

# School Bag Checklist



A new school year often means a new backpack. It's important to choose the right type of bag to reduce the amount of stress placed on the spine.

Our Physiotherapists suggest the following to help minimize the risk of injury from backpacks:

## **BUYING A SCHOOL BAG:**

Wide shoulder straps that are comfortable and sit well on the shoulder.

Waist and chest straps to help transfer some of the load to hips and pelvis.

A padded back support that allows the pack to fit 'snugly' on the back and protect the child from being poked by sharp edges on the objects such as pencils, rulers, notebooks, e.t.c.

Have multiple compartments to distribute the load and prevent it from shifting.

Check for a backpack which carries an endorsement from a professional health organisation.

## **SIZING:**

The top of the backpack should not be more than 3cm higher than the shoulders so that the child can look up at the ceiling without hitting it.

The bottom of the bag should be slightly lower than the iliac crest.

If your child's bag has a waist strap, it should wrap around the body just below the iliac crest. This allows some of the bag's weight to be taken by the hips, reducing the load on the back and shoulders.

If the bag contains a sternal strap, this should be positioned 6cm below the collarbone.

When sitting with the backpack on, the pack should not extend higher than the child's shoulders.

## **CONSIDERATIONS WITH USE:**

Child should not be carrying more than 10% of their body weight.

Keep the load close to the spine – pack the heaviest items nearest your child's back.

Child must wear both straps at all times in order to distribute weight evenly across both shoulders, rather than put the strain on one.

Always wear the waist belt.

Encourage your child to be organised when packing their school bag to ensure they are only carrying what they need.

To get your child's backpack fitted properly by a Physiotherapist, [book an appointment online](#) at one of our clinics.

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## **Top tips for keeping fit this summer**

Summer is here! While we take a break and enjoy the holidays away from work, school and the normality of life, the one thing we still need to focus on is our health. Being organised is the best way to still achieve your results this summer.



Our top tips for staying active this summer include:

**Exercising early** – Start your day off right and get your exercise in early while the sun is still low and the temperatures are not too high (between 5am and 8am). The hottest part of the day is never the best time to exercise as you're more likely to lose fluids faster, fatigue more easily and get burnt. Alternatively, the end of the day between 6-8pm can also be a cooler time to exercise if you're a night walker.

**Keep the fluids up** – Summer heat equals more sweating which means we lose a greater volume of water during exercise. Staying hydrated helps your heart pump blood more easily to your working muscles and also improves muscle efficiency. Do not wait until you are thirsty before you re-hydrate, get into the habit of taking a water bottle with you everywhere. Remember to hydrate well before, during and after exercise to help prevent dehydration and help your performance.

**Exercise with friends** – A summer best spent is with friends. Combine spending time with your friends and exercise to help each other push through the sweat and heat barrier. Use some of the ideas above and organise an early walk, run, swim, surf or gym session.

**Get wet daily** – Take every opportunity this summer to exercise in the water. Fun activities include swimming, kayaking, paddle boarding, kite surfing, canoeing, surfing and snorkeling.

**Deal with those injuries, niggles and pains** – There is nothing worse than not being able to do what you love because of pain or an injury. Start your summer right and seek help from your Physiotherapist so you can enjoy a pain free summer.