



Heavy duty
Australian-made dog
equipment for dogs of
all shapes and sizes

Hiker & Basic Backpacks

Using your Backpack:

Your Windchill backpack is a high quality pack made from an abrasion-resistant, waterproof material, with adjustable synthetic webbing straps so that the pack can be fitted to your dog.

The Hiker style backpack also has separate saddle bags which are attached to the saddle with velcro and a PVC buckle for ease of removal. This backpack is designed to carry heavy loads (but never more than 30% of your dog's body weight) on long hikes or can simply be used on walks to carry your supplies or to help bring the shopping home!

Fitting the Backpack:

Hiker backpack: Separate the saddle bag section from the saddle. Place the saddle on your dog: the 3 velcro strips and buckle go to the front and the D ring should be towards the rear of the dog.

The chest strap goes to the front around the neck and across your dog's chest – it should sit lower than your dog's collar. The other 2 straps go down around your dog's abdomen – the wider strap should sit just behind the front legs. Once the saddle is in the correct position and the straps are adjusted to fit (see below) you can then place the saddle-bag section onto the saddle.

Basic Backpack: The Basic backpack has a curved edge at the front of the pack, the straight edge is at the rear. Place the backpack over the shoulders of your dog and adjust both straps until they are quite firm, with one under the dog's neck and one behind the front legs around the chest.

Adjusting the Straps:

If the straps on your backpack are much too long you can shorten them by trimming to a more suitable length and sealing the cut end by melting the webbing with a flame (cigarette lighter, candle, etc.) Melting the ends of the webbing will stop it from fraying.

It is important that you adjust the 3 webbing straps of the backpack so that it is fitted correctly and is comfortable for the dog. The straps should be adjusted to be quite firm on your dog without being too tight. Once the saddle-bags are loaded onto the saddle check the straps and re-tighten if necessary, and recheck throughout your walk.

If the straps are too loose the pack will move as the dog is walking and may rub the skin or cause injury if the pack is not in the correct position.

Adjust the chest strap so that the backpack is sitting over the withers (shoulders) of the dog. In this position the weight is transferred down to the ground through the front legs and feet. The pack should never sit on the dog's lower back (loin). The lower back is the weakest area of the dog's spine as there is no support from the rib cage or pelvis, and this area should never bear any weight. If you are not sure that your dog's pack is fitted correctly, please check with an experienced backpacker. A badly fitted pack will be uncomfortable for the dog, may rub or even cause injury.

Loading the pack:

The pack should not be too large for your dog. The saddle-bags should not hang so low that they bang around the legs of the dog and interfere with the dog's movement, and the saddle should not extend beyond the upper section of the back.

The pack should also be adjusted so that it remains centred along the topline of the dog and cannot slip from side to side. The saddle-bags should be evenly weighted so that the pack is not pulling to one side. If your dog is to carry a load it is best to load the pack before putting it on the dog, and weigh each side to ensure that the saddle bags are roughly equal in weight. Place the loaded saddle bags carefully onto the saddle so as not to startle or cause injury to your dog – apply the weight from front to back so the weight is taken by the shoulders first.

If your dog is negotiating obstacles on a walk, such as climbing over a log, assist your dog by taking the weight of the pack. In difficult situations it is advisable to remove the dog's pack and put it back on after the obstacle has been safely negotiated to prevent injury to the dog. The pack should only be on the dog while it is walking, and should be removed if the dog is jumping, swimming or negotiating obstacles.

Maintenance of your Backpack:

A backpack which is left dirty will have a reduced life-span since particles of grit will wear away at the stitching and fabric of the pack. The backpack should never be stored damp – unload and dry the backpack before storage.

If dirty, allow the pack to dry and brush off excess dirt using a stiff brush. Handwash in warm (not hot) water using a mild soap, such as Woolmix, and hung to dry away from direct heat.

Do not machine wash. Do not tumble dry or expose to direct heat.

Before using the pack, examine the stitching for signs of wear and check that the zips, straps and buckles are in good condition. If any part of the pack is worn, it must be repaired before use. We are happy to do repairs on your backpack should it become necessary.

