



The American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc.

1, 2, 3's of Basic Backpack Wearing



1 Pack It



Utilize **different compartments** and pockets to distribute weight

- Heavier items closer to the back center of the backpack
- Lighter items in the front of the backpack
- Sharp items away from the back



lightest



mid-weight



heaviest

Lighten the load so it is no more than 10% of your child's weight; heavy backpacks can cause falls and spinal damage

10%

2 Put It On

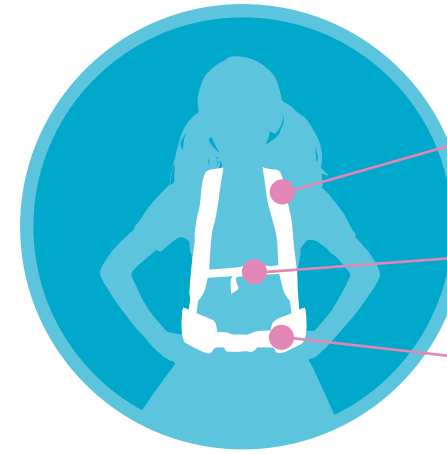


Teach your child to pick up the backpack by **bending and lifting in the knees** instead of the waist to prevent back injury

"The selection of a backpack is a family affair. By joining together as a team children will realize the importance of proper backpack wearing. It should be considered a fun family activity. The bottom line message is to have children begin to take more responsibility for their physical health."

-Dr. Karen Jacobs, Occupational Therapist & Ergonomist

3 Adjust & Carry



Always **use both shoulder straps** to prevent injury

Adjust the **sternum strap**

Secure the **hip belt**

The backpack should **rest snugly** against the back



Watch for **warning signs** that the backpack is too heavy, including:

- **Difficulty** when putting on or taking off the backpack
- **Pain** when wearing the backpack
- **Tingling** or numbness in the arms or legs
- Red **strap marks** over the anterior part of the shoulders
- Any change in side to side **posture** while wearing the backpack

shoulders

hips

Adjust the shoulder and waist straps so that the pack fits comfortably.

To ensure a proper fit, make sure the backpack does not extend past your child's shoulders, or below the top of the hipbones.

Happy Back to School!

from



The American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc.

The American Occupational Therapy Association advances the quality, availability, use, and support of occupational therapy through standard-setting, advocacy, education, and research on behalf of its members and the public.

Occupational therapy is a science-driven, evidence-based profession that enables people of all ages to live life to its fullest by helping them promote health and prevent—or live better with—illness, injury, or disability.

DISCLAIMER:

The American Occupational Therapy Association does not endorse any products.

To learn more, please visit www.aota.org/backpack