packs, if there are any.

Make your own pack. My light aluminum frame from an old pack, combined with an 8-ounce duffel bag, weighs just two pounds total. Not bad for a full-suspension pack (it even has a hip belt).

## **2. Tent**

Bring a lightweight tarp instead of a tent. This works well if you practice pitching a tarp and there aren't too many mosquitoes.

If your rain fly weighs more than 10 ounces, consider getting a lighter tarp to pitch the tent under instead. You might save weight and have a "roof" over your entrance area. You also can keep the tent drier when setting up in

the rain, because you'll pitch the tarp first and then set up the tent under it.

Get a one-man screen tent and pitch it under a tarp. Mine weighs just 17 ounces if I use sticks or trekking poles for tent poles. Under my 16-ounce tarp that makes for a two-pound shelter.

If you are backpacking in a group, look at the tents you have available. Maybe the largest will fit you all and weigh less than several smaller ones. Maybe two 2-man tents will weigh less than one 4-man tent. If you divide that weight up fairly, sharing common items is a good way to reduce weight.

### 3. Tarp

The lightest ones that can keep the rain off you are around 7 or 8 ounces now.

To cut an ounce or two, use lighter strings, and leave one or two behind. I rarely need strings running out from all 12 grommets. The eight I bring can be untied and moved to where I need them.

A good lightweight nylon poncho (12 to 16 ounces) can double as a shelter for short trips in good weather. This saves the weight of a rain suit.

Of course, you can always leave the tarp behind and use an even lighter bivy sack.

### 4. Bivy Sack

The lightest waterproof and breathable bivies are around a pound. One, the Black Diamond Winter Bivy Sack, weighs just 9 ounces.

My own bivy sack weighs just four ounces. It is two extra-large garbage bags taped together. If you don't breath inside it, the condensation inside can be dried out the next day without too much trouble.

If there are enough of you in the group, it may mean less weight to carry a large tarp than multiple individual bivy sacks.

## 5. Ground Cloth

Tyvek can be purchased at anyplace that sells building supplies if you want to make your own lightweight ground cloth.

I have a 2-ounce ground cloth that is simply an extra-large garbage bag cut open. It is roughly 52 by 84 inches, and is good for a week of use if I am careful.

If you have a tent with a bottom, you can leave the ground cloth behind to save weight. The tent bottom will wear out faster, but that may be a fair price to carry less weight on every trip.

## 6. Sleeping Bag

Down is still the lightest fill for the insulating value provided. My Western Mountaineering bag weighs just 17 ounces (19 with the stuff sack). I have use it down to 25 degrees Fahrenheit comfortably (it is rated to 40 degrees). The Marmot Lithium 0 degree down bag weighs just 2 pounds, 11 ounces.

You can cut weight by carrying the sleeping bag in a plastic bag instead of the regular stuff sack. My sleeping bag fits into a bread bag, for example. This should save you about 2 ounces.

Wear your hat and all your clothes to bed and you can stay as warm with a lighter sleeping bag.

Pile dead leaves or grass under your tent and you can stay as warm with a lighter sleeping bag.

On summer nights, you can wear clothes to sleep and use just a sleeping bag liner instead of a sleeping bag. I have done this and slept comfortably on

cool nights with just a 5-ounce liner.

To really reduce weight, sleep in just a bivy sack, with all clothes on.

For a couple, one sleeping bag opened up and laid over you may be warmer than two separate sleeping bags, and save you several pounds.

## 7. Sleeping Bag Liner

Sleeping bag liners protect sleeping bags, but they are not good insulation for the weight. Baby your bag and leave the liner behind.

If you do use a liner, try a silk or light nylon one. There are several available that are under 10 ounces.

Make your own. I bought \$1-per-yard nylon in the discount bin at WalMart and made one that weighed just 5 ounces.

## 8. Sleeping Bag Pad

The lightest pads are the closed-cell foam pads - the typical blue ones.

Trim your closed-cell pad so it covers just all the pressure points, from your hips to your shoulders. Doing this took mine down from 12 ounces to 4, without much loss in actual insulating ability (I throw my pack under my feet at night). Two of these mini-pads stacked up will keep you more comfortable than one regular, and even then save you 4 ounces.

To eliminate the need for a pad, or make it possible to be more comfortable with a lighter one, pile leaves or dry grass under your tent or tarp. This natural "mattress" will insulate and cushion you from the ground.

## 9. Day Pack

Some people bring a day pack as an extra, for running up mountains or whatever. To get rid of this weight, get your total pack weight down to where you don't mind bringing it with you everywhere.

If just need something to carry a water bottle and rain jacket for quick summit-trips, make it a the lightest you can find. I found a nylon-mesh day pack that at WalMart that weighed just four ounces.

Skip the day pack and put a water bottle in one pocket of your jacket, and some snacks in the other.

If you are using a lightweight backpack (mine is 13 ounces, for example), you don't need a separate day pack for side trips. If you want to leave heavy items behind, just carry one or two plastic grocery bags and hang them in a tree with your things.

## 10. Pack Cover

If your backpack is sufficiently water proof, you don't need to bring a pack cover.

Keeping the contents of your backpack waterproof with several plastic bags will save as much as five ounces over using a cover over the outside of the pack.

A small garbage bag with holes for the backpack straps can work as an effective cover, for a weight of one ounce versus five or six for a traditional cover.

## 11. Hiking Boots and Shoes

The best way to reduce the weight of hiking boots is to stop using them. Running shoes or hiking shoes are sufficient for most people on most trails.

The tongue on most shoes is over-stuffed. Some people (Ray Jardine) just remove the tongue altogether. Alternately, you can also remove the padding inside it, but leave the material for some foot protection.

## 12. Rain Wear

There is no reason to buy a rain suit that weighs more than 12 ounces for the top and 8 for the bottom. There are plenty of options in this range now.

Frogg Toggs makes papery waterproof/breathable rain suits for golfers. Apart from golf shops, they can be found in some outdoor stores now. They weigh just 7 ounces for the top or the bottom. They are fragile, but I have used mine for six years in all conditions, all the way up to 20,600 feet.

If there won't be much rain, you can bring a small emergency rain poncho. These are sold in most sporting good/camping departments for a dollar or two and weigh just two ounces.

A garbage bag will also work as an emergency poncho, and will weigh an ounce or two.

A good lightweight nylon poncho (12 to 16 ounces) can double as a shelter for short trips in good weather.

## 13. Pants and Shorts

Good nylon-derivative hiking pants should weigh less than 12 ounces (9 ounces is common now).

Unlined nylon shorts weigh just 2 ounces. If you can't find any, you can cut the lining out of a light pair of nylon shorts. You don't need a lining if you

wear underwear.

Skip the convertible pants. Bringing both lightweight nylon-based pants and unlined nylon shorts will give you the same flexibility for less weight and trouble.

Nice silk boxers can double as shorts in the wilderness, eliminating the need for the extra weight of shorts.

## 14. Sweaters

Some wool sweaters are as light as 9 ounces, but for the most warmth for the weight, the newest materials are probably best.

I used a homemade insulating vest for years, even though I made it as a disposable one. It was simply poly batting, the kind that comes in a roll for making quilts or pillows. Cut a piece about 18 inches by 48 inches, then cut out a hole for your head. It is worn like a tunic, under a jacket or other layer. Lots of insulation for 4 ounces.

## 15. Bathing Suit

Why bring one? Use your shorts or boxers to swim in.

If you will be in an isolated area, just swim naked.

Swimming with clothes on can be a good way to wash them, as long as there is time and heat left in the day to dry them out.

## 16. Coats and Jackets

Down is still the lightest fill for the insulating value. Even if you can't risk a down sleeping bag because of a wet climate, you can usually keep a down coat dry if you have a good rain jacket.

The newest fibers are next best for warmth-to-weight ratio, and they keep you warm even if they get wet. Avoid the extra pockets and frills that add weight.

Why bring two jackets? If you have a good waterproof *and* breathable rain coat, use that as your only outer layer.

## 17. Hats

Don't bring the sun hat out of habit if you will have little sun or heat. If you have a full head of hair and sunglasses, you might not need the hat even if it is sunny.

Polypropylene and other synthetic materials make for light and warm hats that keep you warm even when they are damp. A typical balaclava or ski mask should weigh just 2 or 3 ounces.

An old polypropylene thermal shirt can be used to make a one-ounce hat. Cut a foot of the sleeve off, pull it over your head and mark where the holes for eyes and mouth need to be. Cut these out and you have a ski mask. You can sew the top shut if you want.

If you have a hood on your jacket or rain jacket, you can get by with a lighter hat. Blocking the wind makes a big difference.

## 18. Gloves and Mittens

The lightest polypropylene gloves I have seen are my one-ounce pair (I don't recall where I bought them). A cheap alternative that weighs two ounces is the common work gloves sold at hardware stores - as long as you

can find the ones that are polyester (cotton is awful when wet).

Mitten shells worn over light gloves is a lightweight alternative to bulky mittens.

Hand warmers made from socks with holes cut in them for the fingers weigh about two ounces per pair, depending on the socks used. They cover the hand and wrist, which may be enough in cool weather.

If the morning are cold, but the weather is otherwise nice, you can skip the gloves and just warm your hands in your jacket pockets.

## 19. Shirts

There are many light shirts in new materials that weigh less than 10 ounces now.

50/50 cotton/polyester blend t-shirts weigh about five or six ounces and dry much faster than all-cotton t-shirts. They are also cheap and comfortable

Silk button shirts, if you can find them (try thrift stores) weigh around 3 or 4 ounces, even for the long-sleeved ones. They are comfortable, and dry fast.

## 20. Thermal Underwear

The newest materials are usually the lightest for the warmth. There are nice long-johns that will keep you warm even when damp that weigh less than 8 ounces.

With underwear, pants, and long underwear, It is often uncomfortably crowded around your crotch. Try cutting apart an old pair of long underwear so you can use just the legs. They need to cling sufficiently to stay up, of course. This may reduce the weight by a couple ounces and make you more comfortable.

## 21. Socks

If you make the switch from hiking boots to shoes, you may find that you can use light nylon dress socks as well. I buy mine at Kmart or WalMart and they weigh just an ounce per pair or less. Since I started using them, I have had no blisters at all. They dry fast too.

No hiking socks need to be over four ounces per pair unless you will be hiking in very cold weather. I regularly hike in running shoes through snow with my one-ounce nylon socks and just replace them with dry ones as needed. I have a three-ounce wool pair for sleeping.

## 22. Underwear

Bikini briefs are the lightest, but not the most comfortable underwear.

Silk boxers weigh about 3 ounces per pair and are very comfortable. They can double as shorts (Who will complain out there?), and can be easily rinsed out and dried.

## 23. Sunglasses

Sunglasses shouldn't have to weigh over an ounce.

Skip the case and just tuck them between clothes in your pack.

## 24. Water

You can carry less water if you know an area well, or learn beforehand where you will be able to refill your water bottles. In some areas water is so frequent that there is no need to carry more than a pint of water with you at any time.

Start a trip fully hydrated, and you can carry a little less water to start with.

If you are hiking in a hot desert, you may have real problems reducing the weight of that water on your back. You may have no choice but to plan your route strictly according to where you can find water.

## 25. Water Containers

Plastic pop bottles are the lightest, strongest, most reliable water containers you can use.

For carrying large quantities of water, you can use the plastic bladder from boxed wine. They will hold about six quarts of water, and weigh just 3 ounces. I have inflated these and jumped on them without breaking them, so they are strong as well.

Leave the fancy "hydration systems" home. The bite valves break and get jammed, the tubes grow bacteria, and the bladders leak from punctures. And they weigh more! Is it really that much trouble to take the top off a water bottle?

## 26. Water Purification

The lightest solution could be to boil all water. At least this would be true if you are bringing a pan anyhow, and are using a fire so you don't have to carry extra fuel. Of course, this is very inconvenient.

The next lightest solution is to use water purification chemicals, whether in the form of liquids or iodine tablets.

If you do use water filters, compare weights carefully. Keep in mind that those with large filters will be carrying as much as several ounces of water weight as soon as they are used once.

If you are backpacking in a group, why bring multiple water filters? Bring one, with a few iodine tablets as a back-up plan.

## 27. Food

The key to reducing the weight of the food you bring is to pack high-calorie foods. That means foods that have the most calories for their weight, such as mixed nuts, corn chips, and olive oil.

Another way to reduce weight is to learn to identify a few edible wild plants that are common where you'll be backpacking. I have eaten whole meals in berry patches, and I often carry less food when I know the season is right.

A more extreme way to reduce the weight of the food you bring is to reduce the amount needed by carbo-loading. This is a technique athletes pioneered a couple decades ago. The idea is to avoid all carbohydrates for several days, then pig out on pasta and other carbs for a day or two before leaving on your trip. In response to the carb-fast, your body (the liver) will store as much as 4,000 calories of extra carbs, ready for use.

## 28. Stoves and Stove Fuel

The most obvious way to reduce the weight of a backpacking stove is to not bring one. This may be a problem for you or not. Personally, I rarely cook on a backpacking trip. There are many tasty foods that don't need cooking. This saves not just the weight of the stove, but also the fuel and the pot.

The other way to save weight on a stove is to cook over a fire instead. This

may not be acceptable in some areas. Even if it is, keep the fire small not only to reduce impact, but because it is easier to cook over a small fire.

Of course, if you do bring a stove, there are some that are lighter. The lightest are the alcohol stoves. Some are as light as one-ounce. And unlike with the stoves that take prepackaged fuel canisters, with an alcohol stove you can bring exactly how much fuel you need, and in any lightweight plastic bottle.

Of course, if you are backpacking in a group, you should only need one stove for all of you, which cuts the weight-per-person down.

## 29. Pots and Pans

It may seem that the titanium camping stoves would be lightest, since for the strength, titanium is so much lighter than other metals. However, they always over-build these things. Since I have never seen a pan fall apart while backpacking, I am content with my aluminum pan for WalMart, with the handle removed. At 2 ounces, it is half the weight of a lightweight titanium pan.

Plan meals that can be cooked in one pan and you won't have to carry two. Yes, you can fry things (carefully) in any pot.

For a group, if you plan meals together, you can leave extra pans home and get by with one larger one.

Of course, the lightest option is again to avoid foods that need cooking. Then you can leave the pots and pans home.

## 30. Dishes, Cups Spoons and Forks

Plates? Who needs the weight. All foods can be served in a small plastic bowl, and a used butter container makes a light one.

Cups? Why not just drink from a water bottle or your bowl?

Forks? Almost everything can be comfortably eaten with a spoon.

Bowls? If you are alone, why not just eat out of the pot?

Of course, if you bring foods that don't need preparation, you might be able to leave all these things behind and save the weight of a stove, fuel, pot, bowl, plate, cup, spoon, and fork.

## 31. Knives

It is unlikely that you will need a large knife on a backpacking trip. My little pocket knife weighs less than an ounce and has a two-inch blade. I have used it to cut two-inch-thick saplings down (to make a walking stick), so it is more than strong enough for normal use.

What about multi-tools? I haven't ever found that I needed one, but what do you actually use on it? A small pocket knife and a couple other small tools that you actually use may weigh less combined than most multi-tools that people carry.

## 32. Bear Containers For Food

The canisters are heavy compared to an Ursack (registered trademark) bag. Mine weighs six ounces.

A lighter option is to just use any bag for the food and properly hang it each night. I have found that the easiest and lightest solution is to use a plastic grocery bag. I use my walking stick (or any stick) to lift it up by the handles and hang it on a branch four feet from a tree trunk and ten feet high. Three grocery bags weigh an ounce, by the way.

The lightest solution is to bring nothing. If there are no bears in the area, I would rather have the food in the tent with me. Most other animals are more

likely to get your food if it is out hanging in a tree.

## 33. Trekking Poles and Walking Sticks

You can leave the trekking poles home if you don't really need them. They actually make you work harder, which is okay if they save your knees on those hills. On a level hike, though, there may be no advantage to bringing them.

If you do use trekking poles, try to find ones that weigh 10 ounces or less each, which is getting easier all the time. Some carbon-fiber poles are as light as 4 ounces each now.

Another option is bringing just one pole. I find that I like having one hand free.

You can cut a dead sapling to size when the need for a walking stick arises (like when you come to the steep section of the trail). This can be left behind for the next user when you no longer need it, so you won't have to carry the weight the entire time.

A piece of bamboo from a garden supply store can be cut to size to make a strong and light (6 to 10 ounce) walking stick.

## 34. Lights, Flashlights and Headlamps

A good LED headlamp shouldn't have to weigh over 3 ounces with batteries. The other advantage of these is that they run for 50 hours or more on a battery, so you don't have to carry extra batteries.

For general use, if you don't plan to travel at night, a small key chain LED light is ideal. Mine weighs about a half-ounce, and is sufficient for in the tent. I have even hiked by its light at night.

One way to reduce the need for a flashlight, or at least a powerful (heavier)

one, is to plan backpacking trips around the full moon. I have hiked for hours by moonlight on some trips. Some nights it has even been bright enough to read by moonlight.

## 35. First Aid Kit

While you shouldn't ever leave the first aid kit behind, there are parts of it you may not need on a given trip. You may not need splinting materials if you'll be on a well traveled trail where help is available. You won't need two weeks worth of antibiotics for an overnight trip. Look it over and take out what you won't need. This is a good time to replace things too, like dried-out old anti-bacterial wipes.

If you are backpacking with a group, you may be able to leave your first aid kit behind. Just be sure that someone else in the group has a good kit, and bring anything you may specifically need, including any prescription medicines.

## 36. Toilet Paper

I have found that squares cut from paper towels work better and for less weight than toilet paper.

You could try not bringing toilet paper. Natural alternatives include snow and smooth rocks. The best natural toilet paper may be the leaves of mullein plants, also known as "lumberjack's toilet paper."

## 37. Towel

If you sweep the water off your body with your hands after bathing, you

should be able to dry yourself with just a wash cloth or small hand towel.

Why bring a towel? If you use your t-shirt to dry yourself, it will dry within an hour, either while you wear it or hanging from your pack.

## 38. Combs and Brushes

A small plastic comb that fits in your pocket will weigh an ounce and work fine. Leave the brush home.

Do you need to comb your hair? On a short trip, no harm will come from just running your fingers through your hair to straighten it. Leave the comb home.

## 39. Toothbrush and Toothpaste

You can save a little weight by cutting off half of the handle of your toothbrush. It will fit in the pack better this way too.

You can also leave the toothbrush behind and use a chewed twig to brush your teeth. Dogwood works well for this.

Toothpaste can be put into a small plastic bag - just enough for the trip.

You can also use baking soda to brush your teeth. It may save you weight, but it is also less messy to carry, and won't attract animals with its odor, like toothpaste can.

## 40. Deodorant

Get a small sample size.

Take the deodorant out of its case. The plastic it is on can be held to use it.

Wash well before you go and skip the deodorant for short trips. This works best if you are backpacking alone.

## 41. Soap

Save a small hotel-soap for backpacking.

Don't bring soap. Washing can be done without it, and you can bring a little bit of hand-sanitizer for your hands.

It is better to wash clothes without detergents when you are in the wilderness. Just rinse them out several times.

## 42. Sun Block

Don't carry a container from the store. Put what you need into a film canister or a small plastic bag that can be zipped close.

Don't bring any if the risk of a burn is low, and you will be mostly covered in clothes the entire time.

Apply sun block when you leave if it is just an overnight trip, and you may not need to bring more.

## 43. Insect Repellent

Don't bring cans or heavier containers. DEET, the best active ingredient, is found in many brands that come in small plastic bottles.

Try a few natural repellents instead, like wild onions, cedar, and fleabane.

Take a head net and wear a nylon jacket if it isn't too hot. You may not need more than this. A typical mosquito head net weighs an ounce.

Just don't bring it and don't worry about it. If it is after the first couple frosts, or if the area just doesn't have many bugs, you may not need anything.

## 44. Waste Trowel

If you are in a group, you can use one trowel for burying human waste, instead of each carrying your own. Just be sure that everyone knows it is only to touch the dirt.

Don't bring one. Just use a stick or flat rock to scrape a hole out.

## 45. Whistle

The plainest lightweight ones (usually orange) weigh less than an ounce.

You don't need a whistle if you can whistle loudly by yourself.

## 46. Duct Tape

Use less and you can carry less. Find thin-width rolls, or cut it in half when you don't need wide strips.

Don't ever carry a whole roll of duct tape, or even half of one. Wrap strips what you need onto something else that is in your pack, like around a roll of lip balm, or around a trekking pole, just beneath the handle.

## 47. Fishing Gear

The obvious way to reduce the weight here is to not bring fishing gear. It may be better to make your fishing and backpacking trips separate.

Another alternative is to bring a few lengths of line, and some hooks and sinkers, but no pole or reel. You can cast out far enough in most wilderness lakes and streams just using a stick.

## 48. Pillow

A light piece of open-cell foam, trimmed as small as you can comfortably use, will work as a decent pillow, especially if used on top of a sweater or other clothing. I had one that weighed just an ounce, and was very comfortable. If you can't find one, you may be able to cut open a small throw-pillow to get a piece of foam.

A small bag sewn of soft nylon will weigh an ounce or less. This can be stuffed with extra clothing at night to make a pillow. Avoid the stinky socks.

If you use a plastic bladder from boxed wine to carry water, it can also be inflated with air and used as a pillow. Its best if you put inside a shirt or sweater for comfort.

Place your shoes in opposite directions so they cradle your head, and put any extra clothing on top of these. This keeps your shoes warm too, and saves you the weight of anything extra for a pillow.

## 49. Reading Material

Buy small, lightweight paperback books for backpacking. You'll rarely get through a large novel on a backpacking trip anyhow.

Buy your books cheap at thrift stores and rummage sales, so you don't mind burning the pages you have read to start the night's fire. This will make your load a bit lighter as you go.

Tear chapters out and pass them along after finishing them, if you are backpacking in a group. This makes one book suffice for several people.

## 50. Camera

The disposable cameras are light, cheap, and work well enough for most backpackers.

Some digital cameras are very light now.

If you have a camera on the phone you are bringing, you are all set.

Just skip the camera. Not all trips are about the photos.

## 51. Maps

You can trim the edges off of maps, or cut away parts you are sure you won't need. This will save an ounce if you are lucky.

On long-trail treks you may want to have maps for the next sections at resupply points, rather than carrying a pound of maps for the whole route.

Many topographical county map books can be found in public libraries.

Photocopy the page you need, and the blank side can be used for writing your journal.

## 52. Watch

Leave it. No point in carrying the weight and risking losing an expensive watch in the wilderness if the others in your group have watches on.

Lightweight watches with plastic casing and velcro bands are the toughest and lightest watches for backpacking. Most are also waterproof.

## 53. Compass

Leave it. One is enough for a group, especially if someone else also has a GPS unit.

Small plastic compasses are the lightest option.

## 54. GPS

Compare weights carefully, and include the weight of the instruction manual, if you can't get by without it (I can't).

Leave it. If you know the area, or if you are competent with a compass and the map you have, there may not be any benefit to bringing a GPS.

## 55. Cell Phone

Leave it behind. If there is one in the group for emergencies, that should be enough, as long as the battery is charged.

Bring the lightest one. To keep the overall weight down for the group, bring whichever phone among you is lightest.

## 56. Games and Entertainment

A white handkerchief can be made into a chess or checkers board with a permanent marker. A set of plastic pieces from a cheap store will add another 2 ounces.

A frisbee may be a light option for a fun thing to bring, since one will suffice for a large group. It can be used to pan for gold as well.

A deck of cards is a lightweight option that can be used for dozens of different games

Bring nothing. If you are in a group, learn a few games that don't require anything but imagination, like twenty questions, or a problem solving game.

## 57. Survival Kit

If you have a knife, matches, and a few other survival items in other parts of your backpack, you don't necessarily need a separate survival kit.

Modify a kit you bought. You can buy a survival kit, or a combination first aid and survival kit that is light to begin with. Then you can remove items that aren't needed. You don't need a snake-bite kit in many northern areas, for example, and breaking sticks is more efficient than using the wire saws found in some kits.

You can be safer with less if you learn more. As you learn new survival techniques, you can eliminate some items in your kit. If you learn tricks for building fast shelters and staying warm, for example, you may not need an emergency blanket in addition to the tarp or tent you already carry.

## 58. Money

Leave coins behind before hitting the trail. The weight savings may not mean much, but they are going to fall out of your pockets and annoy you with their noise anyhow.

Leave that large wad of bills and your wallet locked safely in the car. If you are coming out at a different location than you start at, carry just a few dollars, your identification, and a credit card.

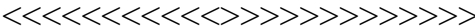
## 59. Pens, Pencils and Paper

Cut that pencil down to size. You'll never use up the lead on one trip.

Take a cheap plastic pen, pop the top plug off, cut the pen and the ink tube in half, and replace the plug in the new "top." A short pen like this can be carried more easily without stabbing you.

Don't bring a large notebook if you won't use it. In fact, tear a small notebook in half if you don't need more than that.

If you are using photocopied maps or have other papers with you, you can use the blank sides for note-taking and journal writing, and not bring anything extra for this.



# Some Basic Ways To Reduce Weight

## 1. Don't Bring It

Look at every item on your packing list and decide if it is really necessary. Do you need it for safety? Was it used last time you brought it? What is the worst that will happen if you don't bring it?

## 2. Bring A Lighter Version

Can you buy a lighter version, or make one? Do you have something lighter already that you can use (like a garbage bag instead of a pack cover)?

## 3. Share The Weight

If three of you will be together during all of a trip, you only need one full first aid kit, one stove, and possibly one tent. What duplicate items can you eliminate?

## 4. Plan More Carefully

This is a matter of all three of the above. With careful planning you can leave things behind (You don't need a stove if you don't bring food that needs cooking). You can bring lighter versions (Check the weather forecast - if rain is unlikely, you might just bring a garbage bag as an emergency raincoat). You can share items more (only one cell phone is really necessary if you give the number to those who need it).

## 5. Bring Multiple-Purpose Items

A 16-ounce rain poncho that doubles as a tarp can save you the weight of the tarp. A pot can be your cup as well. A trekking pole can be a tent pole with some models. Your sleeping bag stuff sack can be stuffed with clothes to be used as a pillow. Anytime you can double use an item for another purpose, there is a chance you can reduce your pack weight.

## 6. Learn More

The more you know about how to stay warm, how to find food in the wilderness, or how to read the sky to predict weather, the safer it becomes for you to carry a lighter sleeping bag, a tarp instead of a tent, or less gear in other areas.



# **How To Reduce The Weight Of Everything**

Supplement to:

**Ultralight Backpacking Secrets**

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(The End)