

Bushcraft



The component parts – on the left is the "Dirty" water bag and the instructions. The "Clean" water bag is on the right. The filter, 300mm dirty hose, 1220mm clean hose, black plastic shutoff clamp and "clean side cap" are on top of the nylon storage bag.

GravityWorks Water Filter

Platypus Outdoors

By Bob Gough



When I received the Platypus "GravityWorks" pump free water filter for review I was immediately impressed by its light weight (305gm) and its compact size (25 x 10cm). However the features that really interested me were the two 4 litre capacity water bags - one for untreated water and one for treated water - and the gravity feed, as, while I have used pump filters for many years and can't fault them, pumping takes time and effort that can be used more productively in camp.

WHAT'S IN THE BOX?

The unit comprises:

- an untreated or "dirty" water bag (with a female quick disconnect fitting);
- a treated or "clean" water bag (with a male quick disconnect fitting);
- a 300mm dirty hose;
- a 1220mm clean hose;
- a plastic shut-off clamp;
- a "clean side cap";
- a filter cartridge.

The unit comes with an instruction manual and its own nylon storage sack.

The zip-lock opening makes filling easy, even in shallow puddles like alpine bogs or rock holes.

Having separate, high capacity clean and dirty water bags is a real benefit, and makes water collection and filtration safer and more convenient.

I used the GravityWorks on a recent trip where I was day hunting out of a base camp. Each day I would roll up the empty dirty water bag, hoses and filter (it is best to keep all parts connected to avoid cross contamination) and carry them in my daypack until I passed a water source on the way back to camp, where I would fill up the dirty water bag. If I needed water during the day, it was a simple matter of filling the dirty water bag and gravity feeding water direct into my hydration system.

The unit comes with an in-line shut off clamp that makes decanting water simple and spill free, and the gravity feed is very fast at a rated four litres in 2.5 minutes.

Those who use "bladder" type hydrations systems will know that collecting water is often a challenge.

The GravityWorks dirty water bag has a patented zip-lock opening at the very top, so you can scoop water into the bag. This makes it much easier to use than other bladder type hydration bags I have used. That said, I always carry a small plastic cup in my daypack so that I can get the last drops out of a puddle!

The GravityWorks filter meets all EPA guidelines for the removal of Bacteria and Protozoa, including Giardia, Cryptosporidium, E. coli, Salmonella and Cholera.

However it does not filter viruses (not many filters do), so if you are in areas where water borne viruses occur treat your water with Micropur Forte tablets after filtering it. Neither will the GravityWorks system filter seawater or chemically contaminated water, e.g. mine tailings, but none of the other water filters I've used do either.

SO HOW DO I USE THE GRAVITYWORKS FILTER?

The unit comes with simple instructions and you can also download the instructions from the website.

For the initial setup:

- ▶ connect the (short) dirty hose to black dirty hose barb; and the (long) clean hose to white clean hose barb;
- ▶ thread the shut-off clamp onto the clean hose;
- ▶ before you use the unit, check that the water flow direction arrow on the filter cartridge is pointing toward the clean container.

FILTER INTEGRITY TEST

Filter Life is stated at up to 1500 litres depending on water conditions. Once you have assembled the unit, or if you drop it from greater than 1.5m, or if you let the filter cartridge freeze, you should conduct a "Filter Integrity Test".

To do this back flush 500ml of water, then take off the clean hose and blow air back through the filter. If you can't blow through the filter it is OK. If you see a steady stream of bubbles you will need to replace the cartridge.

FILTERING WATER

To filter water, all you need to do is fill the dirty water bag with unfiltered water via the zip lock opening. Close the zip lock and hang the dirty water bag by its handles. Connect the male quick connect tube to the clean water bag, then to the filter, then open the shut-off clamp to let the water flow.

PURGING THE FILTER

To purge the filter, filter a small amount of water into clean water bag then hold or hang the clean water bag above the dirty water bag to allow clean water to flow back through the filter until any air bubbles are gone. Re-hang the dirty water bag above the clean bag to filter dirty water.



The Platypus "GravityWorks" water filter in use.

To filter water, fill the dirty water bag with unfiltered water via the zip lock opening. Close the zip lock and hang the dirty water bag by its handles. Connect the male quick connect tube to the clean water bag, then to the filter, then open the shut-off clamp to let the water flow into the clean water bag.

BACKFLUSHING

To backflush, wait until just before dirty bag runs dry and hang the clean bag above the dirty bag. Open the dirty bag at the zip and allow backflush water to run out of reservoir until it runs clear.

PACKING THE UNIT AWAY

To avoid cross contamination leave all the hoses connected, empty all water from the system and lay both water bags flat on top of each other. Wrap the hoses around the filter cartridge and roll both bags around the filter cartridge and hoses and stow the unit in the storage sack.



Purging the Filter.

Filter a small amount of water into the clean water bag then hold or hang the clean water bag above the dirty water bag to allow clean water to flow back through the filter until any air bubbles are gone. Re-hang the dirty water bag above the clean bag to filter dirty water.

It's not really necessary to dry the inside of the Filter Cartridge as the bleach will prevent the growth of mould. However drying the filter will protect against damage from drops or freezing. To dry the filter, remove gray protective bumpers, then remove the white and black thread-on caps and let filter sit at room temperature for at least 1 week.

I've used a number of water filters, and can honestly say that the GravityWorks is simple to use, "set and forget" and treats large quantities of water quickly. If you are looking for a water filter, I can certainly recommend the GravityWorks system highly.

**TO PURCHASE
YOUR GRAVITYWORKS:**

for \$208.00 inc. postage within Aust.

Go to www.sambardeer.com
for Visa or MasterCard payments

OR

EFT to E & L Mason
BSB 704230
Acc. # 100316245
N.B. Reference payment with your name

OR

Cheque or Money Order
payable to E & L Mason,
PO Box 727 Baimsdale Vic 3875.
Ph 03 5156 8278

DISINFECTING THE FILTER

To prevent the growth of bacteria and mould and maintain the optimum flow rate it is a good practice to disinfect the filter before and after long-term storage, or after long-term use for 15 or more consecutive days. To disinfect the filter, remove the hose from the dirty water bag and rinse the dirty water bag with clean water.

Mix a solution of 2 drops of household bleach (without fragrances or dyes) to 1 litre of water in the dirty water bag (be careful with bleach). Agitate the bleach solution in the dirty water bag for a few minutes, then assemble the GravityWorks unit and let the bleach solution filter through system. Once drained, air or towel dry all system parts.

