Lightening Your Load

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Outline

• Introduction
• Steps to Lightening your Load
• The Big 3
• The Objections
• Questions

First Step
Potential Benefits of Lightening Your Load

• Less strain on body (shoulders, feet, etc.)
• More in tune with environment
• Able to go further into backcountry
• In better position to help others with load
• Less gear to keep track of
Lightening Your Load

- Know what your gear weighs
- Look for multiple use items
- Take less “stuff”
- Take lighter “stuff”
- Change your backpacking style
Lightening Your Load

Trading knowledge for weight

- Where you are traveling
- Who you are with
- Anticipated conditions
- Prior experience

Research trips
Lightening Your Load

Trading knowledge for weight
• Where you are traveling
• Who you are with
• Anticipated conditions
• Prior experience

Trading durability for weight
Know what your gear weighs

- Buy scale(s)

“The most important piece of equipment you need to lighten your pack load is a scale.”

Order a postage scale
Know what your gear weighs

- Weigh all your gear
- Create spreadsheet
- Sort by weight
- Observe and analyze
- Make changes

Create a spreadsheet gear list
Look for multiple-use items

- Cup
- Plate
- Bowl
- Pot
- Mug

Eat/drink out of a single cup
Look for multiple-use items

- Watch
- Timer
- Alarm
- Compass
- Altimeter
- Barometer
- Thermometer
Look for multiple-use items

- Bandanna
- Washcloth
- Towel
- Bandage
- Hat
- Handkerchief
- Prefilter for water
Look for multiple-use items

- Soap
- Shampoo
- Dishwashing
- Deodorant
- Toothpaste (1 drop!)
Look for multiple-use items

- Sleeping bag
- Insulating jacket
Take less “stuff”

- Take less items
- Take smaller quantities
Take less “stuff”

- Spoon only

“If I can’t eat it with a spoon, I’m not hungry enough.”

Take only a spoon on next trip
Take less “stuff”

- Smaller quantities
- Travel sizes
- Doctor’s samples
- Reuse small bottles

Get sunscreen samples from dermatologist
Take lighter “stuff”

- Durable nylon, or renewable bamboo, not metal
Take lighter “stuff”

- Flashlights
Take lighter “stuff”

- Rain gear
- Consider sustainability and cost
Take lighter “stuff”

- Running shoes instead of boots
- CAUTION – lighten your load *first!*
- Consider use of trekking poles
Take lighter “stuff”

- Plastic cup

Cut down a fast food plastic cup to create a lightweight backpacking cup.
Take lighter “stuff”

- Pepsi-can stove
- Fuel tablet stoves
Change your backpacking style

No breakfast or later breakfast

• Get a quick start
• Get warm fast
• Stop when sun is up
Change your backpacking style

Main break in the afternoon

- Dry gear in sun
- Cook near water
- Relax in warmth
Change your backpacking style

Hike until “camp”

- Dry camp
- Less smells for bears
- No extra clothes
The Big 3

- Pack
- Tent
- Sleeping System
Glen’s Piñata Theory of Pack Weight Reduction

“Make your first swing count.”

“Get some candy on the floor.”
Pack

- Average pack weighs over 6 lbs. *Empty*

- Many good options now exist for one to two pounds
Tent

- 4 to 6 lbs. is considered a lightweight tent
- Single-wall tents available under 1 lb.
Sleeping System

• Down vs. Synthetic
• Blanket vs. Bag
• Zipper vs. Half Zipper vs. No Zipper
• Fill on Bottom?
• Breathable vs. Vapor Barrier
Dollars per Ounce of Reduction

• $500 down bag to save 16 oz.  
  $31 per ounce saved

• $400 tarp tent to save 2 lbs.  
  $12 per ounce saved

• $200 pack to save 4 lbs.  
  $3 per ounce saved
Dollars per Ounce of Reduction

- $5,000 for laser surgery to save 2 oz. of contact lens solution…

  $2,500 per ounce saved
Bonus Topic…”The Big 2”

- Food
- Water
Food

- 100 calories per oz.
- 1.4 pounds per day

“If it doesn’t have at least 100 calories per ounce, it doesn’t go into my pack.”

Weigh your food before and after every trip
Water

- Research water sources beforehand
- “Supercharge” at source
- Consider chemical treatment instead of filtering
Water

- Chlorine dioxide
- Iodine
- Bleach

Try chemical water treatment instead of a filter on next trip
The Objections

- Comfort
- Safety
Comfort

- Depends on how you “do” backpacking…
- How far do you want to travel?
- How many hours a day do you want to walk?
Safety

Three general injury/sickness categories:

1) You are going to die no matter what you brought
2) You will live no matter what you brought, though you might be (very) uncomfortable
3) Something you brought will make the difference of you living or dying
Safety

Factors to consider:

• Number and experience of people in party
• Experience with route in same season
• Bailout points?
• Pack weight of participants
Safety

CAUTION!!

• Be smart
• Don’t reduce pack weight in excess of your compensating experience
Safety

Heavier packs:

- Increase strain on body parts
- Tired bodies stumble more easily
- Decrease range of party
- Limit ability to redistribute gear
Closing

- Questions
- What I brought to “share”