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BACKPACK SAFETY

Make sure your backpack is not causing you problems!!

Carrying a heavy backpack can be convenient, but can lead to :

- Strain in the back, neck and shoulder areas
- Poor posture and eventual long term back problems such as disc degeneration and arthritis
- Worsening or aggravation of scoliosis
- Pressure on nerves leading to numbness, tingling and weakness
- Increased risk of falling and causing injury

Backpack Guidelines

1. The weight of the backpack should be no more than 15% of your body weight.
2. Carry the pack with straps over both shoulders and a waist strap if available.
3. Your pack should rest in the middle of your back, and not above the shoulders.
4. The backpack should sit at least 2 inches above the waist.
5. Pack the heaviest books closer to your body.
6. Try not to carry any extras in the pack such as lunch box, clothes, CD player, etc.
7. You should not have to lean forward or to one side to be able to carry the pack.
8. When lifting the pack bend at the knees and lift the pack to your waist as your legs straighten.
9. Choose a pack with padded shoulders and hip/chest straps.
10. Shoulder straps should rest comfortably on your shoulders with arms free to move.

How much should you carry?

Student Weight	Backpack Weight
50 lbs	5 - 7.5 lbs
80 lbs	8 - 12 lbs
100 lbs	10 - 15 lbs
120 lbs	12 - 18 lbs
150 lbs	15 - 23 lbs