

Proper Backpack Fit, Weight

With the new school year fast approaching, **Peak Physical Therapy & Sports Performance**, a South Shore practice specializing in unique programs that provide comprehensive treatment in orthopedic, spine and sports medicine specialties is providing a little education on the long-term effects of carrying a heavy backpack.

"We've all seen those comical pictures of children carrying backpacks that look as though they outweigh them but there's nothing funny about the damage a too heavy backpack can do to a child's spine," said Eric Edelman, PT and owner of Peak Physical Therapy &

Sports Performance.

Here are some basic tips suggested by Edelman:

- The backpack should weigh only 10-15% of your child's bodyweight; i.e. if they weigh 100 pounds, their backpack should carry 10-15 pounds of books
- The heaviest books should be kept closest to the body and the lightest books furthest away
- Straps should be adjusted properly so that the backpack sits no lower than the top of the buttocks
- It's ideal to purchase a backpack that has additional support straps that go across the chest and waist to help evenly distribute the weight
- Wear the backpack us-

ing both straps and not slung over one shoulder

The long-term effects of carrying an overweight or unevenly distributed backpack can cause:

- a strained neck and shoulders leading to headaches
- damage to the spine
- reduced breathing capacity due to poor posture
- scoliosis
- back pain and muscle spasms
- excessive strain on joints

"Help your child determine what's essential to bring in their backpack and leave the rest at home!" said Edelman.

