



BOY SCOUT TROOP 18 GATEWAY - LEHIGH

Internal vs External Frame

Internal Frame



Advantages

- Comfort. Pack fits more comfortably to the back.
- Balance. Because the pack hugs your body, the pack does not bounce around, throwing you off balance.
- Maneuverability. The pack is not as wide as an external, so tight spots (hiking through rocks or trees) easier.

Disadvantages

- Internals are hotter than externals because they are closer to the back.
- Internals are harder to pack and organize (most internals only have two compartments).



When packing an internal frame pack, the most important thing to remember is order of importance. You need to put gear that you will need as soon as you get to camp on top and move down progressively. Try to keep heavy gear (tent) close to your back. Put your sleeping bag in the bottom compartment. If you have a sleeping pad that is too big to fit inside, you can put it through the compression straps that are located on the side. You can also put your tent poles through these straps. It is a good idea to categorize gear and put it in separate bags (such as all your cloths in one bag, or all food in one bag, all cleaning stuff in one bag, etc.). This way, when you get to camp you can pull all your gear out but still have it organized. While loading up your bag, keep in mind that each side needs to be somewhat equal in weight in order to stay balanced. It is always a great idea to keep everything in plastic zip-lock bags in case of rain.

Internal Frame



Advantages

- Easy to pack. Separate compartments make it easier to organize gear and locate random items.
- Easier to distribute weight. Heavier are spread more evenly around a person's center of gravity.
- Stay cooler. The pack is set off of the person's back, allowing air to circulate between your back and the pack.

Disadvantages

- More cumbersome due to its bulkiness. This is important on less traveled trails, rough terrain and tight spots.
- Because the pack sits away from the back, it is prone to bounce around, which could throw you off balance.



When packing an external frame pack, balance is the key word. In order to obtain good balance you need to distribute your gear properly. Strap your sleeping bag and pad to the frame at the bottom of the pack. This help keep your back straight so that you're head is not forced down where all you see is the ground. Put the tent on top of your pack to act as a counter weight to your sleeping bag. To share the load, it is a good idea to split up the tent parts among those that are sleeping in the tent. Put your cloths in the bottom compartment above your sleeping bag. This makes your cloths easy to access and they are less likely to get wet. Put crew gear and food in the main compartment. This way, the crew gear remains separate from your personal stuff, and puts the heaviest part of your load in the middle of the pack and against your back. Keep small items and personal supplies in the smaller outside pockets. Put your water bottles on the outside for easy access. Place your pack cover and rain gear on top of the pack so that you can get to it quickly. It is a good idea to put everything in your bag inside another bag (plastic zip-lock bags are ideal to keep stuff dry).