

HINDMARSH PHYSIOTHERAPY AND SPORTS INJURY CLINIC

281 Port Rd Hindmarsh
Ph 8346 2000

IF YOU WANT HAPPY HEALTHY BACKS

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT BACK PACKS



When kids are heading back to school we are always asked about Back packs. Considering that 60-80% of us will experience back pain in our lifetime, choosing the correct back pack for us or our children should be a priority

For years we've been hearing how bad it is for kids to carry heavy backpacks to school. We've worried that they could be doing permanent damage to their backs.

But now, recent studies are suggesting maybe we've got it wrong. In fact, kids should be encouraged to walk to school carrying their backpacks, even if they are heavy. Walking to and from school while carrying a schoolbag could count as moderate activity and therefore it should be encouraged, and not discouraged

SOME THINGS TO LOOK FOR WHEN CHOOSING A BACK PACK OR ASSESSING THE ONE YOU'VE GOT

But providing a good back pack is crucial, and educating your children on its proper use is also important

- Wide adjustable shoulder straps that are comfortable and sit well on the shoulder
- Waist and chest straps to help transfer some of the load to the hips and pelvis
- A padded back-support that allows the pack to fit 'snugly' on the back
- The backpack must fit the child. Don't buy a big pack to 'grow' into, when sitting with the backpack on, the pack should not extend higher than the child's shoulders
- Be sturdy and reasonably water-resistant (or have a rain cover). The material should be firm to prevent sagging. The base should be abrasive-resistant and/or reinforced.
- Have a moulded frame and/or an adjustable hip or waist strap, so most of the weight rests on your hips and pelvis, not on your shoulders and spine. The waist/hip belt is particularly important to secure the load when walking, running or cycling.
- Have a padded or quilted back for comfortable wear.
- Have compression straps at the sides to draw the load together and bring it close to your back. They'll also help stabilise the contents of a partially filled pack.
- Have a sternum (chest) strap to help stabilise the load and prevent the straps slipping off the shoulders. It should sit about 10 cm down from the Adam's apple.
- Have several pockets to help with even weight distribution and organisation inside. A drink bottle holder on the side keeps potential spillages outside the pack.



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SO HERES HOW TO USE IT PROPERLY.



Backpacks are designed to carry a load safely — symmetrical, stable and close to the spine — but not if they're worn casually slung over just one shoulder.

Put it on safely. Try to lift it up by the loop with both hands and bent knees, facing the straps and pushing up with the legs. Place one strap over the shoulder, then the other, or put it on the edge of a desk and loop both arms through together.

A backpack should be worn so the waist strap (or hip belt) sits firmly where intended. Shoulder straps should be adjusted so that you don't have to lean forward and the base of the pack rests on their hips, not on the bum.

Pack your back pack properly. Items shouldn't be able to move around; the heaviest ones should be packed closest to your back to reduce stress on the spine, lighter items away from the spine.

Pack only what you need to keep the weight down.

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HOW HEAVY CAN IT BE

For years, the rule of thumb has been that children shouldn't carry more than 10 per cent of their body weight on their backs. But there's plenty of more recent research suggesting it's okay to carry more than that.

But parents still need to be careful that their kids aren't carrying too much.

With a young primary school child who might weigh 20 kilos, how much do you want them to be carrying? Half of their body weight? No. Whereas a secondary school child, whose weight may vary from 50 to 70 kilos, maybe they could carry 10 kilos

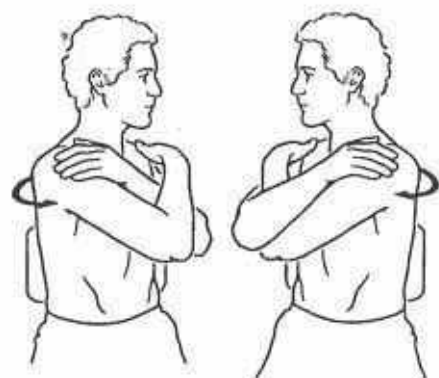
THE THREE MAIN REASONS FOR BAGS CAUSING PAIN

The three main reasons for bags causing back pain are: carrying a heavier load than you are used to; the type of bag you are carrying; and the way you are carrying the bag. Address these three and it should help.

THREE EXERCISES TO HELP

Here are three exercises to relieve back pain caused by carrying a heavy bag, all of them should be pain free.

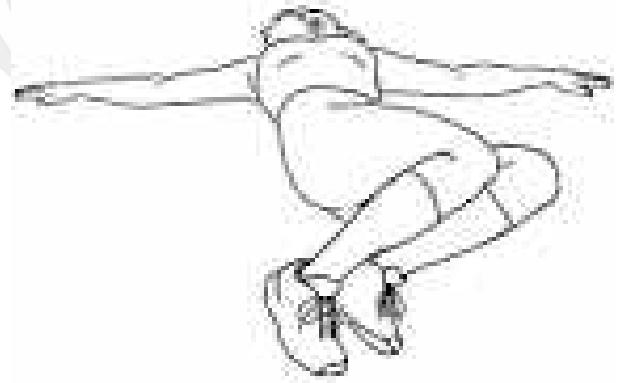
Chair twists: Shuffle your bottom to the front of the chair and reach around to hold onto the back of the chair, gently pull feeling the stretch through your mid and upper back, turn the other way and do the same. Repeat ten times.



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Knee Rolls: Lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet on the floor. Drop your knees to the floor one side and then to the other. Repeat ten times.



Foam roller breathing : Ly on a 90cm foam roller with your head on one end and your bottom on the other, your hips and knees bent and your feet on the floor. Take your arms out the sides and turn the palms of your hands to face the ceiling. Breathe gently from your diaphragm (the upper part of your tummy.) You can also use our fabulous posture poles for this or even a rolled blanket.



For a more complete set of exercises to help maintain and improve spinal mobility visit our [5 MINUTE BACK EXERCISE](#) and [5 MINUTE MID BACK EXERCISE](#) handouts

If you're still having issues of back pain or poor posture with your children, feel free to make an appointment with one of our physiotherapists. We will be able to assess your child's back, give the best treatment and exercises to ensure they have no pain and grow healthy.

We can help you with postural assessments, strengthening and conditioning exercises, pilates and core programs as well as sports injury prevention screening.

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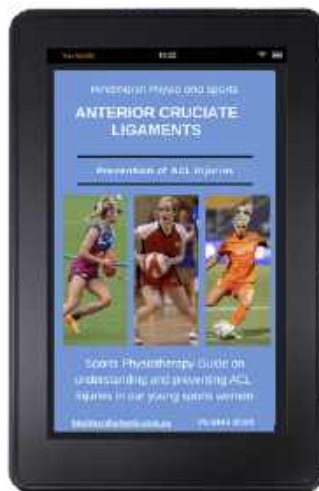
We are committed to supporting you and your familys' physiotherapy needs. Please reach out to our team if there is anything we can do.

As Physios, we provide extensive education as part of our management and prevention programs, but realize not everyone can find the time or have the confidence to make an appointment. You are welcome to download these informative E-books that you may find useful to get you on your way.

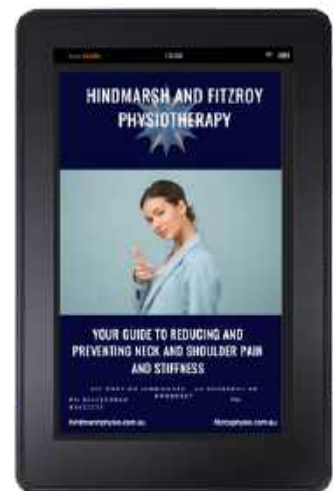
OTHER RESOURCES



WHAT INJURY IS THIS



ACL INJURY PREVENTION



NECK PAIN GUIDE

To access our free E-book Resource just click the images above

You can call us on 83462000 at Hindmarsh or **[CONTACT US ONLINE HERE](#)** if you would like an appointment

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