

Uncle Wacko's Gear Corner

TRAMPING GEAR ADVICE FROM THE EXPERT



I see lots of you trampers using rubbish gear.

Kit that's either heavier than a Dusky downpour, or flimsier than a politician's promise.

If that's you, you need sorting out.

Fortunately, Uncle Wacko's here to do just that.

Over the next few months I'll get you into ripsnorter gear. Kit that'll handle NZ conditions, without buckling you over like Tararua tussock in a southerly.

Yep, lite 'n sturdy's what you're after. Just like me first girlfriend, but don't get me started on that little escapade ...

First, I'm gonna sort out your big three. No, not your coffee maker, PJs and makeup kit. Geez!

I mean your pack, shelter and what them Flash Harrys call your sleeping system. The kit you really need to get right.

Sure, your tent shredding in a gale or shivering your bandoliers off in a wet sleeping bag may be character-forming. But I'm assuming you'd mostly want to avoid them sort of minor irritations.

And the big three are also the first place to look to lighten your load.

Well, apart from the excess padding you're probably carrying around your central regions, but best we leave that delicate wee issue for another day.

Anyway, by the time I've finished, you'll have the big 3 down to between 2 and 3½ kg all up. Yep that's right – all 3 added together, not separately.

If you're not too flash on the arithmetic side of things, this'll set you up for a nice light load you'll be happy to lug into the back country.

So maybe, just maybe, you'll finally be able to get up them hills, keep up a decent pace and not finish the day gasping on all fours praying for the end of time.

Next month I'll tell you what pack to buy – don't miss it.

Right now I'm off to stretch me legs and bag me a weka or two for the pot.

Spot ya.

Uncle Wacko

