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Reviews

Featuring: The Manta 30

URL: <http://tinyurl.com/ykcfxtq>

Osprey Packs has once again come out with a newly designed pack, with a newly added purpose. The Manta is part of their Hydraulics series, which includes the Raptor line also. The Manta is designed as a day hiking pack, with an integrated hydration system.

Using the Manta while snowshoeing worked very well. I put it on as I headed out, and after a few minutes, no longer felt like I was wearing anything on my back. The weight is very evenly dispersed. I liked how the pack stays centered on my back, no matter how I twist and turn. The bite-valve is very easily accessed while moving, which definitely helps me to drink more water. I've had hydration systems before that made me feel like I was using a lot of energy to get a drink of water. Seemed like I had to suck awfully hard to get even a small amount. With the Manta, I could get a good drink of water, with no more effort than drinking out of a straw. That was one of the best features. I don't think I drink enough fluids when I am outside in cooler weather. Hot weather it doesn't seem to be an issue.

Update: May 2010

I've been using the Manta on day hikes and more recently while paddling my kayak. I am so impressed with the fit and function of this pack. I have been consciously trying to drink more water, and the Manta has been a great help while active. The ease of use is the biggest factor. I can easily fill it before heading out. I have used it numerous times, and have not noticed any 'plastic' or off taste. The reservoir is made by Nalgene, and is BPA and PVC free. The AquaGuard anti-microbial formula is designed to prevent bacteria and mold from developing.

Some of the other features of the pack have proven themselves to be very useful. The storage area allows me to take extra layers and then store them when not needed. The 'Stow on the Go' trekking pole attachment is easy to use as designed. I have made more use of the integrated rain cover than I would have liked, but it works without fuss, and keeps the pack dry. Normally I am not a fan of sternum straps, as most are not designed with a woman in mind. I find the Manta's to be very comfortable, and the 'sipper' section of the tubing attaches conveniently within easy reach. The magnet used to make the connection is strong enough that a casual bump does not dislodge it, but a quick pull with one hand retrieves it for a quick drink.