



## ADULT BACKPACK FITTING GUIDE

This checklist has been developed to assist individuals to undertake a review of their backpack use.

### Getting ready:

Observe yourself in the mirror. Observe your posture, movements and backpack used. Using the following checklists as a guide, look at the positive features of the way the you wear your backpack in addition to areas that could be improved to benefit the comfort and/or efficiency for you.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Reviewer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

AREA	Y	N	COMMENTS
<p><b>1. Loading:</b></p> <p><b>1.1 Does the backpack have separate compartments?</b> Use compartments to pack heavier objects closer to the body.</p> <p><b>1.2 Do these compartments allow the contents to be securely arranged?</b> Ensure that objects are secure and not free to move about the backpack.</p> <p><b>1.3 Have you selected the most appropriate sized backpack for you?</b> Always use the smallest backpack that will suit your needs.</p>			

<p><b>1.4 Many backpacks have built in wheels to minimize the load carried.</b> Can you purchase a bag that has wheels to avoid the need to carry the backpack at all times?</p> <p><b>1.5 Is the load comfortable and safely stored?</b> Sharp or hard objects should be packed in such a fashion that they do not come in contact with the body.</p> <p><b>1.6 Is the backpack being handled correctly? Do you bend your knees to lift the backpack?</b> The most ergonomic backpack is still bad if lifted incorrectly. Ensure you lift with your knees rather than your back!</p>			
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<p><b>2. Weight:</b></p> <p><b>2.1 Is the weight of the backpack when loaded appropriate for you?</b></p> <p><b>2.2 Do you lean forward when you are carrying your backpack?</b> This is a sign there is too much weight in the backpack.</p> <p><b>2.3 Is your backpack made of durable and appropriate materials?</b> Try to purchase a lighter backpack to assist in reducing the weight carried. Consider the materials that have been used in its production to ensure that it has been constructed from strong, durable and light-weight materials.</p>			
<p><b>3. Lumbar Support:</b></p> <p><b>3.1 Does the backpack offer support for the lower back?</b> Purchase a backpack that supports the lower back. Ideally this will be a frame of some kind which follows the contours of the lumbar spine and provides support.</p>			

<p><b>4. Waist Straps:</b></p> <p><b>4.1 Does the backpack have a waist strap?</b> Waist straps are important for keeping the backpack stable and reducing excess movement which increase discomfort and fatigue.</p>			
<p><b>5. Shoulder Straps:</b></p> <p><b>5.1 Do the shoulder straps allow for adjustment to fit your body?</b> Shoulder straps need to be adjustable to ensure that the backpack can be kept close to the body.</p> <p><b>5.2 Always use both shoulders to carry the backpack</b></p>			
<p><b>6. Padding:</b></p> <p><b>6.1 Is the padding appropriately located?</b> Padding needs to be located at all of the major contact points where the backpack meets the body.</p> <p><b>6.2 Is the padding of sufficient thickness?</b> Padding needs to be thick enough to be comfortable but not so thick that it produces a poor fit.</p>			

<p><b>7. Hygiene:</b></p> <p><b>7.1 How often to do clean out your backpack?</b> Regularly check your backpack to remove excess clutter that might reduce available space or restrict correct loading.</p> <p><b>7.2 How hygienic is your backpack?</b> Food and other materials left in the backpack can increase wear and tear which reduces its life span.</p>			
<p><b>8. Plan:</b></p> <p><b>8.1 Does everything really need to be there?</b> Can equipment for special activities (i.e. gym) be carried separately?</p> <p><b>8.2 Are there heavy objects that are going to be in your backpack all day?</b> Perhaps a separate bag could be used for a laptop or other heavy equipment to prevent it needing to be carried all day.</p>			

<p><b>9. Posture:</b></p> <p><b>9.1 Are you unable to stand normally when wearing the backpack?</b> Distortions to your posture can be an indicator it is inappropriately fitted or too heavy.</p> <p><b>9.2 Do you have any excessive curve in their lower back?</b> Poorly fitted backpacks commonly cause disruption to your spinal curves. If this is the case then please start from the beginning of this document and review.</p> <p><b>9.3 Do you slouch at the shoulders?</b> Are your shoulders in a relaxed neutral posture without leaning? This is another indicator that the backpack is poorly fitted and should prompt review.</p> <p><b>9.4 Can you wear the backpack and keep your head and neck in neutral position without excessive forward or backward tilting?</b></p> <p><b>9.5 Is the backpack being worn on both shoulders?</b> Hanging a backpack off one shoulder produces poor posture and is linked to numerous future health issues.</p>			
<p><b>10. Fitting:</b></p> <p><b>10.1 Considering the following points when fitting your backpack:</b></p> <p>10.1.1 Adjust the straps to fit securely.</p> <p>10.1.2 The bottom of the backpack should sit clear of the buttocks.</p> <p>10.1.3 The top of the back pack should NOT be above your head.</p>			

<b>11. Maintain</b>			
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<b>Maintain a mindset to reduce the load of your backpack!</b>			
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