

How to Pack a Rucksack

How are you keeping things dry?

Before you pack your rucksack, you need to know how you're keeping things dry.

In a nutshell though, the most effective way of waterproofing on DofE is by using a combination of several dry bags, resealable plastic bags [like these ones](#), or bin bags to create an organised and effective waterproof system. This means you'll have one dry bag/bin bag for your sleeping bag, a resealable plastic bag for your food, another for your wash kit and so on. Almost everything needs to be kept dry, so don't hold back. If you wouldn't want to take it out of your rucksack wet, then it probably needs to be waterproofed.

Ok, now let's get packing!



Bottom section

Work your way from the bottom up. The first things that go into your pack should be the last that need to come out — first in, last out. This means that at the bottom of your pack you want the items that won't be used until you're setting up camp for the evening. This includes your sleeping bag, sleeping mat (if it's stored internally, many sleeping mats are roll-up foam mats stored on the outside of a rucksack), and tents. Of course, make sure everything that needs waterproofing is in an appropriate liner.

Middle section

This is where you should be packing more frequently used items that will not be needed urgently, as well as other rarely used items that you'd rather weren't squashed as much by the weight of all the things on top of it. This generally is where you'll pack spare clothes (excluding waterproofs), food for the following days, crockery and some group equipment (like washing up liquid and matches), as well as any additional heavy items, such as cooking equipment. To increase the stability of your rucksack whilst hiking, try to keep heavy items as close to your back as possible.

Top section and side pockets

In the top section and quick access pockets you'll pack the things you use most frequently and the things you need most quick access to. This includes medical kits, waterproof jacket and trousers, your wash kit, miscellaneous items such as a headlamp and electronics, as well as snacks for the day and your water (note that if you use a bladder for water this will likely have a dedicated pocket).