



Holding Headaches at Bay

Bodywork Eases Migraines and Tension Headaches

Cathy Ulrich

"Do you get headaches?" I asked Cindy. She had come to see me for massage to address her neck and shoulder pain but hadn't mentioned headaches.

"Well, yes," she said. "I've always had headaches and, now that you mention it, they seem to be worse when my neck hurts." Cindy went on to say she suffered from them as often as 2-3 times a week and typically treated them with ibuprofen.

Like many Americans, Cindy suffers from chronic, frequent headaches. Her neck pain finally prompted her to seek help, but she was so used to the headaches, she thought they were something she simply had to live with.

MIGRAINES.

Migraine headaches occur when the blood vessels in the brain become dilated, usually due to a chemical reaction, such as food allergies or a stress response. They often start with visual disturbances and quickly develop into severe head pain accompanied by nausea, vomiting, dizziness, and sensitivity to light. They're usually felt on one side of the head, but can be on both sides. Migraines are often managed with medications and avoidance of foods known to trigger them, such as red wine, chocolate, aged cheese, and nuts. However, some bodywork techniques can also be effective in easing migraines or decreasing the frequency of these painful headaches.

TENSION HEADACHES.

Exaggerated by stress, tension headaches are related to poor posture, jaw problems (such as temporomandibular joint disorder, or TMJ), and neck pain. Many people describe a headache that starts at the base of the skull and then moves in an arc over the ears and behind

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The key to success is to focus our conscious mind on things we desire not things we fear.

-Abraham



Freedom from chronic headaches is an option many Americans don't even realize is possible.

What Cindy didn't understand was that frequent headaches are not normal and, with a little proactive planning, there is something that can be done to manage and even prevent them.

Types of Headaches

Headaches come in many varieties. Following is a short list of the most common types.

Office Hours and Contact

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the eyes. Tension headaches are most often caused or exacerbated by poor posture, work station positions, and body mechanics, creating undue stress on the upper neck muscles.

MIXED HEADACHES.

The term mixed headache is used to describe a tension headache that leads to a migraine. Typically, the tension headache starts first and the chemicals produced from the pain of it create conditions for a migraine to develop. In people with patterns of mixed headaches, the best way to avoid the onset of a migraine is to treat the tension headache.

Bodywork Options

A treatment regimen that includes bodywork, attention to body position, and stress management can help prevent or greatly reduce the frequency of headaches, in turn reducing your reliance on medication and the need to avoid food triggers. There are many different bodywork techniques, each with specific approaches for treating headaches. Following is a short list of techniques often effective in treating recurring headaches.

SWEDISH MASSAGE.

A tension headache, by its very name, implies the presence of stress and tension. Swedish massage, on the other hand, promotes relaxation and relieves muscle tension. When muscles become tight due to stress or poor posture, they eventually adapt a chronically shortened state. Swedish massage teaches the body how to let go of muscle tension and resets muscle tone.

INTEGRATIVE BODYWORK.

Rolfing, Hellerwork, Structural Integration, and CORE are examples of the types of bodywork designed to improve posture and structural alignment. A primary cause of chronic headaches is poor posture, which produces tension in the neck and shoulders because the weight of the head is not properly balanced on top of the spine. Integrative bodywork can produce lasting postural change for greater ease of movement. By selectively freeing the soft tissues, integrative bodywork literally can change postural alignment and remove the stresses and strains on the muscles that cause headaches.

DEEP TISSUE THERAPIES.

The integrative therapies mentioned above, as well as neuromuscular therapy and myofascial release, use similar techniques to free connective tissue. A chronically tensed muscle tends to maintain that tension, even after the stressful event has passed. Deep tissue techniques free the connective tissue glue, creating a new way for the muscle to function.

REFLEXOLOGY.

Like acupuncture, reflexology works to move energy blockages in the body. By stimulating points on the feet that correspond to organs in the body, reflexologists can promote relaxation, reduce pain, and restore energy flow. Several scientific studies have shown that reflexology is a viable treatment for migraines, in some cases working as well as, or better than, medication--and without the side effects.

CRANIOSACRAL THERAPY.

Craniosacral therapy addresses the inherent, gentle, rhythmic movement of the bones in the skull and their effect on the fluid that surrounds, bathes, and cushions the brain and spinal cord and runs throughout the body. Cranial bones move in miniscule amounts as a response to the production and absorption of cranial fluid. With head trauma, whiplash injury, or even severe stress, cranial bone movement can be compromised, resulting in headaches, dizziness, ringing in the ears, or vision disturbances. This therapy restores the normal movement of the cranial bones and fluid.

By addressing the root of the problem, regularly scheduled bodywork sessions can greatly reduce headaches as well as your need for medication. Remember, headaches are not normal, and you don't have to live with them.



Reflexology has proven as, or more, effective than medication--without the many side effects.

Cultivating a Gardening Habit

Discover the Health Benefits of Yard Work

Feeling the need to exercise, clean up your diet, meditate? Want to be more creative, get out and meet people, enjoy the outdoors, and slow down? There's one activity in which you can accomplish all of these objectives: gardening.

ENCOURAGING EXERCISE

Studies show that vigorous digging burns 500 calories an hour, weeding burns 210 calories, and mowing the lawn burns 400 calories. As a moderate exercise, gardening has been found to decrease the risk of heart disease and diabetes, and a study at the University of Arkansas found that gardening was almost as effective as weight lifting in reducing the risk for osteoporosis in women. So instead of taking that indoor aerobics class this summer, try mowing the lawn or planting an herb garden.

As with any exercise regimen, the key is to start at a comfortable pace and gradually work your way up to longer, more difficult activities. Your heart rate should be about the same as when you take a brisk walk.

IMPROVING YOUR DIET

Gardening will also likely help you eat better. Research shows that people who grow gardens eat more vegetables and fruits than those who don't. Growing fresh herbs, even in a container on the deck or balcony, is another great way to add flavor and freshness to home-cooked meals and an incentive to try new recipes.

BOOSTING YOUR SOCIAL LIFE

Gardening can also be quite social. Whether at a garden club, a community garden, or an online forum, people love to share ideas, solve common problems, and connect through mutual interests.

EASING STRESS

And finally, gardening is a great way to manage stress. Spending time outside and tuning in to the rhythms of nature, we're reminded to be patient, slow down, and breathe the fresh air. Whether growing flowers, vegetables, or herbs, a garden reminds us of our connection to life and the abundance that nature so freely gives.



Gardening burns calories and improves diet.

The Art of Aromatherapy

Essential Oils Provide Healing and Balance

Aromatic essential oils extracted from herbs, flowers, resin, wood and roots have long been a source of healing since ancient times, aiding in relaxation, circulation and wound healing. However, the use of these medicinal oils declined as the modern pharmaceutical industry developed. In 1928, French chemist Rene Maurice Gattefosse revived the use of essential oils and developed the art and science of utilizing naturally extracted aromatic essences from botanicals to balance and harmonize the health of body, mind and spirit. Gattefosse coined the practice aromatherapy.

Because aromatherapy's affect on emotional health, many massage therapists and bodywork practitioners

incorporate this noninvasive treatment into their practices. Dispensers or diffusers filled with aromatic essences may be used to scent the massage room, and specific essential oils are used on the client's skin during the massage. Because each oil has unique characteristics and benefits, the choice of oil or oils can be customized to the client's needs and emotional state. Whether inhaled or applied topically, aromatherapy requires an understanding of how each essential oil interacts with the body, as well as the mind.

Many pure essential oils need to be diluted, as they can cause irritation when applied directly to the skin. To guarantee safe and correct usage, consult a trained herbalist or practitioner.

The emotions listed below can be gently eased by one or a combination of the following essential oils:

Anxiety: bergamot, cedarwood, clary sage, frankincense, lavender, patchouli, Roman chamomile, rose, sandalwood.

Fatigue, Burnout: basil, ginger, grapefruit, jasmine, lemon, peppermint, rosemary, sandalwood.

Stress: bergamot, frankincense, geranium, lavender, mandarin, neroli, patchouli, Roman chamomile, ylang ylang.

Anger: jasmine, neroli, orange, patchouli, petitgrain, Roman chamomile, rose, vetiver, ylang ylang.

*If you change
the way you look
at things, the
things you look
at change.*

-Dr. Wayne Dyer

The intention of Brand New Day Massage Therapy is to positively influence people, body, mind and spirit, by facilitating them to the next level of wellbeing through therapeutic massage and bodywork one session at a time.

Brand New Day Massage Therapy

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