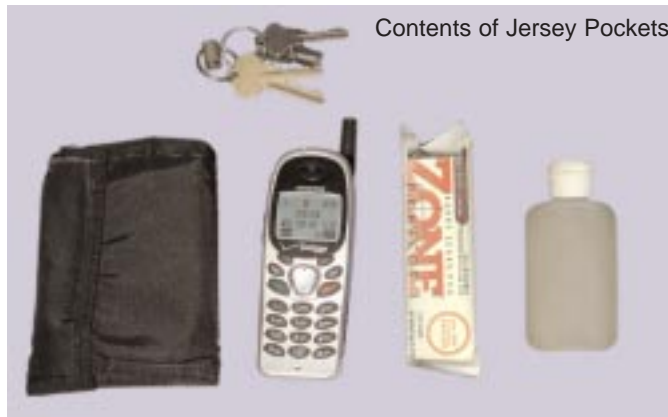


How to Pack Light

Lessons in self-reliant cycling.

by Bill Vojtech



I often watch other people on rides and wonder about what they carry. Rack-top packs, panniers even, just to go to Nyack? Do they plan on camping out? Will they perform a complete overhaul enroute?

Rule #1 of self-reliant cycling is: Make sure your bike is in good repair before you go riding.

People often ask me how I can carry "everything I need" in such a small package. The accompanying pictures show how and what I carry on a typical ride.

Tool Bag: the smallest Topeak micro seat pack, loaded with- one spare inner tube, Park glueless patches, Blackburn Tool consisting of two plastic tire levers, 4, 5, 6mm allen key T-wrench, one 2mm allen key, one flat bladed screw driver, four hex sockets and three different spoke wrenches. Also in the bag, (not clipped to the bag), a Cuelite blinking taillight.

In my jersey pockets: House keys, a nylon cycling wallet, cell phone, Zone bar(s), and a small squeeze bottle of sunscreen. In the wallet is: MetroNorth and LIRR passes, (I own a few), a MetroCard, money, a credit card, a bank card, and a very small first-aid kit.

If I am planning on buying food that will have to be carried for a distance, a musette bag.

Rule # 2 is: Dress properly. Anticipate what the weather will be like for the bulk of the ride,



(check www.weather.com). If you need to strip down, where will you put your shed clothing?

Each time I do the Montauk Century, I pass riders on light racing machines who are wearing wind breakers, usually unzipped or tied around their waists. When they started, it was cool and their jackets kept them warm. After a short time, they were generating a lot of heat. The day warmed up. They unzipped. They might as well drag a parachute behind them.

You can also bring a musette bag on rides that start off cool. When you shed clothing that won't fit in a jersey pocket you can put it in the bag. It's not ideal aerodynamically, but it's better than unzipping and catching the wind or tying it around your waist.

Aerodynamics are very important as your speed increases. Always try for as sleek a profile as you can. You will ride with much less effort.

Happy Cycling!