

## The Camp Kit I Use?

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### Rucksac

I use a comfortable 45:55 litre [Lowe Alpine Mountain Attack rucksack](#) with padded waist belt, chest strap, adjustable top pocket, side compression straps and zip access to the base of the pack. It weighs in just over 1kg which is good for the spec.

I rarely use a rucksack liner as everything I carry is in a dry bag or doesn't need to be;

Unless I need to reduce weight I use [Exped Fold Drybags](#) (1l-8l) profusely as they also allow me to colour code so I could easily identify what is where;

Very occasionally, when I feel the need for a single larger dry liner for my sack, I use an Exped rucksack liner.

If I want a superdry bag to haul large volumes of kit or for use whilst open canoe camping, I use an [Ortleib X-TREMER XL](#) (113l)

### Shelter

Tent; depending on the space I need, I use a silnylon mountain tent ([Summiteer Haven 200](#) 2kg) or a much more spacious basecamp tent (Exped Andromeda 4kg), both two man tents; inside each I keep a small [Splashflash LED light](#), spare earplugs (one of my adventure buddies snores like a typhoon) and a length of 2mm cord rigged as a clothes line.

Outside of the coldest months I often use a tarp/hammock combination ([DD 3x3m tarp](#) with [Exped Travel hammock](#)) or a 3x1.5m homemade tarp atop a Gore-Tex bivi bag;

Whilst snow-holing, I use a Gore-Tex bivi bag around my sleeping bag with a large heavy duty plastic survival bag underneath the Exped sleeping mat.

### Sleeping

I use an [Exped Synmat 7M](#) sleeping mat, good for -17°C, recently upgraded from a ¾ short Exped Downmat (as I get older I need more comfort. I can also fit the Synmat into my Exped Travel hammock so I can sleep in the trees as low as -10°C). I use McNett Seam Grip, which has a rubbery finish, smeared in strips along the sleep-side of my mat to stop me sliding around in the night.

If there's a chance that it will get wet I use a synthetic Nanook sleeping bag (0°C comfort) with a silk liner or, if it's cold, a Meraklon polypropylene thermal liner (-5°C comfort).

In cold dry conditions I use a [Summiteer Glow Worm 800](#) down bag, good for -10°C, and I'd stay alive at -20°C. I also use a silk liner, and could, if needed, use the Meraklon liner.

A pillow makes a big difference to the quality of sleep and the quality of sleep makes a big difference to the quality of my life *and* those around me, so I use an [Exped Air Pillow](#).

If I'm not in a tent, I use an ex-army Gore-Tex bivi bag around my sleeping bag which also adds to the insulation.

## Carrying, Cooking & Eating Food

Over the past 30 years I've honed my cook set to an "all in one" package made up of a couple of pans plus a lid/frypan from a small Trangia inside which is a gas stove ([MSR Windpro](#)), a panhandle, a stainless spork (£2 off eBay), a teaspoon, a small brew kit, a wooden spatula (cut down), 2 windproof Torjet lighters (£1 off eBay), a gas cartridge converter (allows me to use a cheap propane cartridge, especially good in cold weather), a couple of tiny tin openers, MSR windshield and heat reflector and an MSR service tool. I can cater effectively for up to 4 people with it. If I'm not catering for four I can take things out to reduce the weight. The full weight is 1.28kg excluding fuel and the lightest weight is 570g excluding fuel.

I usually carry a Coleman C500 butane-propane cartridge or the much cheaper 127g butane or butane-isobutane bayonet valve cartridges depending on how much I'm going to need. If you don't have a liquid-feed stove you'll need to take different types of gas depending on the temperature.

For carrying food I use plastic clip lock containers to hold pre-cooked meals. I also use a clip lock box for tea, coffee and sugar and on longer trips I carry a small salt-n-pepper shaker.

If I'm on my own I eat out of a pan, otherwise I take a 20cm plastic bowl. I cut the handle off my plastic 500ml mug so that it fits into my rucksack more neatly.

I use a 500ml Thermos flask for fresh milk unless it's cold when I use a 500ml alloy bottle and I use a 1l Aladdin Executive flask for hot water or tea as it keeps the liquid hot enough for a drink for upwards of 40 hours.

I carry water in a 1 litre wide-mouthed Summit bottle or 1.25/1.5 litre Coke bottles. Occasionally I use a 2l Platypus bladder.

I also often carry a 300ml or 500ml aluminium Sigg-type water bottle that I can fill with hot water, wrap in wet socks to dry them and it's also useful as a hot water bottle, wrapped in a dry sock, in my sleeping bag if I feel cold.

I haven't covered food in this document as it's a very big topic. Keep an eye out for an article in the near future.

## Lighting

I use several headtorches;

My go-to is a [Petzl Myo XP](#) (latest version is the Myo RXP) which is an excellent all-round all-weather lamp. I've used its predecessors since the early 90s. Typically they'll last around 10 years if looked after.

I use a [Silva MR150](#) for wet activities as it's rated IPX7 (as waterproof as I need).

I use several Petzl Zipka Plus as emergency lights and in first aid kits.

I use LSD rechargeable batteries in all my lights except for those in emergency kits where I use non-rechargeable batteries as they last much longer when not in use.

## Other Stuff

Loo roll: Shades by Asda, cardboard tube removed, kept in a Ziploc bag.

First aid; I use huge first aid kits sufficient for almost any incident and a smaller medicine/plaster/wipes kit in a Ziploc bag.

For most hill work I use [Scarpa](#) or [La Sportiva](#) synthetic boots (depending on the conditions and use), occasionally my Karrimor Bodmin mids (high ankle trainers with waterproof membrane) and very occasionally, Suretread wellies with neoprene socks.

For hill and mountain activities my clothing is generally synthetic in colder conditions and cotton in warm conditions. My go-to duds are polycotton trousers ([Craghopper Kiwis](#)) and a [Patagonia baselayer top](#) plus light or midweight fleece (Decathlon or Rab), fleece-lined trousers (Kiwis) in really cold conditions, with [Paramo Alta or Alta II jacket and Paramo salopettes](#). I have used Paramo waterproofs since the early 90s; I've found nothing to match their flexibility, longevity and performance. In warmer weather I might wear a [Montane Event jacket and trousers](#). Occasionally I'll wear tights underneath trousers but it would have to be seriously cold or I would have to be inactive. My socks are all smartwool or cheap cotton, chosen according to the length of route/day and conditions.

I have many hats; my go-to for cold, dry, windy days is a [Lowe Alpine Mountain Cap](#). If it's wet I tend to use no hat or a wool scull-cap under my Paramo hood. I also use a cheap synthetic skull-cap, merino skull cap (Pure), Thai farmers hat, a Tibetan herders hat and a variety of cotton baseball hats. I have an old Mountain Equipment fleece balaclava that still does the job in very cold weather though it's mostly relegated to group emergency kit.

My go-to gloves are the fleece inners from my mountain system although I've recently bought a cheap pair of synthetic [Karrimor liner gloves](#). In cold conditions I wear [double Marmot gloves](#) (fleece inner and waterproof synthetic outer gauntlets). In wet conditions (e.g. ghyll scrambling, wet rope work) I might wear rubber gauntlets (think heavy-duty Marigolds). I also use cooked wool Dachstein mitts in snowy conditions when I don't need to use my hands much. In winter hill days I carry a spare pair of skinnies and fleece gloves in a drybag.

I carry [1:25k or 1:50k OS maps](#), sometimes both, printed onto A4 paper in an [A5 Ortlieb waterproof document case](#), easily rolled up and popped in a pocket. I occasionally still use a full waterproof 1:25K sheet and more often carry one in the rucksack.

I use the [Silva Type 4 compass](#). I've found no better and no need for anything more.

Source of heat: If I'm working with clients, especially inexperienced people and youngsters or, if I'm in a cold remote location for any time, I carry a source of heat that is sufficient to warm a cold one up and there are two types; those that you have to stop to administer and those that you administer and remain mobile. The first is a stove used to brew hot liquid which is great except that the rest of the group get cold waiting for it to happen. The second is a small handwarmer that can rapidly be deployed to get useful heat into a cold body whilst still on the move. There are two types of useful handwarmer:

Aldi's re-usable heat gel packs cost £1 with a piezo clicker to start. They last for hundreds of cycles. They're very good for around 20 minutes, much better if placed inside the fleece layer, outside the baselayer on the sternum where the heat gets most directly to the core. Once used they have to be boiled for 20 minutes to recharge.

Occasionally the clicker disintegrates or the pack bursts. There are larger versions available which throw out 45 minutes of 6-8 times more heat energy for about £10-£15 but they are rarely of use as nobody gets that cold without being hypothermic.

Charcoal hand-warmer; the best of the best; each charcoal stick lasts for several hours and gives out huge heat (up to 85°C surface temperature so the fluffy velour outer cover is essential). The quality of the fuel is critical; it's a compressed charcoal stick with another binding ingredient that is sometimes in too high a ratio so poor fuel sticks don't stay alight. Good sticks stay alight even in low oxygen conditions so you can store them in a pocket. A trick to ensure they stay alight is to use a Torjet windproof lighter to light almost a centimetre of the stick before closing the case. BCB Guardsman and Highlander are both good quality fuel sticks.

Both these handwarmers are very useful in camp but the gel pack has to be recharged by boiling so it's not as convenient and much more expensive than the charcoal burner, which can be relit with another 15p fuel stick within 30 seconds. I light my charcoal handwarmer once I've got my clients under shelter and my tent up, as I'm going to stop generating much heat as I get a brew on and cook food. The charcoal burner sits in my fleece and keeps my core warm, which means the rest of my body is going to be warm.

Contact; I always carry a charged phone (iPhone 4s) and have recently added a power pack ([Aukey 20,000mAh](#)) which is heavy but good for extended trips. I also use a 2500mAh Goji but they only keep charge for a short while. I use an [Aquapac waterproof phone case](#).

That just about covers my current range of camp kit. I'll try to keep this document updated so keep an eye out for the updated version every now and then.

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