

PHYSIO TIPS



For consultation:

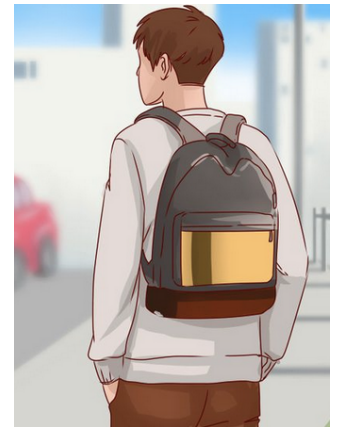
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BACK(PACK) TO SCHOOL

(WHAT SHOULD I CHOOSE FOR MY CHILD?)

Many students use backpacks to carry their school books and supplies, but child health experts warn that improper use can lead to muscle and joint injury, neck and shoulder pain, as well as posture problems.

The American Academy of Paediatrics (AAP) suggests that: parents and kids choose a lightweight backpack with wide, padded shoulders; two shoulder straps; a padded back; and a waist strap. A rolling backpack might be a good choice for heavy loads, but they may be hard to roll in snow and must be carried up stairs. Children should always use both shoulder straps and tighten them so the pack is close to the body and held two inches above the waist.



Parents are advised to make sure that the loaded backpack doesn't weigh more than 10 to 15% of the child's body weight. Heavier items should be packed closest to the centre of the back.

Teach kids to bend using both knees when wearing or lifting a heavy backpack, instead of bending at the waist. Back and core strengthening exercises will help build strong muscles to bear the load, according to a news release from the AAP.

According to Paediatric Orthopaedic Society of North America (PASNA), **parents can help:**

- Encourage your student to tell you about numbness, tingling, or discomfort in the arms or legs which may indicate poor backpack fit or too much weight being carried.
- Watch your child put on or take off the backpack to see if it is a struggle. If the backpack seems too heavy for the child, have them remove some of the books and carry them in their arms to ease load on the back.
- Do not ignore any back pain in a child or teenager.
- Talk to the school about lightening the load. Team up with other parents to encourage changes like on-line textbooks.
- Encourage your child to stop at his or her locker when time permits throughout the day to drop off or exchange heavier books.
- If your child has back pain that does not improve, consult a physiotherapist.

