

4 Steps to Safe Backpack Use

Below are helpful tips to insure you know how to safely use your backpack in order to promote spinal health.



Step 1: Choose Right.

Choosing the right size backpack is the most important step to safe backpack use.

Tip: Bring a friend to help you measure your backpack properly.



Step 2: Pack Right.

The maximum weight of the loaded backpack should not exceed 15 % of your body weight, so pack only what is needed.

Tip: If the backpack forces the wearer to move forward to carry, it's overloaded.



Step 3: Lift Right.

Face the Pack - Bend at the Knees - Use both hands and check the weight of the pack. - Lift with the legs - Apply one shoulder strap and then the other.

Tip: Don't sling the backpack onto one shoulder.



Step 4: Wear Right.

Use both shoulder straps - snug, but not too tight.

Tip: When the backpack has a waist strap - use it.

Dear Parents,

We have long known that your children's spine and posture is a foundation to their neurological health as they grow. While back pain, headaches and disc problems have long been one of the most common complaints among adults, evidence is mounting that back pain among children is increasing and that using overloaded or incorrectly worn backpacks is a primary cause which may result in further complications later. Thousands of children are injured each year by backpacks that are too heavy and may cause repetitive stress injuries (like Carpal Tunnel Syndrome) that come from poor posture. The good news is that these injuries are preventable. Combine education and training with properly designed ergonomic workstations and we can keep our children safe and healthy.

Facts to Consider:

- ❑ There were more than 7,000 emergency room visits each year which were related to improper backpacks and book bags with about half of those injuries occurring in children from 5 to 14 years old, according to the Consumer Product Safety Commission.
- ❑ U.S. study reveals that 6 out of 10 students ages 9 to 20 reported chronic back pain related to heavy backpacks, while among students who carried backpacks weighing no more than 15 percent of their body weight only 2 out of 10 reported chronic back pain.
- ❑ The good news is that a study of children exposed to backpack education revealed that nearly 8 out of 10 middle-school students who changed how they loaded and wore their backpacks reported less pain and strain in their backs, necks and shoulders.

If you need any assistance with selecting the appropriate backpacks for your children, please don't hesitate to give me a call!

In Spinal Health,

Dr. Mark W. Ashley
Family Chiropractor