Backpacks Cause Many Physical Issues if Worn the Wrong Way

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Staff Writer

Starting high school means harder classes, more books, and heavier backpacks. At anytime students could have at least four books, several binders, and many notebooks crammed into a small bag carried on their back.

Everyday to and from each class, students have to carry books strapped on like it's a part of their body. Junior Shelbie Quakenbush thinks that a backpack should weigh about 15 pounds but her backpack weighs in at a whopping 27 pounds.

Know the Facts About Your Backpacks

- **Gell-filled shoulder straps absorb the shock of the weight carried in backpacks**
- **Backpacks should not weigh more than 10% or 15% of a student's weight**
- **Students use backpacks to transport their work as much as 80-94% of the time**
- **Wearing backpacks account for 13% of backpack related injuries**
- **Lifting accounts for 8% of backpack related injuries**
- **Three most likely body parts that can be injured are the neck/head, back, and wrist**

"If I walk for long periods of time, my lower back hurts," said Quakenbush. She carries only what is necessary, but for her that includes three books and three binders.

Mark Hinze, a physical therapist for Health Care Midwest, says that students shouldn't carry alot of weight because it can throw off the proper movement of their back.

"Students should carry no more than 20 pounds, but it depends on the person," said Hinze.

"[I] used to carry a backpack but it hurt my back," said senior Katie Therkildsen. Therkildsen often has pain because her backpack is heavy. She thinks that not having to carry a bag would relieve stress put on her back.

On top of hauling a backpack around with books there is also the issue of sports practices and all the necessary equipment for that sport. Everyday, students fill the halls with backpacks on their backs and a sports bag flung over a shoulder. Uneven weight is one of the worst things for your back.

Briefcase style book bags that hang over one shoulder may be more stylish but they actually put the most strain on your back. Hinze says that carrying a backpack over one shoulder is one of the worst things to do. This can create even more strain than a normal backpack would. Your back has to compensate for the uneven weight distribution. Briefcase style bags cause stress to the middle back, ribs and lower back on the side it hangs on. It can in some people speed up the development of back problems that usually occur later on in life.

Two strap backpacks aren't always the best for a back either. When a backpack is worn too low it causes a student's shoulders to learn forward thus shifting the center of gravity and creating more strain on the spine.

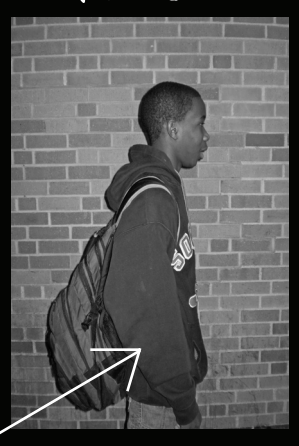
The question brought up when talking about heavy backpacks is why don't students get lockers? Students complain about having to carry a book to class everyday, yet those kids don't use lockers. To students, lockers are just an extra stop on the way to class that takes up their precious six minutes. Ideally students would leave one class, stop at their locker and be to their next class on time. Most students don't know why they dont have a locker and they think that it would be out of their way. However students with close access to lockers report that they have less back pain.

All students in the Freshmen Academy are required to use a locker so that their back packs coats and books for other classes are not in the room with them.

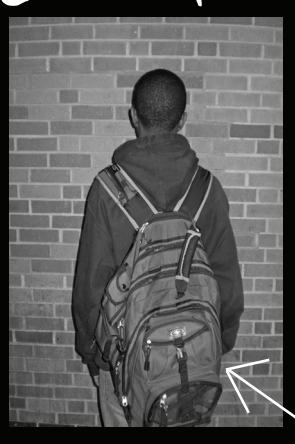
Since the Freshmen Academy students are in close proximity to their classes it is easier for them to have time to stop at a locker. Upper classmen could have a class in the J wing and then in the A wing taking up a majority of the six minutes. The risk in carrying a backpack that is overloaded is that causes strain on students, back, neck and shoulders. Carrying a backpack for an extended period of time can distort the natural curves of your back.

The best way to carry a backpack is over both shoulders, placed in the center of your back. Not too high, nor too low. Also those silly waist straps provide a lot of support. Make sure not to overpack your backpack. This will also help to prevent possible stress.

The Wrong Way

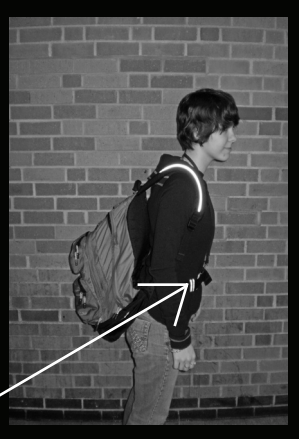


There is no waist strap which provides extra support.



Backpack hangs too low.

The Right Way



Waist strap fastened across the waist.

Backpack hangs in the middle of the back.

Presidential Primaries Bring Candidate Controversy

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A&E Editor

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Senator Barack Obama of Illinois and Senator Hillary Clinton of New York battle it out at a Democratic presidential debate.

The presidential primaries are in full force, and the campaign trail for 2008 has been one of confusion and controversy. Between Democratic drama and revolutionary Republicans, this is going to be an election for the history books.

To start things off, Mike Huckabee won the seemingly important Iowa Republican caucus, receiving 34% of the electorate votes. Barack Obama won the Democratic caucus.

Hillary Clinton placed second in the Iowa Democratic Caucus, seemingly lowering her spirits for the time being. She came back, though, with the New Hampshire primaries, beating Obama to first place by a mere 2%. Some theorize that her win over New Hampshire was because of the small upset she had while having dinner with a few voters and discussing her campaign. She elaborated to them how hard the campaign trail is, and when a voter asked how she deals with it, tears started to whell up in her eyes.

"She increased in female support," claims Morgan Butts, junior. "But it wasn't really that big of a deal."

Others feel that the incident isn't going to effect her campaign one way or the other.

"I feel that it isn't a big deal," said Robin Veeck, junior. "She was showing a lot of emotion. I think it's ridiculous that people are saying it was staged."

Clinton may be gaining popularity, but not so much with the public of Michigan. Even though she was the only Democratic front-running candidate to take part in the Michigan primaries, she did not campaign or tour the state at all. This could end up a detriment to the Democratic party when it comes down to the final vote.

Romney, a native of Michigan, claims that if elected president, he would focus much of his time and the nation's money toward getting Michigan jobs back.

Most of the front-running Democratic candidates refused to run in the Michigan primaries, as Michigan broke one of the Democratic rules by moving their primaries up to an an earlier date. This was an obvious detriment to the Democratic party, as the most well-known front runner still participating, Clinton, did not have a large audience here. Aside from Clinton, the other Democrats on the ballot were Dennis Kucinich, Christopher Dodd, and Mike Gravel.

"I understand why they did it," said Veeck. "Michigan moving their date up was pretty ridiculous."

Butts felt quite the opposite.

"I think they should have been able to stand up to their own party," she proclaimed. "It makes them look weak."

Michigan aside, there are still months of campaigning and primary elevtions all leading up to the final vote this upcoming November.

Those Left Behind

GRIEF Continued from Page 1

surrounded the group to protect the vigil.

"We prayed for healing in the community, and we prayed that the violence would stop... it was like a mourning session, everyone was crying," said Davis.

Close to fifty people started the march, carrying single candles, as a symbol of remembrance, a symbol of solidarity, a symbol of hope. Dozens of people joined the march when they saw the group on North Westnedge as they marched to the site of the death of their friend, child, grandchild, and aunt. Signs of the struggle were still apparent on the tree where Bloodworth was killed. The crowd placed signs of rememberance at the trunk. The girl had been sprayed with mace, stabbed, and shoved against this tree only the night before.

"I went up and gave her mom a hug [at the vigil], I was crying a lot, like almost hyperventilating, and she said that I gotta be strong for her and strong for Jasmine, and that it was up to me to make sure this didn't happen again because it was preventable," said Davis.

Jacobi Washington, junior at LN, who was present the night of the stabbing, recounts the scene that followed the stabbing. "I ain't even see her [Paige] stab her, all I saw was her [Bloodworth] fall," said Washington.

To further increase Davis' grief is the fact that she is also friends with Jasmine's killer, 16 year old Kalamazoo resident Jalissa Paige. This is the case for other students at LN and members of the community; the girls had been friends, and many of the friends and family they left behind were one and the same.

Paige was sentenced on January 7th, 2008 to spend the next 12-25 years in prison for the crime of murder in the second degree. While Davis admits that it's hard to have her friend away for so long and residing in a prison across the state, she doesn't think any worse of Paige.

"It's not even up to us to judge her [Paige] for what she did. All we can do is forgive her, pray for her, and move on... It was an accident, she feels bad enough about what she did. They were friends," said Davis.

In the case of Bloodworth's death, the vigil, the visitation, and the funeral all served to provide closure for her family and friends. For those who mourn the loss of Paige, none of these services are provided, even if she's gone for what seems like a lifetime.

For Jacobi Washington, this isn't the first time he's seen a friend sent to prison. On December 10, 2007, his close friend of six years, Emmanuel Jammar Atkins, was sentenced to life in prison with no possibility of parole, for the murder of former LN student, 14 year old William Berry.

The boys initially met when Washington moved onto the same street as Atkins. The two bonded because they both owned dogs, and they played basketball together. The boys could regularly be seen together, and according to Washington, neither were ever involved with gangs. For six years, Atkins was a regular part of Washington's life, but after one pull of the trigger, they were removed from each other's lives forever.

"I think about him almost everyday, I don't think differently of him [now that he's in jail]," said Washington.

When LN grad Tim Palmer was shot on July 8, 2007, many members of the LN community were affected personally. Palmer was a high-profile wrestler at LN and had many loyal friends. Tamara Palmer, sophomore, has been affected on so many levels about the passing of her brother. She says that one of the first times she showed emotion after his death was when she received his diploma.

"When my dad and I got home from the hospital, we got Tim's diploma in the mail. He had just passed, he didn't even get to see it... I just started crying," said Palmer.

To cope with the stress of her brother's death, Palmer played a lot of basketball, and turned to her friend Amber Butler, sophomore, who was also very close to Tim. Sometimes, Palmer couldn't sleep at home because it reminded her of Tim too much.

"Both of our rooms are upstairs, I didn't sleep up there for a couple of months... sometimes I couldn't stay at home," said Palmer.

When she wasn't at home, Palmer spent nights at Butler's, who was also trying to deal with the death of Palmer. She went to therapy for about a month after her brother's death, but Palmer soon realized that her friends were more essential to her recovery.

"I was in there [therapy] about a month, but I quit going, I wasn't ready to be talking like that... I miss him, it's still hard to deal with, I'm glad that I had people to support me," said Palmer.

On January 22nd, several students at Loy Norrix remembered Tim Palmer's birthday by wearing tee shirts with his picture on them and hanging posters in the hallways. In the Jump Start program, a party was held in his remembrance.

Almost six months after his death, his sister and good friends are still trying to make it through the grieving process.

"I miss him, the first couple of months, I used to look at his pictures and cry. Now I look at him and smile," said a tearful Butler.

Even members of the community who have no personal connection to those who have died or who have killed are affected by these tragedies. Senior Katie Therkildsen was at a friend's house, only one street away from former LN student Timothy Palmer, when he was hit with that fatal bullet. Therkildsen was an acquaintance of Palmer's but has had no personal connections with any of the other four teenagers who have been murdered in Kalamazoo this year, or their young killers. However, none of this mattered when she heard that shot and the siren that followed it.

"[The gun shot] scared me a lot, it could have been anybody... It doesn't matter that I didn't know them, it's sad, and it's happening around me and in my town," said Therkildsen.

Whatever the cause of the continuing violence among Kalamazoo's youth, for every teen that is killed, and for every teen that kills, there are countless teens, adults and children that suffer from their absence.

In remembrance of her friends, Davis tearfully asked her peers to stop the violence,

"I don't understand why this is going on. Three kids our age killed in the past year. How many kids, our friends, are going to have to die for us to get the picture that we need to get it together, as a community, as a city or whatever. There is no way that kids our age, kids, need to be dying. What is it going to take for use to get the picture? Kids our age, kids dying, that's ridiculous, that shouldn't even be happening."

For Grief Help Call:

The Ark- (269) 381-9800
Crisis line: (200) 873-TEEN

The Gryphon Place: (269) 381-1510
Crisis line: 1-800-273-TALK