

# The Courtyard Clinic

Physical  
Health

## Kids, Back Packs & Back Pain



### Osteopathy/Physiotherapy Sports & Remedial Massage

- Back, Neck & Shoulder pain
- Joint & Muscle Injuries
- Headaches
- Arthritis
- Rib Pain
- Sports Injuries

### Podiatry/Chiropody

- Toenail Problems
- Corns & Callouses
- Verrucae
- Diabetic Foot Checks
- Foot Odour
- Footwear Advice



Please note The Courtyard Clinic's new address.

It's the summer holidays! Sooner rather than later, those of us with kids will be shopping for all their new kit, including school bags/backpacks! Whilst the digital age does seem to be reducing the number of books that need to be carried to and from school, school bags can still bear a fair load, so it is important to make a wise decision with the balance in favour of function over fashion. Whilst we might not usually associate children and back pain, there are many factors in modern life which effect children's bodies and cause issues in this area.

### Development of the Skeleton

During childhood and adolescence, many bones are still very cartilaginous (consisting of strong cartilage rather than solid bone) and as such their development is much affected by the stresses and strains that are placed upon them. Neurological control and movement patterns are also still developing, and activity at this time will have a huge influence on future physical health.



Weight gain and obesity tend to be the main health concerns linked to limited movement and exercise, but it is important to remember the role movement and activity play in our physical development and how it can effect health later in life. You will probably all have seen toddlers playing in this natural squat position, but how many adults can still do this comfortably? It isn't age that takes this balance and stability away from us, it is more that if we don't use it we lose it.

Sadly today 'losing it' seems to start when kids go to school. The two pronged attack of built up, solid school



shoes and sitting for long periods in chairs severely compromises the child's stability, flexibility and balance. This was less of an issue when the rest of a child's life was filled with activity, but this is increasingly not the case. By the time a child becomes a teenager, gets to study time, and has to lug around a back pack with heavy books often their body's may be unprepared for it.

### Back Pack Tips

In the short term, the best quick fix is to

1. Make sure they get a good quality back pack. This should be well fitted to the back, have a waist strap (which loads the pelvis rather than just the shoulders). The pack should not extend too far back as this shifts the centre of gravity which requires a forward stoop to balance.
2. Ideally the bag should have padding at the back and shoulders.
3. Don't overload the bag. Carry only the books that are necessary. Try to store as many books as possible in lockers and if possible carry notes or photocopies of important pages rather than whole textbooks.
4. Always carry the bag with straps on both shoulders so that the load is carried evenly.

### Treatment of Back Pain in Children

At The Courtyard Clinic we have lots of experience in treating children. Treatment techniques are usually very similar to those used with adults but because children tend to react to treatment more easily, treatment is more subtle and applied much more gently. Causes of musculoskeletal pain in children are varied



but because they haven't been around as long, patterns of strain in children are usually quite simple and most problems resolve within a couple of sessions.

### In the Long Term

So what is the best advice for long-term physical health for kids? Children shouldn't need to do regular stretches or exercises to keep a healthy skeleton, they just need to be kids. Most children will instinctively run, jump, climb, balance, crawl, tip-toe, hop etc. All the activities that help develop balance and movement mechanisms so well are instinctive, they just need to be put in the right environment. Screen-time is a part of life now; devices are a great tool for education and entertainment, just try to limit the time a child spends on a device and in a chair. Whatever their age, just try to make sure they get plenty of time unplugged and outdoors. They'll probably do the rest.



Weather can sometimes be a bit mad in this country, but in the words of Billy Connolly:

"I hate all those weathermen who tell you that rain is bad weather. There's no such thing as bad weather, just the wrong clothing, so get yourself a sexy raincoat and live a little."

## The Courtyard Clinic - Osteopathy, Physiotherapy, Massage Therapy, Podiatry/Chiropody



**Patrick Murphy**  
Registered  
Osteopath



**Jamie Lauder**  
Registered  
Osteopath



**Ben Brown**  
Registered  
Osteopath



**Jack Kirby**  
Registered Podiatrist/  
Chiropodist



**Wendy David**  
Sports & Remedial  
Massage Therapist



**Nicola Gerken**  
Chartered  
Physiotherapist

**The Courtyard Clinic: 1, The Old Cutting Rooms, Church Walk, High St, Maldon - Tel: 01621 842 750**

Clinic Opening Hours: Monday - Friday 8am to 7pm & Saturday 9am to 2pm

[www.osteopathmaldon.co.uk](http://www.osteopathmaldon.co.uk) | [info@osteopathmaldon.co.uk](mailto:info@osteopathmaldon.co.uk)

Find us on : The Courtyard Clinic - Osteopathy & Massage Therapy