

# BOY SCOUT ULTRALIGHT BACKPACKING GUIDE

**Those who prepare for all the emergencies of life beforehand may equip themselves at the expense of joy. -- E. M. Forster**

## **Boy scout backpack weight requirement:**

Somewhere I have read 35lbs or 20% of bodyweight. (Does that mean we adults need a 40lbs pack?). Either number is unrealistic. Weight depends on a number of different parameters. (See some below: Decisions to make)

## **Ultralight backpacking – Definition:**

Ultralight backpacking is a way of thinking, an idea, a “backpacking philosophy”. It is about examining critically to see if you really need it or not and if yes, what is the lightest weight item you can find (or afford to buy).

## **Daily possible mileage (approximate):**

55 lbs pack = 10 miles

40 lbs pack = 15 miles

30 lbs pack = 20 miles

20 lbs pack = 25 miles

10 lbs pack = 30 miles

## **Another Layering Method:**

A person in the wilderness either MOVES or STANDS. If it moves, it generates heat, so the primary function of the clothes should be to remove perspiration, and protect from wind. If he or she stands, than heat is not generated, so a layer of insulation should be added on the outside.

If one moves then one needs:

Wicking polyester layer on skin to remove moisture

Wind Jacket to block wind and transfer moisture to outside

If one stands then one needs:

Wicking polyester layer on skin to remove moisture

Wind Jacket to transfer moisture

Insulated Jacket to block wind, keep warm and transfer moisture outside

(Note that the insulated jacket is on the OUTSIDE, so it can be easily put on/taken off.)

## **Decisions to make:**

Type of trip (season, chance of rain, chance of bugs, altitude, etc.)

Need or not (Do I **have** to have it? If yes, no metal!) Explain Pareto rule.

Weight savings benefit (Start with the heaviest items, pack, tent, sleeping gear)

Multiple uses (Can you use an items for multiple functions? Insulated jacket can also be used for sleeping.)

Cost vs. weight savings (Which is better, reduce weight by one ounce costing

\$100, or one pound costing \$10, so start with the heavy or cheap items)

(Tips for adults: the cheapest way to go ultralight backpacking is to lose weight.)

**Priorities:**

Traditional thinking (Better to have it, even if I will not need it.)

1. How much does it cost?
2. Is it good looking?
3. Does it do the job?

Ultralight thinking (If I need it and I don't have it, then I don't need it.)

1. Do I need it?
2. What is the lightest version that does the job?
3. How much does it cost?

**WARNING:**

**Always carry emergency items. Don't save weight by leaving out those.**

**(Fire starter kit: lighter, birthday candle, dry tinder, a small knife, a set of cold weather, storm proof clothing: insulating jacket, rain jacket, mittens, warm hat)**

**Shopping tips:**

Never buy an item without knowing what it should weigh (see targets below) and what it does weigh (listed from catalog or actual in store).

If you buy in store, ask for a store scale or take your own kitchen scale with an aluminum turkey roasting pan to measure the true weight of the item. (see demo at the meeting)

Tent: use tarp

Sleeping bag: use single layer (see GoLite)

Shell jacket: uncoated nylon, full length front opening zipper, 3 oz

Insulated Jacket: full length front opening zipper w. Polarguard 3D

Rain: use umbrella, see GoLite

Shoes: light running shoes (need 1-2 sizes larger), 12 oz

Flashlight: LED

Water filtration system: in the bottle

**Target weights:**

**TOTAL GEAR WEIGHT TARGET: <10 lbs for weekend, <15 lbs for a week  
(food excluded)**

**PACK <1-2 lbs**

**SHELTER <1-2 lbs**

**SLEEPING GEAR <1-4 lbs**

**FOOTWEAR <1-2 lbs**

**CLOTHES <3-4 lbs**

**MISC. <1-2 lbs**

**(FOOD <1-2 lbs/day)**

**All you have to know: it is possible.**

## The contents of an actual 9.23 lbs backpacking pack used on the Pacific Crest Trail

Pack	13.5 oz
Umbrella	9 oz
Mylar umbrella covering	0.8 oz
1 person silicone tarp	12 oz
Stakes, stowbag	2.6 oz
Ground sheet, space blanket	1.2 oz
Foam pad	4.8 oz
Camera, film	6.6 oz
Water scoop and through	0.3 oz
Sleeping quilt w. mosquito net	33 oz
Sleeping bag stowbag	1.8 oz
Stove, fuel, windscreen, stowbag	20.8 oz
Cook pot for one person	5 oz
Water bottle	1.6 oz
Hat, fleece	1.2 oz
Shell jacket, breathable nylon	6 oz
Mittens, fleece	1 oz
Shell pants, breathable nylon	3 oz
Socks, 2 pair thin nylon	1.2 oz
Shower booties, coated nylon	0.8 oz
Face towel, cotton, 12" square	1.8 oz
Clothing stowbag (garbage bag)	1.3 oz
Ditty bag #1, nylon mesh	0.2 oz
Windex to clean eyeglass/camera	0.4 oz
Half cotton bandana to clean above	0.1 oz
Compass	0.8 oz
Spoon, lexan	0.2 oz
Eyeglass bag, fleece	0.2 oz
Flashlight with 1 AAA battery, spare bulb	1 oz
Pocket knife	0.8 oz
Toothbrush	0.1 oz
Dental floss	0.1 oz
Hydrogen peroxide (antiseptic)	0.5 oz
Cord	0.5 oz
Ditty bag #2	0.6 oz
Medical kit: betadine, metronidazol,	2.7 oz
Diasorb, Amoxicillin, Campho-Phenine	
Antibiotic, zinc oxide, Mycelex (athlete foot)	
Aspirin, multi vitamin, 1 tsp salt	
Foot care bag	2 oz

Sewing kit: heavy thread, 3 safety pin, 3 needles	0.1 oz
Lighter	0.5 oz
Can opener	0.2 oz
Repellant	1 oz
Emergency fire starter: small lighter, stick matches, birthday candles in bag	0.9 oz
Spare AAA flashlight battery	0.5 oz
Valuables: traveler's check, credit card,	1 oz
Cash, driver's license, in plastic bag	
Toilet kit: toilet paper, Dr. Bronner's soap	2 oz
Journal pad, maps & pen	2 oz
 Total pack weight	 9.23 lbs

**Clothing worn that was not in the backpack**

Sun hat with wire rim	2 oz
Shirt, polyester	4 oz
Watch	1.5 oz
Shorts, spandex	4.3 oz
Socks, 2 pair thin nylon	1.2 oz
Shoes	22 oz

Total clothes weight: 2.19 lbs

**Resources, catalog, books, websites, video:**

<http://www.rayjardine.com/index.shtml>

Beyond Backpacking: Ray Jardines Guide to Lightweight Hiking

<http://www.golite.com/>

Lynne Whelden: Lightweight Backpacking Secrets Revealed (2 hrs video)

<http://members.tripod.com/halbertri/noteson.htm>

<http://www.monmouth.com/~mconnick/>

<http://www.patagonia.com/store/mens/>

[http://www.marmot.com/technology/tech\\_anatomy\\_moist.html](http://www.marmot.com/technology/tech_anatomy_moist.html)

<http://www.monmouth.com/~johno/>

<http://www.backpacker.com/subs/pop/0,4489,,00.html>

<http://onestep4me.tripod.com/>

<http://www.ultralightbackpacker.com/snowcamping.html>

<http://www.backpacking.net/>

<http://www.cyberturf.com/tornado/>

<http://www.ultralight-hiking.com/>

<http://www.speakeasy.org/~krk/travels/backpacking/backpackingFrames.html>

<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/rwgross/ultralig.htm>

<http://minibulldesign.com>

<http://zenstoves.com>

Troop 10 backpacking resources

<http://troop10.scouter.net/backpacking/index.html>