

If you weigh: **Your backpack
should weigh
less than:**
(all in pounds)

90	9-13.5
100	10-15
110	11-16.5
120	12-18
130	13-19.5
140	14-21
150	15-22.5
160	16-24
170	17-25
180	18-25
190	19-25
200	20-25

*** No one should carry more than 25 pounds.**



If you are experiencing recurrent or chronic neck, back or joint pain, schedule an appointment to see your primary care physician. They may determine physical therapy is needed. It is much better to take care of pain and problems early and while still young to try to avoid future problems.

Provided by:
Department of Physical Therapy
University Health Center
706-542-8634



How to carry your **BACKPACK**

To Reduce Neck and Joint Pain/Injury



The Consumer Product Safety Commission reports backpack-related injuries are up **33%** since 1996.

Carrying a backpack improperly may lead to improper spine alignment causing fatigue and strain and may significantly alter the posture and gait of youth.

To help avoid injury, recognize the following **WARNING SIGNS** that the backpack is too heavy:

- Change In posture when wearing the backpack
- Struggling when putting on or taking off the backpack
- Pain when wearing the backpack
- Tingling or numbness in arms and legs, mostly arms
- Red marks on the shoulders

GENERAL TIPS

In addition to weight restrictions, the following instructions are recommended for the proper use of the backpacks:

Wear both straps

- Use of one strap causes one side of the body to bear the weight of the backpack. This can be true even with one-strap backpacks that cross the body.

Remove and put on backpacks carefully.

- Keep the trunk of your body stable and avoid excessive twisting.

Wear the backpack over the strongest mid-back muscles.

- Pay close attention to the way the backpack is positioned on the back. It should rest evenly in the middle of the back.
- Shoulder straps should be adjusted to allow the person to put on and take off the backpack without difficulty and permit free movement of the arms.

Lighten the load.

(see chart on the outside)

- Keep the load to 10-15% or less of the student's body weight.
- Carry only those items that are required for the day.
- Each night remove articles that can be left at home.
- Organize the contents of the backpack by placing the heaviest items closest to the back to reduce kinetic forces that cause postural misalignment and overwork muscles.

Have you weighed your backpack lately?

Pay attention to the type of backpack.

Yours should have:

- Wide straps. Narrow straps can dig into your shoulders!
- Waist belt

Even better...use a backpack with wheels!

WRONG

Notice rounded shoulders

Too heavy



CORRECT

Wide straps

Light Load
(no more than
10%-15% of
body weight)



WRONG

Straps need to be on both shoulders

