

ULTRALIGHT 2.0 TIPS & GEAR FOR EVERY BUDGET

BACKPACKER

THE OUTDOORS AT YOUR DOORSTEP

17 EASY EPICS

Amazing trips with huge views
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43

LOCAL
HIKES

NEW TRIPS
IN EVERY
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DYING OF THIRST!

How to find water anywhere

85 ESSENTIAL SKILLS

TRIP PLANNING & PACKING
EASY CAMP MEALS
ANIMAL ATTACKS



SEPTEMBER 2012

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Skills

Mike Clelland
NOLS instructor, author of
Ultralight Backpackin' Tips
(\$15; falconguides.com)



"Skirts aren't just for ladies. Learn how to make my ultralight (and ultra protective) rain skirt at backpacker.com/rainskirt."

Master Class: **Lighten Your Pack**

Drop 5, 10, or 15 pounds (or more!) by packing smart, planning ahead, and fine-tuning essentials.



Streamline Your Pack

Don't purchase an ultralight hauler until your base-weight (all your gear not including food, water, or fuel) is less than 15 pounds; lightweight packs lack the suspension and comfort features (like hipbelt padding and frame stays) that you need for heavy loads. Instead, cut up to 20 percent of your pack's weight by ditching the top lid and trimming unnecessary features like extra buckles, webbing, and pockets. You can shave pack heft without sacrificing functionality or comfort. Learn more cutting tips in our video tutorial at backpacker.com/cutit.

Weight saved 12 oz.

Drop 5 lbs.

Shed the Easy Stuff

Reduce your pack load by just a few pounds and you'll hike farther, cut injury potential, and reduce trail fatigue.

Leave Nonessentials at Home

Take a critical look at your packing list and off-load (or substitute) these items.

Gear	Weight cut	
Wallet	6 oz.	Bring only your insurance card, ID, and some cash
Food packaging	4 oz.	Discard boxes; measure servings into zip-top bags
Pillow	6 oz.	Fill your sleeping bag hood with rolled-up clothes
Extra pot	8 oz.	Plan one-pot meals, use nonstick for easy cleanup
Camp shoes	10 oz.	Unlace boots and switch socks to walk around camp
Stuffsacks	20 oz.	Stuff clothes into pack corners; roll your tent
Guidebook	9 oz.	Photocopy the pages you want to reference
Trowel	3 oz.	Dig catholes with a sturdy stick or tent stake
Repair kit	4 oz.	Pack a tiny sewing kit, tube of SeamGrip, and safety pins
Water filter	15 oz.	Use chemical or UV treatment instead

Weight saved 5+ lbs.

Ditch Unused Gear

Count individual items like tent stakes, gylines, trail bars, and lengths of TP. After each trip, make a list of gear you carried but didn't use. If a piece of your kit makes the list after three consecutive trips, leave it behind next time (exception: first-aid supplies).

Plan Calorie-Dense Meals

Combine high-calorie foods for efficient fueling on trail and in camp.



All these foods have more than 100 calories/ounce.

» Fruity PB Roll-Ups

Spread peanut butter on a tortilla and top with dried apricots and chocolate squares, then roll it up. **6.5 oz., 522 calories**

» Buttered Hot Chocolate

Make hot chocolate using 2 packets of powdered mix; stir in a tablespoon of unsalted butter. **2.5 oz., 348 calories**

» Cheesy Salmon-Pesto Pasta

Cook 2 cups of pasta; toss with a 5-ounce pouch of salmon, 2 tablespoons pesto, and ¼ cup Parmesan. **8 oz., 640 calories**

Go Stoveless Pack a no-cook menu on short, warm-weather trips, and you can unload your stove, pots, and fuel.

Weight saved 2 lbs.



Photo Courtesy Sveinung Myrli / Vistlnorway.us

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NORWAY

Basecamp

Skills: Master Class

Dr. Bronner's biodegradable soap (\$3; 2 oz.; drbronner.com) does triple duty: Use it for camp dishes, bathing, and even brushing teeth. A single drop cuts grease.



Upgrade Core Gear

You don't need all-new equipment to shed another five pounds, but a few ultralight investments can add up to huge weight savings. Rethink your layering and sleep systems to drop double-digits.

Wear Light Shoes
Build ankle strength to stay injury-free as you transition from overbuilt boots to trail runners. (See backpacker.com/ankle.)

Weight saved 1.5 lbs.

Dress Down

What do ultralighters wear? Use Mike Clelland's three-season packing list as a guide to dropping your layering system below 4 pounds.

Wear while hiking

Short-sleeve baselayer top (4.3 oz.); sun hat (1.7 oz.); thin, synthetic running shorts as underwear (3.5 oz.); long, quick-dry pants (10.4 oz.); thin, shorty running socks (.6 oz.).

Carry in your pack

Long-sleeve baselayer shirt (7.5 oz.); windshirt (3.3 oz.); light-weight puffy (10.2 oz.); rain jacket (7.1 oz.); rain skirt (2 oz.); warm hat (1.3 oz.); liner gloves (1.1 oz.); one pair of thin, shorty hiking socks (.6 oz.); one pair of warm, sleeping socks (1.4 oz.).

Reboot Your Sleep System

A tent/bag/pad combo can weigh 10 pounds. Here's how to whittle that down.

	Shelter	Sleeping bag	Sleeping pad
	Potential weight savings 3+ lbs.	Potential weight savings 3+ lbs.	Potential weight savings 1.5+ lbs.
Light	Ditch your tent's inner canopy on mild, bug-free nights; pack and pitch the fly and footprint only. In bug season: bring a headnet.	Carry a bag that's rated 10 degrees <i>above</i> expected lows, and wear insulating layers to bed to make up the difference.	Upgrade to a light pad that's cushy and warm enough for a deep sleep. We like Therm-a-Rest's NeoAir XLite (\$160; 12 oz.; thermarest.com).
Lighter	Pack a waterproof tarp with reinforced seams like Brooks Range's Ultralite Mini Guide Tarp (\$115; 10 oz.; brooks-range.com).	Buy a premium down-filled bag with gram-saving features like a 15-denier shell, ½-length zipper, and efficient fit (see p. 58).	Cut the corners off a closed-cell foam pad and chop material extending below your knees. Cushion your legs with your pack.
Lightest	Sleep under the stars. Set up on high ground in forests; depressions and meadows collect condensation.	Carry a single-sided blanket like GoLite's RS 1+Season Quilt (\$120; 1 lb. 7 oz.; golite.com) in temps down to 40°F.	Create a body-sized, six-inch-tall pile of boughs topped by leaves, moss, and/or grass. Cover with a Tyvek groundsheet.
			

Night Lite Save high-power headlamps for caving. For backpacking, use a single-battery unit

PHOTOS BY (FROM LEFT) COURTESY (3); ANDREW BYDLON; BEN FULLERTON. TEXT BY JASON STEVENSON



Carry Less With Careful Planning

Jettisoning the last five pounds requires thorough trip research, confidence in your trail skills, and, yes, sacrificing some creature comforts. The prize? Easier hiking every step of the way.

Research Trail Conditions

Pack only what your route requires.

» **Get seasonal beta.** Call park offices to ask about campsites, trail conditions, water access, and other seasonal issues. Are fires allowed? Leave your stove at home. No snow in the passes? Don't pack crampons or an ice axe. Also review recent trip reports at backpacker.com/community.

» **Be weather-wise.** Research backcountry forecasts at weather.gov. Subtract 4°F for every 1,000 feet of elevation above the forecast area. Warm front approaching? Ditch your puffy.

Potential weight savings 5+ lbs.



Carry Less Water Weight

Water's heavy—two pounds per quart. Schedule breaks to coincide with water sources, drink at planned refill stops, and tote no more than two quarts on the trail (unless safety requires it). Plus: Shed bottle weight. A 32-ounce-capacity Gatorade jug weighs 1.6 oz.; a similarly sized Lexan screw-top weighs 6.2 oz. Prefer a hydration bladder? Only fill it to 60 ounces (use as a pillow at night).

"I don't carry toilet paper. I haven't had any in my backpack for well over 20 years and it's not an issue. There is plenty of natural toilet paper out there." —Mike Clelland

Potential weight savings 3 oz.

Switch Your Pack

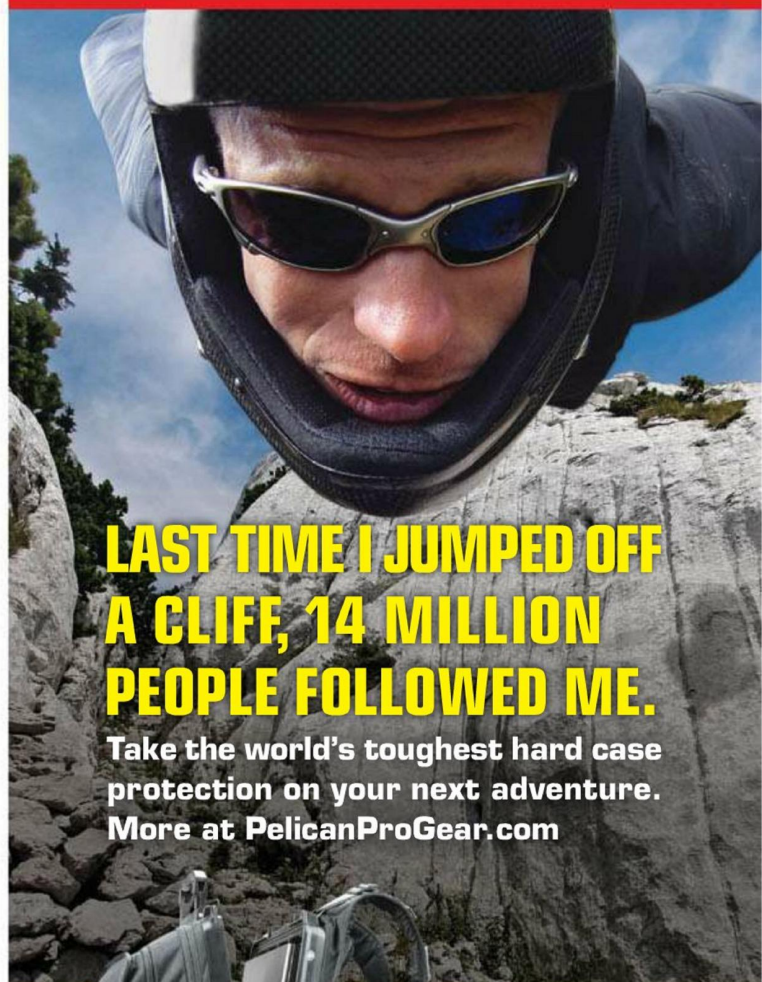
Baseweight below 15 pounds? Downsize to a frameless midsize hauler; the lightest are made of waterproof (but delicate) silnylon and weigh just 5 ounces. Use your sleeping pad to add structure to the back-panel, pad sharp gear (stove, tent poles) with clothing so fabric doesn't wear, and don't yank compression straps or secure heavy items to them, which might cause seam blowouts. See reviews of our favorite UL packs at backpacker.com/ulpacks.



like Mammut's S-Lite (\$23; 1.7 oz.; mammut.ch).

Weight saved 6 oz.

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Laptop Backpack

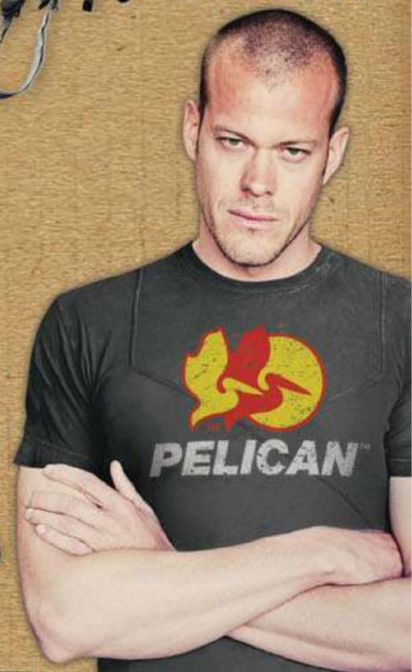


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