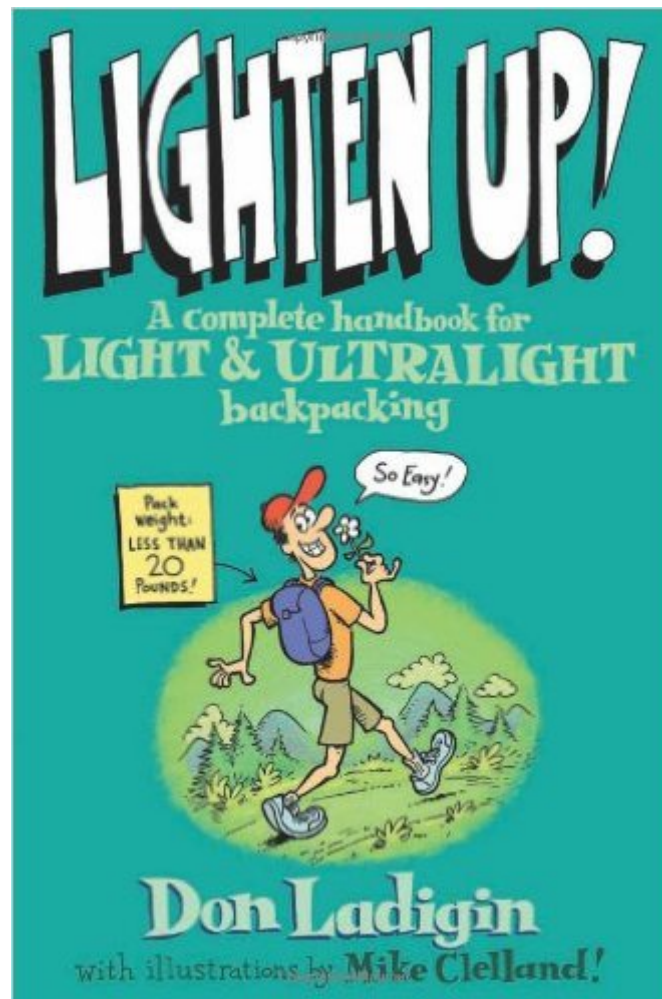


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# Lighten Up!: A Complete Handbook For Light And Ultralight Backpacking (Falcon Guide)



## Synopsis

Short, to-the-point, and humorously illustrated by famed outdoor illustrator Mike Clelland, this book presents everything hikers and backpackers need to be safe, comfortable, and well fed while carrying a very small and lightweight pack.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Most backpacking books have a tendency to mainly talk about specific pieces of gear that, unfortunately, become obsolete in six months. The author doesn't fall into that trap. This book will be relevant far longer than six months and far longer than six years. Its really a book about a change in philosophy. It doesnt tell you what to buy but it does guide you on how to decide what to buy. True it is not a literary tour de force like Colin Fletcher's "The Complete Walker", it is more like a Zen proverb that reveals more by stating less. From the introduction and from searching around on the web, it becomes appearant that the author has been doing "ultra light" far longer then some of the so called "pioneers". If you bother to read between the lines you can decipher that the author has created ultra light packs from day packs, camping stoves from pop cans. Its more about changing the way you look for solutions instead of following what mfgs. want to market to you. And that in itself is far more useful then any backpacking book can ever do.

I've read several books on backpacking. This book is the best, without a doubt. Sure, you can read extensively on the [backpackinglight.com](http://backpackinglight.com) web site and eventually learn much of what is in the book,

as another reviewer suggests. But you will spend much more time doing it and read a lot of misleading information as you peruse the backpackinglight.com forums. Don't get me wrong. I'm a member and reader of backpackinglight.com. I enjoy it. But this book does an excellent job of concisely stating lots of good information on how to lighten a backpack. I wish it would have been the first book I read, but it wasn't written yet. If you're interested in backpacking, I strongly urge you to read this book.

It's good as far as it goes, which is really maybe twenty pages of material. It doesn't go into so much depth that I become struck by some unknown insight; it is a collection of good tips and demonstrable multi-tasking that can save weight and show off a little of your backcountry skills, i.e. build rather than buy, and make on site rather than haul in and out. All of these tips are things you already know, codified for about one hour of reading. Worth it? Dunno. If you're an experienced hiker, you could intuit almost all of this. Any reputable 1st Class or above Boy Scout could do the same at age 14. I'm not impressed with it, and know I'll never re-read it. However, it does serve a purpose to the less-experienced, so in that regard, the content was solid and well-presented.-Fred

There are many books about lightweight backpacking. Books that will help a traditional backpacker lighten up, shed their gear and enjoy the simple act of walking again. However, most of these books are too gear wonkish in my opinion. The books place an emphasis on the gear (and some times specific gear). Backpacking is portrayed as a hobby for merely collecting and fine tuning gear. Where walking and enjoying the wilderness is secondary to having the perfect gear setup. LIGHTEN UP is different. Rather than focusing on specific gear it gives more of an overview. It helps the person wanting to make the transition from a traditional gear setup to a more streamlined and less extraneous kit. Other books are good for fine tuning your techniques. This is the book to get for a person taking the initial steps into the world of lightweight backpacking. Often times too many details get in the way of accomplishing a goal. Besides, a LIGHT book on lightweight backpacking seems to be more fitting than a heavy book on lightweight backpacking. :)

Despite mentioning his name a couple of times as well as listing it in the biography, almost everything in this book is distilled from Ray Jardine's seminal work, "Beyond Backpacking." All of Ray's ultralight innovations are presented in this book, such as quilts, tarps, and running shoes, next to the lightweight alternatives; full bags, bivy sacks, light hiking boots, as well as brief reasons to avoid the traditional gear: heavy packs, two man tents and full leather boots. They also mention a

few alternative ultralight ideas such as ponchos and windshirts. I took exception to the notion that white gas stoves are in any way dangerous, temperamental or difficult. My base weight is 12 lbs including my white gas stove, with which I've never had any problems in 15 years once I learned to prime it thoroughly and later blow it out to reduce clogging soot. The book also suggests one wear 3 ounce socks, by which I imagine he means Thorlo or merino wool type hiking socks, but both Ray Jardine and other ultralighters swear by 1 ounce nylon liner socks to compliment their running shoes, and I concur. I was intrigued by the idea of steam baking, but I doubt I could manage even one cupcake in a tart pan, on top of a mesh platform, on top of pebbles, above boiling water, in my 0.9 liter titanium pot? The Outback Oven, which he doesn't mention, might be an alternative? All in all, maybe an idea or two, but this sums up my prejudice regarding newer UL books: Ray Jardine is the original, and there's not much more left to say.

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