

Tote-ally Healthy New Idea

Q I bring a huge, heavy briefcase to work every day, and it's starting to strain my lower back. But a backpack wouldn't be appropriate for my office. Any ideas?

A "When you carry a bag that's extremely heavy, you put undue stress on the group of muscles on either side of your spine, the erector spinae," explains New York City chiropractor Joseph Caraccilo.

"This can cause backaches and eventually may lead to agonizing muscle spasms." To end your pain, lighten your load by giving your bag a thorough spring cleaning. File away old receipts, toss empty lipstick tubes and chuck all your loose change. "Next, consider the material your briefcase is constructed from—a bag made from heavy leather or canvas can add pounds of unnecessary weight," says Caraccilo. "Instead, opt for a tote made from a light yet durable fabric, like nylon." A great bag to try that will definitely be easier on your back: black nylon "workshopper" bag, \$75, DKNY. Available at select Nordstrom stores or Macy's northeastern stores.

