

# BACK TO SCHOOL



Help your children to return to school safely by looking after their backs

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# In this article we will explore :

- Carrying
- Posture
- Activity

This way you can learn what to do (and what not to do) and help prevent back injuries both now and in the future for your children.

# CARRYING

- A growing child should not carry more than 10 % of their body weight regularly.
- Often older kids do not have lockers at school and have to carry the whole of the day's books, lunch and sports equipment with them throughout the day. In some schools these distances can be considerable.
- The most vulnerable age is Year 7 (age 11-12), read on to find out why...

- Year 7 students, in the senior starter year, are naturally smaller.
- They are keen to please by not forgetting a book.
- So they are often found to be carrying way above the recommended maximum 10%.
- What can we do to help?

# We can help by:

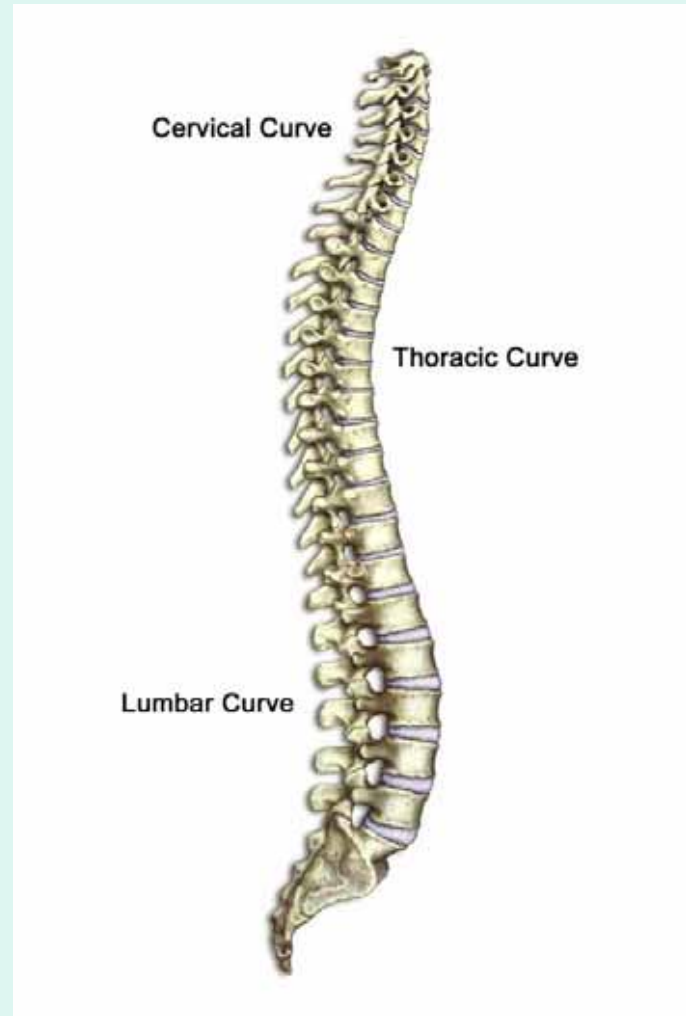
- Supplying an ergonomic and comfortable bag. Back packs help to spread the load and keep the spine straighter. Encourage your children to use them properly.



- Ask your children daily to only take to school those items needed for that day.
- Encourage them to use lockers wisely when provided, by returning to them regularly throughout the day.
- If your child needs to carry 2 bags, even loads in each will help to spread the weight carried.

# POSTURE

- The spine has a natural “s” shape which should be maintained in all sustained postures; this especially applies to homework.
- How can we help?



# How can we help?



- A comfortable and supportive chair which is of a suitable height for your child, helps to achieve good posture.
- A table or desk of complementary height also helps.
- Sloping work surfaces can help too, these can be easily purchased or made at home for those with some DIY skills! These bring the homework towards the eye level so making a child less likely to slouch over the desk.

# Computer



- Computer heights should be adjusted to suit your child.
- If the whole family share the use of the computer it may be better placed on an adjustable arm in order to suit different users.
- Laptops can often encourage slouching if used on the lap; placing them on a laptop stand or using a docking station can help prevent this problem in the taller/older child.

# ACTIVITY

Are your children sedentary kids?

- It is a good habit for their future to get them out of the sitting position regularly.
- All forms of sport are excellent, but for the less sporty child it is good to encourage them to get up and stretch out of the “banana” position regularly. How about suggesting they lie on the floor with a book for a change?
- Getting them to perform one activity each day is excellent; this can be as simple as going for a walk with them after school. 20 minutes brisk walk is recommended.

# Encourage Good Postures



# Discourage Bad Postures



# Further Information

- Leaflets on “how to sit correctly” are available from our practice at Loughton: Phone 0208 508 9100
- Writing slopes, laptop kits and a selection of ergonomic bags are available to order through our practice. Please phone the telephone number above for more details.
- Our Physiotherapist, Sue Cooper, has a special interest in ergonomics and work related and repetitive injuries. She has written this article and is happy to help with any further queries.
- Sue Cooper is also happy to undertake Work station assessments in the local area. Please contact our Loughton branch for prices and appointments.