

# 10 Tips for a Healthy Back

1. Exercise every day.
2. Eat healthy foods and drink lots of water.
3. When sitting and standing, keep your shoulders back & squared...and try not to "hunch" your back.
4. Stretch before and after sports.
5. Don't overload your backpack!
6. Stretch your legs and back after each hour of sitting – between classes is ideal.
7. Never cradle the phone (or anything else) between your head and shoulder.
8. Sleep on your back or side instead of your stomach.
9. Get enough rest and sleep on a good pillow and firm mattress.
10. Have regular spinal check-ups.

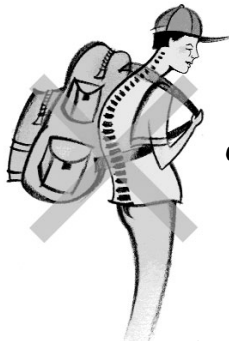
# Carrying Your Backpack

- DON'T sling your backpack on one side – this can cause the spine to lean, putting stress on the joints and muscles in the mid - and lower - back.
- DO wear both straps and adjust them so that the pack fits snugly. Check the fit-you should be able to slide your hand between the backpack and your back.
- DO use the waist strap because it reduces the strain on your back and transfers some of the load to your hips.
- DON'T carry your backpack too low as this will cause you to lean forward and puts the weight on your upper back.



# Lighten Your Load

Your back will thank you!



It's easy to calculate your "MAXIMUM LOAD."

1. Weigh yourself and record it on the chart.
2. Figure out your "maximum load."  
It's 10% of body weight for Grades K-8 and 15% for Grades 9-12. So, if you're in Grade 5 and weigh 90 pounds, then  $.10 \times 90 = 9$  pounds, your personal "maximum load." Record on chart.
3. Weigh your stuff.  
EASY WAY: Weigh your loaded pack on your bathroom scale & record opposite under "loaded pack."  
SCIENTIFIC WAY: Weigh each item on a kitchen or postal scale, including your empty pack, record them, add them up and put total under "loaded pack."
4. Compare your "maximum load" to your "loaded pack." Surprised? If you're over, then maybe it's time to lighten your load!

S-s-straighten up!  
Unless you want to be leaning like this all of your life, lose some of the load off your shoulder.



	pounds	kilograms
1. My weight		
2. My maximum load		
<b>My stuff</b>	<b>It weighs...</b>	
My pack		
My books (list them)		
My binders (list them)		
Notebook		
Shoes		
Sports gear		
Lunch/snack		
Water bottle		
Drinks		
CD's or computer disks		
Pencil case		
Other stuff		
<b>3. TOTAL WEIGHT OF LOADED PACK</b>		
<b>MY MAXIMUM LOAD</b>		
<b>4. I AM OVER/UNDER BY</b>		