



Introduction to Backpacking

If competitive sports aren't your style but you still want an active lifestyle for your Malamute, why not try backpacking? It's the sort of "go anywhere" sport that everyone can take part in. Whether your Malamute carries a pack during its regular walks or during longer planned walks or camping trips, it's a great way to keep your dog fit, active and healthy. Of course the added benefit is that they can carry their own supplies!

Getting Started

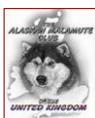
It's important when starting backpacking to get the dog used to the bulk of carrying a pack. Suddenly your Malamute can't fit through the gap in the fence or walk right past a tree. I would suggest that for the first few walks or for young dogs, load your backpack with empty carrier bags or rolled up towels. This will give the pack the bulk without the weight and get the dog used to giving itself a bit more room when avoiding obstacles and will give you time to make adjustments to the fitting so that it doesn't rub or slip.

There is no timescale, so take your time in adding weight, especially in young dogs. As a guide, 1 litre of water weighs 1kg, so by adding a 1 litre bottle either side, your Malamute is carrying 2kg or just under 4 1/2 lbs of weight. Build the weight up slowly to avoid injury and increase the stamina in your Mal.

Take into account distance too. Start with short distances and slowly build up the length of the walks as your Mal gets used to carrying the weight.

Equipment

Backpacks can be bought from various sources and a quick scan of the web can bring up a vast array of sizes and colours, even some of the larger high street pet shop chains now have them in store.



Alaskan Malamute Rescue is run by the Alaskan Malamute Club of the UK



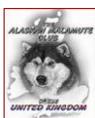
Think about what your Malamute will be carrying and for how long. Consider the weight you will be asking your dog to carry. For short recreational walks just carrying a travel bowl and some water and snacks a smaller pannier is adequate and the high street store backpacks would do fine. If you are camping and/or attempting a working pack dog title, consider a larger pannier as your dog will be carrying up to 30% of their body weight.

Most backpacks are fully adjustable and it is important that you fit the backpack correctly to avoid rubbing before setting off. You should also make sure the load is evenly distributed to avoid injury to the dog. If you are carrying water, try to make sure that you use some from each side to make sure it remains evenly weighted throughout your walk and get into the habit of checking and redistributing weight at each stop if necessary.

You can purchase backpacks from the sources below:

[AMCUK Merchandise](#)

[The Snowpaw Store](#)



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