

5 Top Tips for Running with a Rucksack

“You can be surprisingly comfortable with surprisingly little. And it’s liberating to have everything you need right on your back. The goal in fastpacking is to carry a load with which you are able to run the flats and downhills, and power hike the uphills. The lighter your pack, the more fun you’ll have – even if you have to leave the espresso maker at home.”

Michael Bengé, Trail Runner magazine, June 2008

1. **Remember the old adage that no matter what size rucksack you bring, you’ll end up filling it.** Look for a rucksack volume of about 25 to 30 litres with a padded waist belt and chest strap. Avoid traditional multi-day rucksacks with heavy frames and too many bells and whistles.
2. Pack items that you won’t need until the end of the day at the bottom of your rucksack, leaving space at the top for those essentials that you’ll need easy access to. Don’t worry about the advice to pack heavy items at the top...bottom...front...back – you’ll be carrying so little it won’t really matter.
3. If your rucksack has any form of compression use it. This will prevent the rucksack rocking from left to right and will help stop the rucksack bouncing on those exhilarating descents.
4. To avoid uncomfortable rubbing try to get your rucksack stable before fastening the waist belt and chest strap, and avoid over tightening the straps. Also wear clothing that doesn’t “ruck up” between your back and the rucksack.
5. Apart from trekking poles avoid attaching items to the outside of your rucksack. Most modern running / adventure-racing-type rucksacks are usually equipped with mesh pockets to stash drinks and snacks, or even better have built in hydration bladders.