

The Dog Scout Backpack

The Dog Scout backpack is made up of a harness and saddle bags. The saddle bags may be removed, so that the harness can be used separately for tracking, flyball, water rescue, or other activities. Most backpacks are made to be worn by the dog while he is led by a leash attached to his collar. With this backpack, you have the option of snapping your leash onto the “D” ring at the top, so that your dog can help pull you up slopes and hills.

Designed for maximum comfort and adjustability, the pulling pressure is placed on the breastbone, not the bottom of the neck, to reduce cough and choking. The non-restrictive “V” neck configuration is far superior to a horizontal breast strap in this respect. The two buckles (instead of one) mean that you don’t have to pull a foreleg through an arm hole.

This harness adjusts at the neck, breastbone, and chest, for optimum fit. The pack is situated over the shoulder blades, rather than in the middle of the back, which would put pressure from the weight of the pack on the spine. The clips which keep the sides of the pack tucked in, can be removed for placing larger objects in the packs. The flap with velcro closure is adjustable to accommodate a full or a relatively empty pack.

To place the pack on your dog, first place the harness on and adjust the straps for the best fit. Then, insert the “D” ring at the top of the harness through the slot in the top of the saddlebags. Next, open the velcro closures on the undersides of the saddlebags, and place the vertical chest straps between the velcro. Fasten the velcro to hold the harness in place. The velcro is situated so that the “picky” side faces out. This keeps the scratchy side away from the dog. If you have the dog wear the harness alone, there will be fuzzy spots where the velcro has raised the nap on the harness webbing.

When loading the pack, evenly distribute the items so that the saddlebags are balanced. This pack should remain in place, even with rigorous hiking. It was “field tested” on a Border Collie playing frisbee while wearing the pack, and it remained in place. Your Dog Scout Merit Badges may be sewn on the pack to display them.

Remember, to earn credit toward your Backpacking merit badge, and to count your mileage toward your Backpacking titles with the Dog Scouts of America, you must carry these required items in your pack: Compass, Water, Bowl, Spare collar and leash, First Aid Kit, Pocket knife, Clean-up bags, Matches, and Flashlight.

Happy Hiking!

Lonnie Olson, Designer of the Dog Scout Backpack