

## FIELD TESTED



### PROS

- Excellent for all activities
- Cost-efficient

### CONS

- Gear loop very tight
- Takes work to become superlight

## Gregory Alpinisto 35L

**\$199.95 / GREGORYPACKS.COM**

The **Gregory Alpinisto** is a redesign of their venerable alpine pack. The new Alpinisto is for a climber, skier, snowboarder or just plain backcountry mountain'ista who needs an any-activity pack—one as at home with ice axes in its holsters as it is with skis on its sides.

Select improvements from previous renditions include more secure ice-axe slots, an 8-ounce overall weight saving, and a crampon pouch that cinches down with side (and lengthy) compression straps. The functionality of the back pouch is unique to the Alpinisto. After repeated use in different seasons, it isn't just a crampon pouch, but holds a layer when you heat up, a water bottle at the crag or even a guidebook. It's a distinguishing feature, and super convenient.

The Alpinisto isn't for the type of minimalist climber who cuts their toothbrush in half to save weight; comparably sized alpine packs can weigh less than half the Alpinisto, which clocks in around 3.2 pounds for the 35L, with all of the accoutrements included. The weight is due to being stacked with features—durable and easy-to-use ski holsters; a side zip for quick entry; removable top lid; bivy pad; removable waist belt. Yes, you could strip it down and save weight.

While size is personal, the 35L option was good for me. On one solo outing last winter, I fit everything I needed for a cold bivy, with, of course, the help of the two side compression straps. If you are heading into the backcountry for two days plus, I'd recommend moving up in size, assuming you want to pack your rope and gear. Additionally, the pack is well structured (due to an interior alloy frame), so it doesn't turn into a limp sack when stood upright.

Some feedback for Gregory—consider making the gear loop longer, as it's extremely tight and could only hold a few items.

Comfort is another one of those things you only notice if it isn't there, and even when I had it packed to the gills, it carried well. The main question: When do you know a pack performs? Answer: when you start unconsciously choosing it. That I did.

—Francis Sansaro



### PROS

- Skin-friendly texture and rounded edges
- Asymmetrical design for comfortable shoulder and wrist alignment
- 15 different holds, compact size

### CONS

- No pinches
- Expensive

## Concept Climbing Solution Hangboard

**\$167 / CONCEPTCLIMBING.COM**

When I first felt the Concept Climbing Solution hangboard, I thought I had been sent a manufacturing dud—the holds were asymmetrical. The outer pockets in a given row had different depths, same with the inner pockets. Only after going back and forth did I realize the “screw up” was on purpose. A left outer hold matched a right inner hold, and vice versa, on every row. While most hangboards require wider or narrower hand positions for different holds, the Solution maintains a constant distance between paired holds so your shoulders and wrists are always the same distance apart.

Machine routed from a single piece of plantation-grown mahogany, this Australian-made woody is beautiful and body friendly. The fine and uniform grain of the hardwood paired with the board's gently rounded edges make it easy on the skin, yet it doesn't feel overly slick. I've used many plastic hangboards over the years—never with much consistency since I find hangboarding miserable—but the Solution's texture is so tolerable, even for worn fingertips, that I actually use it.

From jugs to monos, the Solution has enough variety of hand positions, 15 in all, to please both the beginner and experienced climber. It has one set of incut jugs, three sets of slopers (30, 37.5 and 42.5 degree), four sets of edges (.27, .39, .71 and 1.1 inches), three sets of two-finger pockets (.75, .94 and 1.38 inches), two sets of mono pockets (.83 and .98 inches), a one-arm edge of .87 inches, and a one arm two-finger pocket of 1.38 inches.

My only qualm with the hold design—besides having no desire to pull on monos—is that you need gecko feet to stick the 42.5 degree slopers. I can't hold them for a second, but maybe I just need to get stronger.

Mounting is easy, same as any hangboard, although you will need plywood backing to attach it to drywall since the board's screw holes are only 12 inches apart and won't span the standard 16 or 24 inches between wall studs.

Price is a mark against the Solution. At \$167.36 plus \$29.55 for international shipping, the Solution is one of the priciest hangboards out there. But the Solution's high-quality wood, design and craftsmanship make hangboarding a little less torturous, and that alone makes it worth the price.

—Hayden Carpenter