

Is a hunting backpack needed?

By JOHN JOHNSTON
Special Contributor

Quite a few times when I am hunting not far from camp or my truck, I have found I really do not want or need to lug around a heavy backpack. Even though I set up my backpack every year before the season -- kind of a ritual for me -- I get tired and sometimes sore from carrying a heavy pack.

I have been in a few box stands where it was awkward to get into a pack when I needed something. So why not get a belt that would carry my essentials? Besides, it would ride on my hips, not my back.

So I went to the Texas Hunt Co. catalog. I have used their products for years. I wear their all-nylon belt every day and carry one of their wallets, which holds everything I need but is still very comfortable. For hunting, I use one of their slings that is the most comfortable I have ever tried.

This company, located in far West Texas, spends a lot of time in research and development before manufacturing its products. What I like most is that every product is made in Texas. They make a belt rig that was exactly what I was looking for. The "PH Utility Belt" is all nylon and actually two belts in one. The under belt is adjustable by way of a nylon buckle that lets you adjust it to the tension

you desire. This makes for a quiet, fast and comfortable belt. The top belt is where the individual pouches and sheaths are attached.

The two belts are held together with a hook-and-loop system and some snap keepers. The user can pick and choose what he wants to put on it and, more importantly, where on the belt. There is nothing to scratch the rifle when you carry it over your shoulder.

My belt in the photo has a five-round ammunition carrier. This may not be important to those bolt-action hunters who carry that many rounds in their rifle anyway, but I shoot single-shot rifles most of the time. It can hold anything from a .22 Hornet to a .458 Magnum.

Next is a pouch in which I carry a Buck 110 knife, but the pouch is large enough to carry most utility tools like a Leatherman.

Next to it is another pouch in which I carry a folding saw, this one being a Gerber switchblade rig.

The next pouch is a little larger, and that carries my flashlight. I usually wear a cap light, but a hand-held light can be useful with tracking and other chores.

Last is a mini-cargo pocket organizer. This can be used to carry your range finder, GPS, cell phone, pens, extra ammunition or just about anything you can get in it. It has five elastic loops inside for



PHOTO BY JOHN JOHNSTON

My belt has a five-round ammunition carrier. It can hold anything from a .22 Hornet to a .458 Magnum.

the extra ammunition and a quick-access mesh outside storage pocket that secures with hook-and-loop fasteners. I carry cleaning gloves, wire ties, pen and hand-cleaning wipes in mine, and it still has room for more.

This PH belt rig is lightweight and puts everything where you want it. You can choose how to set it up or buy it as a com-

plete rig. The smaller pouches will handle pistol magazines of all sizes, if you want to use it as a pistol belt. It definitely is versatile.

Texas Hunt Co. products are well designed by actual hunters with a lot of thought going into each product. Best of all, they are well made and should last a long time.

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