

Backpack Types

Every Scout needs a Hiking Backpack with the following criterion:

1. Must have a Frame (either external or internal)
2. Must have a Waist Belt
3. Must fit the scout

Frames - There are two types of frames: External and Internal. External frames have a frame to which has straps and belts to attach to the hiker on one side, and the bag on the other. Internal frames are inside of the pack and are typically made of a flag, slightly flexible material. There are advantages to both which are:

Internal Frame

- Best on rugged terrain with lighter weights. More freedom of movement.
- Distributes weight lower - Better for lighter weights on more rugged terrain. More freedom of movement, but tend to need to lean forward.
- One large main compartment and less outside compartments - Harder to organize.
- Bag sits flat on hikers back making it hotter/sweatier.
- Outside of bag more streamline for hiking through overbrush.

External Frame

- External Frame - Best on flatter terrain with heavier weights. Less freedom of movement. Cooler on the back.
- Distributes weight higher - Better for heavy weights on flatter terrain. Less freedom of movement but don't need to lean forward.
- Divided main compartment and many outside compartments for better Organization
- Bag is separated from hiker making it cooler / less sweaty.
- Outside of bag allows for hooking on extra things to the frame.

Articles on Internal vs External Frames:

- [Boys Life Scout Magazine](#)
- [AMC Outdoors](#)

Since I mostly hike in Florida where it's hot and we have flat terrain, and tend to have a heavy pack, don't want to lean forward, and I like to strap things on.... I prefer the External Frame pack. But if I were to be hiking in mountains, where it's cool, I need better movement on rough terrain... I'd probably rather use an internal frame. Both will work JUST FINE! It's just my opinion.

What to Look for in a Backpack?

- Decide if you want External or Internal
- Determine your Torso Length and be sure the Backpack you get is right for you - [How to Measure your Torso](#)
- Buy on the upper end of Torso Length. Some backpacks have adjustable Torso Lengths, this is an advantage for growing Scouts.
- Check to see it has some means of holding 1L Hiking Water Bottles (almost all do, but a few don't). The internal bladder thing is an option, but not very important as the bottles are easier to fill/monitor usage.
- Storage compartments - Does it have enough to organize well?
- Try it in the store if you can.

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