



## Adjust your Backpack's Weight in 4 Steps!

Guidelines used by backpacking experts say that an individual in good health should be able to carry about 20% of their body weight. For example, a 40 lb. pack (18 kg.) for a 200-pound person. Your ideal backpack weight will depend on a number of factors including fitness level, upper body strength, age, build type, bone and muscle density, and the health of your joints (knees in particular).

So, in order to keep your pack at a weight that is both comfortable and safe, the first step is to determine what that weight is, and we'll do that by figuring out the 20% weight and that will be our baseline.

Step 1: Weigh your current bug out bag/emergency kit with all its contents. (A luggage scale or kitchen scale is handy for these steps.) Make a note of that weight here: \_\_\_\_\_

Step 2: Next, you'll determine what the 20% amount is and see if that is a comfortable weight for you or not. With a calculator, enter your body weight and then divide by .2. This will give you the number of pounds that equal 20% of your weight. Write down that amount: \_\_\_\_\_

Step 3: Put your backpack on and wear it around the house or go on a walk of at least 15 minutes. You'll soon know if the weight is going to cause you pain.

Is this a comfortable weight for you? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

Step 4: Now it's time to adjust that weight. If your pack is too heavy, then ask yourself these questions about every item:

- Are there multi-purpose pieces of gear that can replace 2 or more items you have? A half-bar of Dr. Bronner's soap, for example, can be used to wash clothes, hair, body, and eating utensils.
- Can you find smaller or lighter-weight versions of anything?
- Is each item of vital importance? What is nice to have but not necessary?

Once you've adjusted your pack's weight, put it back on and assess your comfort level. Take another walk or wear it around the house for a while.

If it seems you've arrived at a weight that is comfortable for you, then weigh your pack again and jot down that weight here: \_\_\_\_\_

If your pack now carries everything you want to have with you in an emergency, then great! You're good to go.

If you'd like to continue building up your endurance and strength, then continue with a walking or other exercise plan and 30 days from now, go back through steps 1 through 4 and adjust the backpack's weight accordingly.

( ) I have done the Day 5 Action Step.

Now, take a pic of your bag, your pack, your contents, and post them in the DO IT NOW 2020 Facebook group!

