



HEADACHES BE GONE!

Do you experience headaches regularly? If you do, what is your symptom management plan? Do you brush off headaches thinking they are “normal?” Headache disorders are a worldwide problem, affecting people of all ages, races, income levels, and geographical areas.

According to the World Health Organization (2016), it has been estimated that the global prevalence among adults of current headache disorder is about 50-75% among 18-65 year olds. Current headache disorder means that you have experienced symptoms of a headache at least once within the last year.

30% of the current headache disorder group also reported experiencing at least one migraine within the last year. Headaches lasting more than 15 days every month affects up to 4% of the world’s adult population (WHO, 2016).





Get the Facts

- Headache disorders are among the most common disorders of the nervous system.
- Headache disorders, which are characterized by recurrent headache, are associated with personal and societal burdens of pain, disability, damaged quality of life, and financial cost.
- Headaches have been underestimated, under-recognized and under-treated throughout the world.

Common Causes of Headaches

While there are many contributing factors that may result in a headache, some of the most common include the following:

- Excessive stress
- Exposure to toxins
- Poor nutrition
- Inadequate sleep
- Head posture distortion patterns

In addition to getting more sleep, reducing stress, exercising regularly, and eating a proper diet, postural correction is also considered effective for the management and prevention of headaches. Research demonstrates a correlation between postural distortion patterns and an increased frequency, duration, and intensity of headaches.

According to Fernandez-de-las-penas (2007), patients who present with headaches commonly have active trigger points of the upper trapezius, sternocleidomastoid, and temporalis musculature. They also have greater forward posture and lesser neck mobility than healthy controls.

This means that people who present with poor posture, have a decreased range of motion of the cervical spine, and have tight musculature of the neck and shoulders are more likely to have headaches. If you are currently experiencing any of these signs or symptoms, consider the importance of postural correction to manage and prevent headaches.

According to a research study by Watson and Trott (1993) in comparison to a healthy group of individuals, the headache group presented with forward head posture, less isometric strength of upper cervical flexor musculature, and less endurance of cervical musculature. The outcome of this study highlights the need to screen for cervical etiology in patients who are suspected of suffering from common headaches and/or migraines.

The best way to manage headaches is to have a plan for prevention. To prevent headaches consider the importance of these three posture tips!



TIPS TO PREVENT POSTURE-RELATED HEADACHES

1) Use a Posture Reminder: Place an object in your workspace that will serve as your postural reminder. Every time you see this reminder, remember to sit up straight and focus on your neck posture. Pull your chin back so that your ear is aligned over your shoulder.

2) Strengthen your Neck Muscles: Stand with your back against a wall. Place a small cushion (pillow, towel, etc.) behind your head. Press your head gently into the cushion and hold for 10 seconds. Repeat 5 times. Perform this exercise regularly to strengthen neck musculature and to prevent postural distortion patterns from occurring.

3) Consult a Posture Expert: Arrange an appointment with a Posture Expert to take Posture Images and see if you have forward head posture that may be causing or predisposing you to chronic headaches. If forward head posture is detected, consider the importance of doing postural correction care right away.



References:

Fernandez-De-Las-Penas, C. et al. (2006) Myofascial Trigger Points, Neck Mobility, and Forward Head Posture in Episodic Tension-Type Headache. *Headache the Journal of Head and Face Pain*, 47(5).

Watson, D. & Trott, P. (1993) Cervical Headache: An Investigation of Natural Head Posture and Upper Cervical Flexor Muscle Performance. *Clinical Neurology*, 13.

World Health Organization (2016) Headache Disorder Fact Sheet <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs277/en/>

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