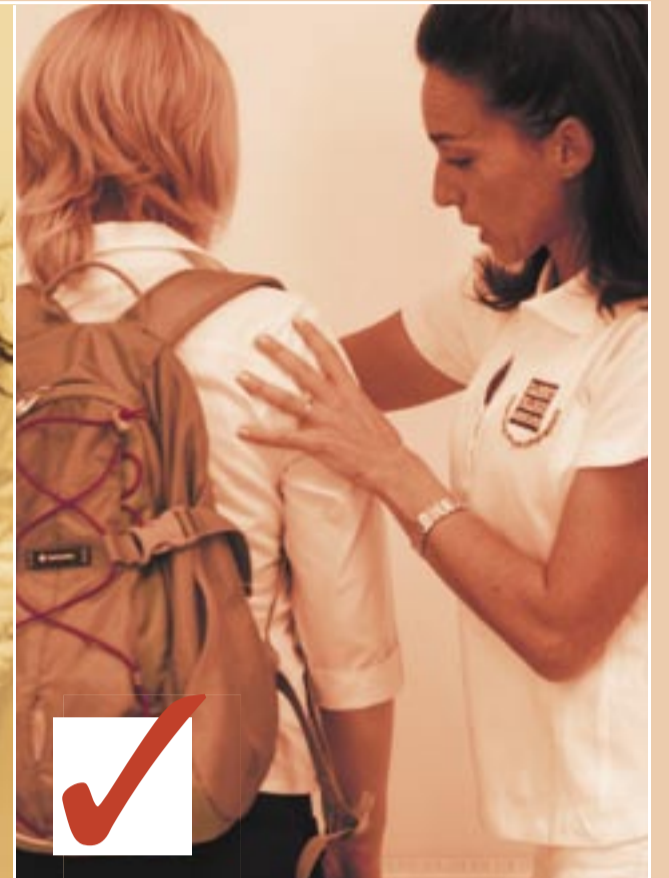


BACKS for the FUTURE



How to wear your schoolbag

A heavy backpack can put stress on your neck and shoulder muscles. But it might not be the weight of the bag that causes back pain – it's the type of bag and how you carry it that really counts:

- Choose a sturdy backpack from an outdoor activity shop rather than a fashion bag. These bags are designed for carrying heavy weights over long distances and will protect your posture
- Always pack your bag correctly. Heavy objects should be packed first and on the inside so they are close to the spine and the

pelvis. This will prevent the back from arching and take the weight off your shoulder region. Adjust the shoulder straps and fasten the waist belt so that the bag sits snugly against the entire back

- Look for a bag with wide, padded straps and a waist-belt which will redistribute weight from the shoulders and back to the pelvis
- Wear the bag over both shoulders. You might think this is uncool but it will spread the weight evenly over your body and avoid placing uneven pressure on one side of your spine.



Desks, chairs and equipment

- Make the most of the support your chair is designed to offer by bringing it close to the table and sitting back in the seat rather than perching on the edge
- Sloping desks were ideal as they prevented slouching, but most have been replaced by flat tables to create space. While working at a table you should try imagining having a string

attached to the top of your head, which is lifting you into a tall, upright position. This should help you avoid hunching over your work

- Our bodies are not designed to spend too much time sitting in one position. Try to stand up and stretch between long lessons and be active during breaks.