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HOW TO AVOID PAIN FROM CARRYING A BACKPACK AT SCHOOL

Read more inside on The Ideal Position For Carrying A Backpack,
Backpack Strategies for Parents & Students, and Exercise of the Month!

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HOW TO AVOID PAIN FROM CARRYING A BACKPACK AT SCHOOL

Do you worry about hurting your back or neck while carrying a heavy backpack? Is there a way to properly carry your backpack? At Amber Hill Therapy Centers, our physical therapists work with students from elementary to college-aged dealing with aches and pains from overloaded packs.

Back and neck pain prevention in school-aged and college students often involves managing backpacks filled with books, laptops, and workout clothes. Poor postural habits and incorrect lifting contribute to students' problems every school year.

There are multiple factors related to how and why back pain starts; fortunately, our physical therapists have solutions for resolving pain and, even more critical, preventing it from ever starting in the first place!

At Amber Hill Therapy Centers, our physical therapists will give you solutions to lift, hold and carry your backpack correctly. Request an appointment today to learn more about how physical therapy can help prevent problems from your backpack this school year!

Why Is Posture Important When Using A Backpack?

When people think of posture, they usually imagine someone sitting upright or someone in the military standing at attention. Posture is another way of saying a person's body's position(s) in space.

Most people don't know that posture includes how we move, like our lifting postures or walking postures. When the spine is in its natural position, the vertebrae are stacked up over one another. This is what people call "good posture" (also referred to as a neutral spine).

When we hold this neutral spine posture, our body absorbs and distributes stresses from everyday activities such as sitting, standing, and walking or more intense activities such as running and jumping.

An outdated concept is trying to always stay in one posture. Our spine is designed to move, so our posture should also move. It is nearly impossible to sustain any position, and now we know it is unnecessary for a healthy spine.

The spine does not like to remain in any position for extended times, particularly the slumped or slouched posture. These positions lead to excessive strain on your joints and muscles.

Posture changes occur over time; most people ignore them until they notice aches and pains. Unfortunately, the longer we wait to address it, the harder it is to restore it to normal.

Learning to find your ideal posture is key to moving and feeling better. Your body is designed to align perfectly to allow proper movement, breathing, and blood circulation. This means that your posture should adjust depending on the situation or activity.

Stop letting pain get in the way. Give us a call or visit www.amberhillpt.com today!

Correct and incorrect postures



THE IDEAL POSITION FOR CARRYING A BACKPACK

Our first step will be to find your natural posture. A simple tip for finding your natural posture starts by lifting your breast bone (i.e., sternum) towards the sky. This will naturally cause your spine to straighten out, lifting you into your natural posture. Remembering to return to this position will help you maintain your natural lower back posture (i.e., lordosis).

The neutral posture while carrying a backpack is often described as “keeping your back straight.” It is OK to emphasize and perhaps even exaggerate this posture so you can essentially lock your spinal joints and prevent unnecessary strain. Ideally, you will use your muscles to perform the task.

When you are lifting a heavy pack, or for that matter, even if it is just a single book, use proper mechanics and maintain a straight spine with lordosis in your lower back. This ensures your body mechanics are sound!

Choosing The Right Backpack

It all starts with choosing the right backpack. If you’re shopping for a new backpack this season, look for one with two shoulder straps, a padded back, and one with wide shoulder straps and a waist belt. It’s also important for a backpack to be lightweight.

When carrying a backpack filled with books, laptops, or other objects, the key is to position the backpack so that it rests on the hips rather than the shoulders. Start by placing the pack so the

bottom rests at the waist, and cinch up the waist belt, so it is snug. If you positioned the backpack correctly, you should be able to easily lift the shoulder straps off your shoulders without actually raising the pack.

Another tip is to organize the backpack’s contents so that heavier items are lower and closer to the center. Remember to use both straps to help distribute the backpack’s weight and avoid resting the entire weight of a loaded pack on one side of the body.

Request An Appointment Today!

At Amber Hill Therapy Centers, our therapists will assess your mobility and strength, and we will educate you on identifying your natural posture to ensure you protect your spine from the common injuries associated with lifting, carrying, and typical tasks you will perform at school.

Sources:
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30252425/>
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27285608/>
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5889545/>

**Get Your Life Back with
Amber Hill Therapy Centers!**

*Make an appointment today to start
living your life again, pain-free!*

BACKPACK STRATEGIES FOR PARENTS & STUDENTS

Loading the Backpack

1. A child's backpack should weigh no more than about 10% of his or her body weight. This means a student weighing 100 pounds shouldn't wear a loaded school backpack heavier than about 10 pounds.
2. Load heaviest items closest to the child's back (the back of the pack).
3. Arrange books and materials so they won't slide around in the backpack.
4. Check what your child carries to school and brings home. Make sure the items are necessary for the day's activities.
5. If the backpack is too heavy or tightly packed, your child can hand carry a book or other item outside the pack.
6. If the backpack is too heavy on a regular basis, consider using a book bag on wheels if your child's school allows it.

Wearing the Backpack

1. Distribute weight evenly by using both straps. Wearing a pack slung over one shoulder can cause a child to lean to one side, curving the spine and causing pain or discomfort.
2. Select a pack with well-padded shoulder straps. Shoulders




- and necks have many blood vessels and nerves that can cause pain and tingling in the neck, arms, and hands when too much pressure is applied.
3. Adjust the shoulder straps so that the pack fits snugly on the child's back. A pack that hangs loosely from the back can pull the child backwards and strain muscles.
 4. Wear the waist belt if the backpack has one. This helps distribute the pack's weight more evenly.
 5. The bottom of the pack should rest in the curve of the lower back. It should never rest more than four inches below the child's waistline.
 6. School backpacks come in different sizes for different ages. Choose the right size pack for your child as well as one with enough room for necessary school items.
 7. Only put items in your backpack that you need for the day.

EXERCISE OF THE MONTH

FORWARD BEND - LONG SITTING

Sit with legs straight out and lower back tall. Bend forward keeping lower back tall to feel a stretch in the back of your thighs. This helps with lower back pain. Hold for 20 counts and repeat as needed.



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IT'S IMPORTANT NOT TO MISS YOUR APPOINTMENTS

We are here to help you enjoy your life, pain-free! To make sure of this, we ask our patients to commit to their scheduled appointments. If you are feeling sick or have to reschedule, please call in to ask for other options. Our practice is dedicated to helping our patients identify the cause of their pain and creating a custom treatment program that will allow them to return to normal activities pain-free.

Your health is our highest priority. Give us a call or visit www.amberhillpt.com today!