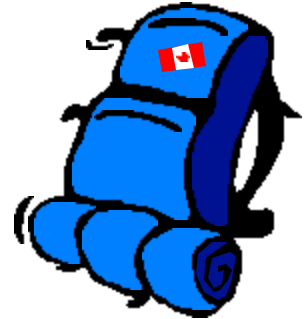


## The Right Stuff - Day Packs & What to Put In Them

by

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Each of us develops a personal attachment to a pack. In time it becomes a good friend, never complaining and is with us through many adventures. If you are looking to buy a first pack or replace an old friend, here are some things to think about.

### Traditional pack versus Fanny pack

For day use you have two choices, the traditional pack with shoulder straps or the waist pack, sometimes called a fanny pack. Each has its own merits, the biggest advantage of the traditional pack is size, you can get a lot more in it. However, if you have shoulder or back problems or want a cooler back, especially in summer, you should at least consider a fanny pack. The newer fanny packs are larger and you will need all the room you can get in this style, make sure it has external straps so you can lash extra stuff to the outside. The key to comfort in packs for me is what holds the weight of all my stuff. Both packs should have a good, substantial waist belt, these are not easy to find, however both my Kelty packs (see below) feature a great belt and I have little weight on my shoulders, the weight being put on my hips which can handle it better than my shoulders. If the pack you are looking at doesn't have a good waist belt at least look for well padded straps. Many of the better packs now come with a sternum strap which also helps.



“Summit” Fanny Pack  
by Kelty Pack Inc.



“Stride” Fanny Pack -  
Kelty Pack Inc



“Redwing” Traditional  
Day Pack - Kelty  
Pack Inc.

[The packs, and their specifications, shown above may be viewed if you browse the Kelty Pack Inc. website at <http://www.kelty.com> . These are just a few of many packs on the market.]

### Women’s Pack Frames

Women's frames are generally smaller and now some manufactures are making more comfortable packs for women; they are usually narrower.

## Packs and Rain

One thing that all packs have in common is that they are not waterproof. Again you have two choices. A pack cover which is waterproof (and hard to find for day packs) or do what the English do, put everything into a substantial plastic bag that can be sealed with a twist tie, the easier solution.

## Water Bottle Access

You will want your water handy and not have to rummage through your pack every time you want a drink, consider a pack with external pockets for your water bottle(s) or get a holder for your waist belt.

## What to Put In The Pack

Do what professional pilots do, use a check list and it should live in you pack. Here is mine.

- ' Water, 2 litres (the Nalgene bottles don't leak)
- ' Lunch and snacks
- ' Raincoat
- ' Rain pants
- ' Hat
- ' Extra layer(s)
- ' Situpon
- ' First aid kit
- ' Camera in its own padded case that fastens to my hip belt
- ' Sunscreen
- ' Insect repellent
- ' Trail guide (in a waterproof sleeve)
- ' Compass
- ' Cell phone
- ' Pen and paper (in with the trail guide)
- ' Space blanket (small metallic plastic sheet for emergency shelter)
- ' Whistle
- ' Swiss Army knife (one that has scissors for cutting moleskin)
- ' Flashlight (Fall and Winter)
- ' Wallet and car keys in a zip lock bag
- ' Spare socks
- ' someone added black licorice to my list and that has been a great idea.



Enjoy the trails safely,

Greg

Note:

This article first appeared in the 1999 Winter Newsletter of the [Grand Valley Trails Association](#). It was reformatted for this article and for the GVTA website. Greg is a very experienced hike leader and instructor. He has been a longtime member of the [Bruce Trail Association](#) and serves on the GVTA Board of Directors. In his spare time Greg teaches hiking and map and compass courses through the Adult and Continuing Education division of the Waterloo Region District School Board.