

# How to avoid suitcase strain this holiday season

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(HealthDay)—With holiday travel comes the risk of injury from toting

heavy luggage.

In 2017, more than 85,000 people were treated in U.S. emergency rooms, doctors' offices and clinics for injuries related to luggage, according to the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

"Hurting your neck, back, or shoulders can put you out of commission for a long time," Dr. Charla Fischer, an American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons spokesperson and orthopedic spine surgeon, said in an academy news release.

"You can prevent that by packing lightly, using sturdy luggage with [wheels](#) and handles, and using good form when carrying or lifting bags," she suggested.

Here are some luggage safety tips, courtesy of AAOS.

Don't buy luggage that's too heavy or bulky when empty. Try to place items in a few smaller bags instead of one large one. When lifting luggage, stand alongside it and bend at the knees, lifting the luggage with your leg muscles. Once lifted, hold luggage close to your body.

Don't twist when lifting and carrying luggage. Point your toes in the direction you're going and turn your entire body in that direction. Don't carry bulky luggage for long periods of time. When possible, use the airline's baggage service when you have heavy luggage.

Carry luggage in both hands, rather than one hand off to the side. This can decrease stress to the spine and reduce the risk of developing elbow problems.

Carry, don't drag, rolling [luggage](#) when climbing stairs.

If you're using a backpack, it should have two padded and adjustable [shoulder](#) straps to equally balance the weight. Pack heavier items low and towards the center.

When using a duffel or shoulder bag, switch sides often.

**More information:** The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more on [holiday health and safety](#).

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