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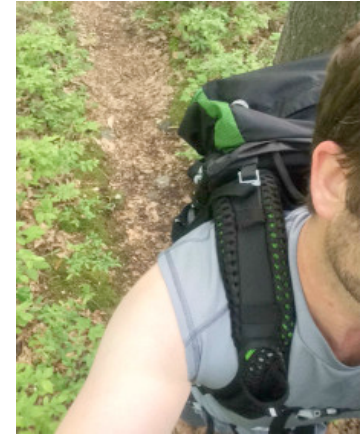
July 15, 2014

Pack Review

Featuring: Exos 48

Monthly Traffic: 41,500

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



With the new rendition of the Osprey Exos 48, Osprey must have been putting some serious investment into their Research and Development. Out of the box, there is a combined “Wow! That looks amazing” which goes hand-in-hand with “Good Grief! What is that and what have they done?” The colors and graphic lines are slick, but we all know that after a few good weeks on our shoulders and hips, the colors fade, the dust gathers and all we want to know is how it rides.

This iteration of Exos is sporting Osprey’s new ExoForm™ padding on the shoulder straps and the hip belt as well. It looks like a light, swiss-cheese version of closed-cell foam padding, but in reality it is much more breathable. It actually seems like it is dense, woven mesh because it has more flexibility to it.

One of the more talked about features with my hiking companions was the size of compression straps. If I remember correctly, one crusty, old veteran mentioned that he has been toting an Osprey pack since the Ice Age and exclaimed in his best ‘I walked uphill both ways to school in a snowstorm’ voice: “Boy, I remember back when straps were the size of suspenders and not this spaghetti stuff!” That said, they worked well as both load compactor and as a restraint for a sleeping pad.

Another element that proved very handy for anything from energy bars to sunglasses to headlamp was the extra stretchy mesh pockets on the shoulder straps. They are about 3 inches deep and really provided a nice utility for something small that you want to keep handy.

One last little item that I liked was that the sternum strap is not a plastic slide on piping but rather a series of button holes that you can use for adjustment. As someone who either has had the slides pop off or just gets annoyed in constantly having to re-adjust the height while hiking, I like that this is a ‘set it and forget it’ feature.

What *IS* consistent for the Osprey Exos 48 that most long-haul hikers have liked in past generations is the ride of the pack and the weight transfer to your hips. The aluminum frame makes a very sturdy shoulder to hip connection with a mesh overlay that creates the AirSpeed™ effect for a ventilated ride. Up to 30 pounds, the pack really felt balanced and did not tug on the shoulders at all. If I overloaded the weight to 40 pounds, I lost most of the air gap for ventilation but the weight still felt well distributed.

All in all, the Osprey Exos 48 offers some nifty new bells and whistles and my areas of concern seem pretty minor and thus far, unsubstantiated.