



SAFE USE OF BACKPACKS

Backpacks are a popular and practical way for carry schoolbooks and supplies. Backpacks are a better option than shoulder or messenger bags for carrying books and supplies because the weight of the pack is evenly distributed across your body.

Backpacks are designed to distribute the weight of the load among some of the body's strongest muscles. When used correctly, backpacks can be a good way to carry the necessities of the school/workday.

The Safest Backpacks have the Following Four Features:

- Two wide, padded straps that go over both shoulders
- A padded waist or chest belt to distribute weight more evenly across the body
- Multiple compartments to distribute the weight of the load
- The width of the backpack should not be greater than the torso

Correct Methods to Wear a Backpack:

- Always use both shoulder straps! Carrying a backpack on one shoulder can strain muscles and may increase curvature of the spine.
- Tighten the straps! This keeps the backpack close to the body. The straps should hold the pack two inches above the waist.
- Pack light! The pack should **NOT** weigh more than 15-20% of your total body weight.
- Organize the backpack! Use all of the compartments. Pack heavier items closest to the body.
- Empty the extra load whenever possible! If possible, remove an item that you will not be using.
- Bend using both knees! Do not bend at the waist when wearing or lifting a heavy backpack.