

Fall

Summer holidays are over. The long trek back to school and work is beginning. Here are a few tips to consider when carrying a heavy load to and from work or when selecting a backpack for your child. By following these simple tips you can help minimize injury and alleviate the pain of carrying a heavy load.



If you feel pain during or after carrying a heavy load, your physiotherapist can help.

Susannah Britnell (Dayan Physiotherapy and Pelvic Floor Clinic) teaches her children Madeline and Marcus proper carrying for packs and shoulder bags.

physio⁴ Carrying Tips to prevent injury, alleviate pain and keep you moving for life.

1. **Split the load.** Divide groceries into two lighter bags to distribute the weight more evenly. If carrying just one bag, alternate sides. Always carrying a bag, purse or briefcase on one side can put strain on your neck, shoulder and lower back – switch it up.
2. **Fit your backpack.** Choose a pack with two padded straps and a chest or waist belt to provide adequate support. Tighten the straps so the pack fits against your upper back and the waist belt is snugly fastened around your hips. Place heavier items in the center and close to your back.
3. **Keeping it close lightens the load.** Carry a purse with a strap diagonally across your body, messenger style to distribute the weight more evenly. This will encourage a more efficient posture. Your physiotherapist can show you how to improve posture and keep you pain free.
4. **Push rather than pull luggage.** The new all directional wheels make it even easier to maneuver. Keep your feet close to the luggage to maintain a more upright body position and minimize strain.

To contact a physiotherapist for advice on ways to develop good posture and avoid neck and shoulder strain, visit www.movingforlife.ca.