

# Is Your >BACKPACK< too heavy?

Backpacks are a good way to carry books, homework and other belongings from place to place.

To help avoid injury, it is important to make sure your backpack isn't too heavy.



## Wearing a Backpack

Most injuries are caused by a backpack that is too heavy. To cope, you may arch your back, lean forward or lean to one side. This can cause back pain, neck and shoulder strain, and poor posture.

To help prevent injury, your backpack should not weigh more than 10 to 15 percent of your weight.

For example, if you weigh 120 pounds, your backpack should not weigh more than 12 to 18 pounds.

### Dos and Don'ts When Wearing a Backpack

#### Do

- Wear both straps. They should fit comfortably on your shoulders and under your arms.
- The bottom of the backpack should rest in the contour of your lower back.
- The backpack should sit evenly in the middle of your back.

#### Don't

- Don't use only one strap.
- Don't let the backpack sag down toward your buttocks.
- Don't fill your backpack too full.

## How much does your backpack weigh?

Put your backpack on a scale and see how much it weighs. Make sure it is filled with everything you carry around each day.

My backpack weighs \_\_\_\_\_ pounds.

Look at the chart below. Find the number closest to your weight. Write down how much your backpack should weigh.

My backpack should weigh \_\_\_\_\_ pounds or less.

Your Weight (pounds)	Your Backpack's Weight (pounds)
100	15
110	16.6
120	18
130	19.5
140	21
150	22.5
160	24
170	25.5
180	27
190	28.5
200	30

### Does your backpack:

- weigh too much?
- weigh just the right amount?

## Now what?

If your backpack isn't too heavy you don't need to do anything.

If your backpack is too heavy try:

- cleaning it out each week
- taking something out and carry it in your arms
- carrying your lunch bag separately
- leaving an extra pair of shoes and a sweatshirt at school during the winter months.

You can also ask your teachers if there are things you can leave at school.

