



# About Range Bags

Prepared by Black Oak Training, Inc: [BlackOakTraining.com](http://BlackOakTraining.com)

Most human practices and pursuits involve a set of gear particular to the needs of the endeavor. Keeping that gear together in one easy-to-transport and relatively secure unit is a good idea on several levels. In the practice of firearms we call unit this a *range bag*. If you don't already have one, read on.

## Good features in a range bag

- Sturdy construction.
- Not too heavy to carry.
- Shoulder straps or some other hands-free way to carry it. Some kind of cushioning over the shoulder is a plus when the bag is fully packed & heavy.
- Multiple pockets, many with zippers, some with cushioning thick enough to hold items still inside the pocket.
- Some kind of lockable section, or at least a section big enough to hold your firearm in its own lockable case.
- An exterior that can be wiped off with a damp towel or lead wipes. You might also try a little vacuuming now & then to keep GSR levels and dust/lint down. Other than keeping the levels of lead & arsenic down in your vehicle & home, though, don't worry about keeping the bag too, too clean: a banged-up looking range bag is just fine.

## Things to avoid in range bags

Speaking just for ourselves we try to avoid bags (or knapsacks, or fanny packs) with NRA or other gun-related logos, or even excessive camouflage. It's just all too evident what you might be carrying in said bag.

## Prices

A range bag is one of those things on which you can "\$pend" just about as much as you'd like. There's a very wide range out there. On the high-dollar side the NRA has many classy styles of range bags ([here's their range bag catalog webpage](#)). Other sources, such as Cabela's ([here's their range bag webpage](#)) and Bass Pro Shop ([THEIR range bag webpage](#)) offer similar.

On the other hand you could go for thrift: a plain old gym bag works fine, or even a big book bag. We've seen people using old tool boxes (though they look awkward to carry). FYI one of us got a lot of service out of an old, hard-walled, roll-around suitcase, purchased at a thrift store for \$2. It did everything a range bag needs to do, particularly when we added cushioning in the form of clean old towels.

(Note that the wheels would have done better at an indoor range -- they weren't great on the dirt/gravel surfaces at the outdoor range we frequent. Nevertheless the thing lasted a couple of years.)

## Outfitting your range bag

Here's a checklist of basics you'll want on hand, followed by some of the additional items that might prove useful as time goes on. All go in the bag.

REMEMBER: You're usually allowed to bring snack/beverage to the range but do not eat or drink near the firing line. Gun-shot residue is all too easy to ingest on a range anyway. No reason to stack the odds against your health by eating & drinking stuff right where GSR is being produced!

For the same reasons, limit your use of lip balm/moisturizer and avoid touching eyes/nose/face while at an active range.

### *The basics*

- Your firearm, unloaded, wrapped or contained in some way that will keep it stable and protected during transportation (such as the original packaging, an after-market carrying case, a holster, a tightly wrapped tea towel secured with rubber bands...)
- One and possibly additional magazines for your firearm. No, we don't mean the readable kind.
- Ammunition appropriate to your firearm. We recommend a minimum of 100 rounds for a session like this one. Additional ammo equals additional practice time.
- Ear protection.
- Eye protection.

### *Beyond the basics*

- A change of shirt & shoes at least, in order to limit GSR levels in your car afterward.
- First aid kit---actually this is a much bigger topic than a mere mention on a checklist, so ask for the BOT handout.
- Gun-cleaning kit.
- Multi-tool, flat-head screwdriver, or knife.
- Targets.
- Duct tape.
- Colored tape (to cover holes in paper targets for repeat target use).
- Permanent markers (to mark hit counts for repeat target use).
- Low-powered monocular or binoculars (for checking marksmanship from the firing line without having to walk out to the target).

- ① Note pad.
- ① Staple gun & staples (available at the range, but people often BYO for convenience--- these are for putting targets up on the stands).
- ① Whistle.
- ① A lawn/leaf bag for any clothing that needs a wash due to gun-shot residue.
- ① Lead wipes (and we're not pushing any particular brand or source, but for example [here's a typical product of this type](#) on Amazon, as an example.
- ① One fave additional item is a sheet of little stickers to use as micro targets evenly spaced over the unprinted sides of the largest target sheets. It's good bio-feedback to practice with smaller targets.

... and that's range bags, in a nutshell.

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