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Gear Review

Featuring: Exos 34 & 46

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Osprey isn't joking when it calls its Exos-series packs 'superlight'—these overnight-capable packs come with a stiff and robust frame yet weigh about the same as most frameless daypacks. In either the 34 or 46 liter versions, the Exos feel supernaturally light. If you can lift one of these lightweight marvels in the store and not end up bringing it home, you've got more self control than I do. Rather than using struts alone or in pairs, the Exos packs come with a continuous rectangular frame that is essentially an ultralight reimagining of a vintage external frame pack's skeleton.



The Exos packs employ what may be the most aggressive edition yet of Osprey's Airscape/Airspeed design. Desert hikers take note: the Exos' frame creates a ventilation space between the body of the pack and your torso, allowing air to freely flow across your back. The Airspeed-enhanced Exos kept my back cooler and more comfortable than any other pack I've ever tried.

Overall I find the Exos an intriguing iteration of Osprey's gradual evolution toward lighter, more specialized technical packs. I can't quite call the Exos a triumph for my own needs, and even for its intended uses I'd like to see a better frame/waist belt interface, but I must say it is exciting to see Osprey continuing to develop and execute these innovative concepts.

Osprey is clearly challenging—and changing—the rules of backpack design, and that's great news for all of us.

