



Prairielands Chiropractic Clinic

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Chiropractic, Massage, Yoga

Fall 2009

Backpack Misuse Leads to Chronic Back Pain, Doctors of Chiropractic

Back pain is pervasive among American adults, but a new and disturbing trend is emerging. Young children are suffering from back pain much earlier than previous generations, and the use of overweight backpacks is a contributing factor, according to the American Chiropractic Association (ACA). In fact, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission reports that backpack-related injuries sent more than 7,000 people to the emergency room in 2001 alone.

"In my own practice, I have noticed a marked increase in the number of young children who are complaining about back, neck and shoulder pain," said Dr. Scott Bautch, a member of the ACA's Council on Occupational Health. "The first question I ask these patients is, 'Do you carry a backpack to school?' Almost always, the answer is 'Yes.'"

This new back pain trend among youngsters isn't surprising when you consider the disproportionate amounts of weight they carry in their backpacks - often slung over just one shoulder.



According to Dr. Bautch, a recent study conducted in Italy found that the average child carries a backpack that would be the equivalent of a 39-pound burden for a 176-pound man, or a 29-pound load for a 132-pound woman.

Of those children carrying heavy backpacks to school, 60 percent had experienced back pain as a result.

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According to Dr. Bautch, preliminary results of studies being conducted in France show that the longer a child wears a backpack, the longer it takes for a curvature or deformity of the spine to correct itself. "The question that needs to be addressed next is, 'Does it ever return to normal?'" Dr. Bautch added.

The results of these types of studies are especially important as more and more school districts - many of them in urban areas - remove lockers from the premises, forcing students to carry their books with them all day long.

The problem has become so widespread, in fact, that the California State Assembly passed legislation that would force school districts to develop ways of reducing the weight of students' backpacks. Similar legislation is being considered in New Jersey as well. The ACA believes that limiting the backpack's weight to no more than 10 percent of the child's body weight and urging the use of ergonomically correct backpacks are possible solutions.

What Can You Do?

The ACA offers the following tips to help prevent the needless pain that backpack misuse could cause the students in your household.

- Make sure your child's backpack weighs no more than 5 to 10 percent of his or her body weight. A heavier backpack will cause your child to bend

forward in an attempt to support the weight on his or her back, rather than on the shoulders, by the straps.

- Bigger is not necessarily better. The more room there is in a backpack, the more your child will carry- and the heavier the backpack will be.
- The shoulder straps should be adjustable so the backpack can be fitted to your child's body. Straps that are too loose can cause the backpack to dangle uncomfortably and cause spinal misalignment and pain.
- If the backpack is still too heavy, talk to your child's teacher. Ask if your child could leave the heaviest books at school, and bring home only lighter hand-out materials or workbooks.
- Although the use of rollerpacks - or backpacks on wheels - has become popular in recent years, the ACA is now recommending that they be used cautiously and on a limited basis by only those students who are not physically able to carry a backpack. Some school districts have begun banning the use of rollerpacks because they clutter hallways, resulting in dangerous trips and falls.

Chiropractic Care Can Help...

If you or your child experiences any pain or discomfort resulting from backpack use, call your doctor of chiropractic. Doctors of chiropractic are licensed and trained to diagnose and treat patients of all ages and will use a gentler type of treatment for children. In addition, doctors of chiropractic can also prescribe exercises designed to help children develop strong muscles, along with instruction in good nutrition, posture and sleeping habits.



Dr. Langille is a chiropractor for all ages.

BACKPACK SAFETY CHECKLIST

AMERICAN CHIROPRACTIC ASSOCIATION OFFERS BACKPACK SAFETY CHECKLIST

One of the fundamental pieces of any back to school ensemble is, of course, the backpack, and although they're practical, backpacks are a leading cause of back and shoulder pain for millions of children and adolescents. As students head back to school, the American Chiropractic Association (ACA) offers parents advice on preventing unnecessary backpack pain and injuries.

The ACA offers the following checklist to help parents select the best possible backpack for their children:

- **Is the backpack the correct size for your child?**

The backpack should never be wider or longer than your child's torso, and the pack should not hang more than 4 inches below the waistline. A backpack that hangs too low increases the weight on the shoulders, causing your child to lean forward when walking.

- **Does the backpack have two wide, padded shoulder straps?**

Non-padded straps are not only uncomfortable, but also they can place unnecessary pressure on the neck and shoulder muscles.

- **Does your child use both straps?**

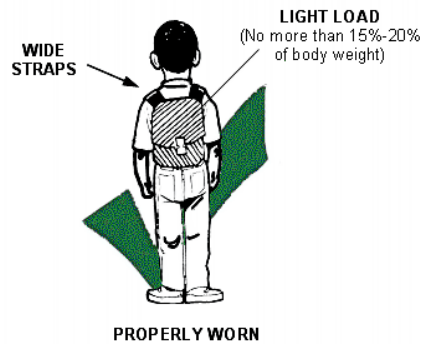
Lugging a heavy backpack by one strap can cause a disproportionate shift of weight to one side, leading to neck and muscle spasms, low-back pain, and poor posture.

MASSAGE THERAPY FOR STRESS

altMD.com

• Are the shoulder straps adjustable?

The shoulder straps should be adjustable so the backpack can be fitted to your child's body. The backpack should be evenly centered in the middle of your child's back.



• Does the backpack have a padded back?

A padded back not only provides increased comfort, but also protects your child from being poked by sharp edges on school supplies (pencils, rulers, notebooks, etc.) inside the pack.

• Does the pack have several compartments?

A backpack with individualized compartments helps position the contents most effectively. Make sure that pointy or bulky objects are packed away from the area that will rest on your child's back, and try to place the heaviest items closest to the body.

The ACA recommends that parents or guardians help children pack their backpacks properly, and they should make sure children never carry more than 10 percent of their body weight. For example, a child who weighs 100 pounds shouldn't carry a backpack heavier than 10 pounds, and a 50-pound child shouldn't carry more than 5 pounds.

In addition, parents should ask their children to report any pain or other problems resulting from carrying a backpack. If the pain is severe or persistent, seek care from a doctor of chiropractic or other health care professional.

To find a doctor of chiropractic near you, visit ACA's Web site at www.acatoday.org.

It's no wonder we often feel "stressed out" in this complex world. With rising gas prices, a competitive job market, and increasing pressures from work and family—all complicated by limited time to take a break and unwind—it can be hard to



find a balance.

Among the many ways to successfully manage stress, massage therapy is a great way to relieve tension. **The benefits of massage therapy are numerous, ranging from promoting relaxation to loosening tight muscles and increasing blood flow.**

How Can Massage Therapy Help Manage Stress?

Just taking a break from your hurried routine by to see a massage therapist can help you reduce stress, and once you arrive at the massage appointment, you'll obtain even greater benefits. Massage can help you manage stress by relieving anxiety and tension, promoting relaxation, increasing your energy, improving sleep, reducing muscle soreness, and decreasing pain. Therapeutic massage, such as Swedish massage, is the massage technique most often performed to relieve stress. Swedish massage techniques involve gentle kneading pressure and long strokes applied to the surface to relieve tension in the muscles and connective tissues. Therapeutic massage often involves aromatherapy in the form of massage oil or candles, and the pleasant fragrance can also contribute to stress relief during your massage therapy session.

A combination of massage techniques can also be helpful in managing stress. Other massage techniques that can help relieve stress include deep-tissue massage to release tension from the deeper muscles and connective tissues, trigger point therapy to release muscle spasms from specific areas, and shiatsu to improve the flow of energy ("Qi" or "Ki") in the body by applying firm pressure to specific acupressure points.

What is Stress?

Stress is your body's natural response to the demands of life. Stress helps you face challenges and "stay on top of your game." Stress can be the result of environmental, physical or emotional factors. Although stress is a natural, and necessary, part of everyday life, prolonged or chronic stress can lead to damaging health effects, including psychological and emotional disorders, as well as the development of diseases such as cardiovascular disease.

What is Massage?

Massage is a manual therapy that uses hands-on manipulation of the muscles and other soft tissues to relieve muscle tension and reduce stress. Although massage affects the whole body, it is especially therapeutic for the musculoskeletal, circulatory, lymphatic, and nervous systems.

Helpful Tips for Managing Stress

While massage can help reduce stress and tension, it is only one of several useful tools to help manage your health, and it shouldn't take the place of standard medical treatment recommended by your doctor.

Here are other ways you can manage your stress:

- *Get chiropractic:* The nervous system can be enhanced, helping the body to be in a state of homeostasis: Natural healing.
- *Make positive cognitive and behavioral changes:* Review your attitudes and beliefs, adjust your expectations, set realistic goals, and mentally rehearse before potentially difficult confrontations to help manage your stress. In addition, share your expectations assertively with others and communicate openly about your feelings.
- *Don't rely on unhealthy coping habits:* Smoking, excessive drinking, and overeating are not the answers for managing stress. These are unhealthy

coping habits that can actually escalate the negative effects of stress.

- *Exercise regularly:* Among numerous other health benefits, regular exercise can help you relieve stress.
- *Get organized:* Stress can often be the result of disorganization. Set goals, make lists, and purge unnecessary clutter to help you get back on track.
- *Seek an experienced certified massage therapist for treatment:* A certified massage therapist can make recommendations for the type of massage techniques that are right for you.
- *Practice relaxation techniques:* In addition to massage, deep breathing, meditation, guided imagery, yoga, Qi Gong, Tai Chi, and a variety of other relaxation techniques can help reduce stress and tension by producing a calming effect on the body and mind.

When to Get Help for Overwhelming Stress

Talk to your doctor if stress is limiting your ability to participate in activities of daily living, if you have intense feelings of fear, or if your negative feelings persist for four weeks or more. Your doctor can provide guidance about the appropriate treatment—or combination of treatments—that are right for you. A mental health-care professional can offer stress-management tips, counseling, support group referrals, biofeedback, and much more.

It is important to seek immediate medical attention if your stress is associated with feelings of hopelessness or suicidal thoughts. Suicide is an irreversible solution that causes permanent harm not only to you but also to family members and friends. If you are having thoughts of suicide, call your local 24-hour suicide hotline right away, call 911, or go to the nearest emergency room for help.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Massage Therapy as CAM](#), published by the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (May 27, 2008), provides a helpful overview on massage and its benefits.

[Mind-Body Medicine](#), published by the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (May 2007), provides an overview on the mind-body connection.

The [American Institute of Stress](#) provides information on many stress-related subjects.

The [Patient Education Institute](#) offers a helpful interactive tutorial on managing stress.

Learning Focus and Concentration through Yoga

by Keith E. Renninson

For many of us today focus and concentration aren't difficult by virtue of necessity, for others however, it is an unbearable task.

Ancient and modern day yogis taught yoga as a way to gain focus and become one with yourself and the universe. Being grounded is goal of many westerners because it is illusive.

But, let's look at the basis for the problem.

Occupations, family, avocations, addiction to multi-tasking, goal achievement, and cultural pressures are among the reasons that people in the west suffer from the lack of a focused and grounded mentality.

Yoga offers a solution that few exercise programs can. Performed in a class or in your living room, yoga's meditative quality allows your level of focus and concentration to heighten and strengthen with each session.

Our brain functions at four levels of brainwave cycle per second activity:

1. Beta: Fully active, alert, thinking and engaged with your

life at that moment.

2. Alpha: A much slower rate of cycles per second, that dreamy state just before you fall asleep, the creative and thoughtful level.

3. Theta: Deep sleep, some activity, but nothing constructive.

4. Delta: Unconscious sleep, very little activity.

Performing yoga enables you to decrease your brain's activity from Beta to Alpha, to focus on the pose and your breath. The Alpha state by it's very nature is quiet, calm and concentrative. Your body reacts to the poses more efficiently; stretching properly and slowly revealing your inner grounded self for confidence and strength.

In the end, isn't that what we are all after? To discover our inner self, to become focused, to calm the chaos, gain overall strength, balance and poise.

Concentration and focus are just two of the benefits of yoga that come quickly to the dedicated novice and will deepen for the seasoned veteran. You will notice the advantages of a calm and focused mind in virtually everything you do at work, at home or at play.

Concentration is a benefit of yoga that transcends all areas of life from: sports, relationships, work, hobbies, study and spirituality. It allows you to focus on one thing at a time and achieve excellence in that one activity. Without concentration your mind wanders to other demands in your life.

Focus is part of concentration being a narrow pattern of thought on just one item, but it can still be a very flexible and creative experience. If you are focusing on a project and you need new ideas to make it different and exciting, focusing on the variables involved allows you to brainstorm with yourself or others with fascinating results.

Yoga gives you an avenue to this type of brain activity by forcing you to slow down and concentrate on the movements, your breathing and your thoughts. Taking what you learn in this area and applying it to the rest of your life

will have astounding results that you will be very pleased with.

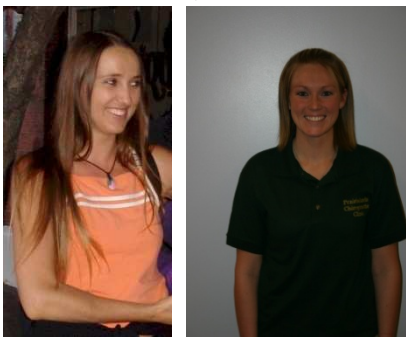
Give yoga a try; it may be just what you are looking for.

Meet our Massage Therapists:



Whitney

Dana



Shamani

Andrea

\$5.00 off Massage Coupon

Bring in this coupon to be used toward any massage service we offer.

EXPIRES: Oct. 31, 2009

Meet our Wellness Instructors:



Shamani

Steven

Annie

Meet our Front Desk Receptionist:



Tiffany

Referral Reward!

Tell a friend about us!

If they sign up for yoga, massage or chiropractic, you will receive a \$ 10.00 coupon postcard to be used for any Massage or Wellness Class.

Many seek relief and wellness care for the following conditions:

- Low Back Pain, Neck Pain, Sprain/Strains,
- Headaches, Mid-Back Pain, Pregnancy Discomfort,
- Sinus Problems, Shoulder Pain, Carpal Tunnel Pain, Numbness/Tingling in Hands Or Feet, Fatigue,
- Whiplash, Scoliosis, Stress Reduction, Arm, Leg, Foot, Hand Weakness or Pain, Muscle Spasms,
- Arm/Elbow Tendonitis or Bursitis Knee Pain,
- Wellness and Improvement of Overall Condition,
- Several Neuromuscular and Skeletal Conditions

Thurs., Oct. 15, 2009 7:00 - 8:30 PM FREE RELAXATION THROUGH GUIDED IMAGERY - register today!

Wellness Classes

MONDAYS

Yoga Basics 5:30 - 6:45 pm

TUESDAYS

Gentle Yoga 12:00 - 12:45 pm
Pre and Post-Natal Yoga 4:00 - 5:00 pm
Medical Yoga Therapy 5:30pm - 6:45pm

WEDNESDAYS

Tai-Chi 5:00 - 6:00 pm

SATURDAYS

Fat Free Yoga 10:30 - 11:45 am
Power Yoga Level One 12:00 - 1:15 pm

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www.PrairilandsChiropractic.com



Same Day On-Line

Scheduling Available!

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