

## WHAT'S IN YOUR MAN BAG?

### - The British Chiropractic Association looks into what is weighing men down -

New research\* from the **British Chiropractic Association (BCA)** reveals **that two thirds of men (66%) have suffered from back pain**. With back pain on the increase, it seems the humble man bag could have a lot to answer for.

According to the study, **three in five (60%) men carry some sort of man bag**. These man bags come in all shapes and sizes – from the traditional over-the-shoulder laptop case, to messenger bags and satchels.

What is shocking is the sheer amount of items the typical male now carries; **in fact the average man bag now weighs up to 6.2kgs\*\*** the equivalent of over 12 bags of sugar. That amount of weight on one shoulder for an extended duration from a commute to and from work will start to cause discomfort in the majority of people.

The man bag has been growing in popularity since the rise of the metrosexual male made famous by the likes of footballers like David Beckham, model David Gandy, or movie stars like Robert Downey Jr and Hugh Jackman.

As much as they are a functional fashion accessory, these bags could be doing harm to your back and shoulders, as men load them up with life's daily essentials – from phones to books and computers.

With technology moving towards digital platforms, men need various ways of accessing the internet world – but this also means carrying more with them. Gone are the days when a man would leave his home with just his keys and wallet. BCA research shows that modern man now needs a full armoury of technology and entertainment for the day:

Item	Percentage of Men That Carry Them on a Daily Basis
Mobile phone/Blackberry	56%
Lunch	40%
Books	29%
iPod/MP3 player	23%
Laptop/iPad	19%
Gym kit	10%

**Tim Hutchful from the British Chiropractic Association** comments: “Man Bags are now a necessity for many men during their daily lives, but they could cause back and shoulder pain from prolonged stress, this can also impact posture. The bags serve a purpose so we need to become more savvy in how we use them, whilst learning to read our bodies and know when we're placing too much pressure on certain points.”

However, with new advice from the British Chiropractic Association (BCA), you can now stride forward without the man bag pain weighing you down:

- If you carry an over-the-shoulder style bag, alternate between both shoulders so the weight and pressure is distributed equally between them. It is also advisable to keep the strap as short as possible
- If you carry a laptop use a rucksack design laptop case, carry it on both shoulders and adjust the straps so that the bag is held close to your back
- Stand comfortably when carrying your bag. Avoid long periods of being in one position, move around regularly and stretch and exercise your back muscles regularly
- Ensure you take regular breaks so that you don't tire yourself out too soon from fatigue
- Don't carry so many items in your bag all the time, only pack what you need

The simple most important piece of advice from the BCA is to take a break from carrying your bag, and not to carry it from prolonged periods of time. The BCA has also devised a simple three minute exercise routine called Straighten Up UK. This can be incorporated into our daily lives to help strengthen the spine and improve posture. The exercise routine is available to download from [www.straightenupuk.org](http://www.straightenupuk.org) for more information call the BCA on 0118 950 5950 or visit [www.chiropractic-uk.co.uk](http://www.chiropractic-uk.co.uk) where there is also plenty of practical advice to help avoid back problems and improve posture.

- Ends -

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\*BCA research carried out in January 2011 by Onepoll.com

\*\*Weight broken down by: 3kg laptop, 2kg gym kit, 0.5kg lunch, 0.5kg book, 100g phone/blackberry and 100g iPod.

## **Notes to Editors**

### **British Chiropractic Association**

*Chiropractic is a primary contact health profession that specialises in the diagnosis, treatment, prevention and management of many conditions that are due to problems with bones, joints, muscles and nerves, particularly those of the spine.*

*The **BCA** represents well over 50% of UK chiropractors. Chiropractic is a statutorily regulated healthcare profession, regulated by the General Chiropractic Council (GCC). Members of the BCA must abide by the GCC's Code of Conduct and Standard of Proficiency. The association only accepts graduates from an internationally recognised college of chiropractic education. Chiropractic care offers hands on pain management and focuses on muscles, joints and nerves. Chiropractic is suitable for all ages and can help with a wide range of problems.*

*Chiropractic treatment mainly involves safe, often gentle spinal manipulation to free joints in the spine or other areas of the body that are not moving properly. Apart from manipulation, chiropractors may use a wide variety of techniques including ice, heat, ultrasound, exercise and acupuncture as well as advice about posture and lifestyle.*