

## **Heavy handbag hurting your back?**

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Have you ever stopped to think about how your fashion choices might be affecting your health? The oversized handbag might be a convenient and stylish trend, but carrying a heavy bag around town all day could be doing damage to your back and neck. To avoid pain from large handbags or totes, consider the following:

- Don't carry your bag only on one side of your body as it can throw off your gait by creating a skeletal and posture imbalance that can cause pain. Try regularly switching your bag from shoulder to shoulder to avoid imbalance.
- Do not allow your purse to become so heavy that it causes you to shift your posture and balance. Carrying a bag that's too heavy can cause your head and neck to shift forward and contribute to neck pain, stiffness, and headaches. To avoid this, try to make sure your bag weighs no more than five percent of your body weight.
- Choose bags with alternative strap options. Look for a purse that has both handles and longer straps for cross body wearing to better distribute the weight, or consider switching to a purse that has straps that can be carried like a backpack over the center of your back to evenly distribute the weight.
- Choose a bag that's right for your body. If the handles are too short or too high up it can affect your arm swing, which can lead to imbalance and pain.
- Bigger is not necessarily better. The more room there is, the more you'll be tempted to carry, increasing the weight of your purse. Choosing a smaller bag will force you to carry only the essentials.
- Don't text while carrying your purse. Texting while carrying a heavy bag, creates stress on your neck as it shifts forwards to look down at your phone.
- Avoid high heels. The combination of wearing high heels, which can cause a pelvic imbalance, and carrying a heavy purse, which can cause a skeletal and postural imbalance, is a recipe for disaster. If you must carry a heavy bag, make sure you wear flat, comfortable shoes with proper support.