

# Fitting a Backpack

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## Understanding Backpack Specification Charts

Specification	Description
Weight	7 lbs. 9 oz./7 lbs. 13 oz.
Base volume	5,577/5,912 cubic inches
Fits torso	18 - 19/20 - 21 inches
Fits waist/hips	28 - 34/34 - 40 inches
Material	Cordura nylon/Spectra nylon
Frame material	Aluminum
Number of stays	2
Number of pockets	5 + main compartment

Used as an example, this chart describes the Gregory Robson Pro internal-frame backpack, which REI lists in its category Internal-frame packs — extended trips. Here's how to interpret the information presented on such charts:

**Weight:** The description lists 2 weights, separated by a slash. This means 2 different frame sizes (designed for 2 different torso lengths) are offered. Internal packs typically weigh between 4 and 8 pounds, so this model is on the heavy side, indicating it is designed for longer, rigorous trips.

**Base volume:** This is the normal amount of gear-storing space inside a pack, measured in cubic inches. There's also "extended volume," which adds in the extra space made available if you use the "extendable collar" found in most internals and some externals. Typically, this adds 800 to 1,000 cubic inches of additional space.

Note: Keep in mind capacity ratings vary significantly between internal- and external-frame packs. Why? Internals carry sleeping bags in an interior compartment and consume many cubic inches of space — from 800 for a lightweight down bag to 2,500 for a 4-season synthetic bag. Bags are usually lashed to the exterior of an external-frame pack and thus have no impact on the pack's cubic-inch capacity.

**Fits torso:** Measure your torso as directed in our How to Fit a Backpack clinic; compare your number with the range of measurements shown in the chart. In our Gregory example, the slash indicates 2 frame sizes (medium and large in this case) are offered.

**Fits waist/hips:** Know your hip measurement and determine if your size is appropriate for a pack's hipbelt. Check the details of the product description to see if a particular pack offers interchangeable parts, such as a hipbelt.

**Material:** This describes the fabric used for the packbag. In this example 2 grades of material are used: Cordura® (a beefy nylon with a brushed feel) and Spectra® (a nylon fiber—thin, light and strong—used to create ballistics nylon and climbing cordage).

**Frame material:** This describes what is used in the stays of an internal-frame pack or the tubing of an external-frame pack. Sometimes internal framesheet material, such as high-density polyethylene (HDPE), is included in the description.

**Number of stays:** "Stays" are flat bars used in internal-frame packs that support the pack. Two is a customary number.

**Number of pockets:** Typically, external-frame packs will offer more than internals.