



Headache & Migraine Survival Guide

5 Steps To Manage Your Tension Headache Pain

Why this Guide?*

According to the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS) and the American Council for Headache Education (ACHE), migraine headaches affect 30 million people in the US. In addition, they note that because of the growing trend towards self-care and the large number of readily accessible over-the-counter pain relievers, "Americans have a responsibility to examine facts about headaches and pain relievers."

To help educate our patients, Body Pros Physical Therapy offers this Headache & Migraine Survival Guide. The Guide is designed to be a useful tool for helping you find the treatment options and care providers that will work best for you.



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- Step 1** Discovery:
Headache Types & Symptom Checklist
- Step 2** Symptom Tracker
- Step 3** Physician Consultation
- Step 4** Treating Your Headaches
- Step 5** Preventing Future Headaches

*The information in this Guide should not be used as a substitute for a physician's diagnosis, which includes screening for other medical conditions that may be related.

Step 1

Discovery: Headache Types & Symptom Checklist

Before considering treatment options, it is important to think about the different kinds of headaches and their unique sets of symptoms. By using the symptom checklist below, you will have a better understanding of the potential possibilities for your diagnosis and treatment. In addition, you will be better prepared to be more fully engaged in the conversation with your doctor, physical therapist, and other wellness professionals.

Tension Headache:

Typically mild to moderate pain.

The World Health Organization and International Headache Society report that up to **78% of all headaches are “tension headaches,”** and 60% of tension headache sufferers are impaired to some extent in social or work situations. For the 60% who experience social or occupational impairment, or take pain relievers regularly to suppress the pain, professionally managed treatment is recommended.

Symptoms (check all that apply):

- Tight feeling in neck muscles.
- Band-like or vice-like ache that surrounds the head (as compared to a localized pain around the eyes, or one side of the head only).
- Dull but constant pain on both sides of the head (as compared to throbbing or sharp, pointed pain).
- Pain primarily in the temples, back of the head, or neck.
- Changes in sleep patterns.
- Onset of headache in early morning.
- Onset of headache late in the day.
- Anxiety, dizziness, fatigue, or nausea.

Vascular (Migraine) Headache:

Typically moderate to intense pain.

Approximately 30 million Americans (**75% of these are women**), suffer from migraines. According to the American Medical Association, “The exact cause of Migraine is uncertain.” In addition, **research shows that the large majority of migraine sufferers report a family history of migraines.**

Symptoms (check all that apply):

- Pain on one side of the head.
- Pain throbs, pulsates.
- Moderate to intense pain.
- Nausea or vomiting.
- Sensitivity to light and sound.
- Increased pain with activity (example, lifting or climbing stairs).
- Warnings, or “auras” before the pain starts, including visual signs like spots of light, lines, and blind spots; or numbness or tingling in the face or extremities.

Cluster Headache:

Typically - intense pain, repeating in cyclical patterns.

Compared to other headache types, **cluster headaches are rare,** affecting an estimated 1 million people—**Most (90%) are males.**

Symptoms (check all that apply):

- Sharp, knife-like pain around one eye.
- Attacks come in groups (clusters), that can last for months.
- Pain comes on intensely, without warning.
- Droopy eyelid during, and sometimes after the attack.
- Redness or tearing of eyes, stuffy or runny nose on the same side of the attack.
- Attacks lasting from 30-90 minutes.
- Attacks come on during sleep.

Traction and Inflammation Headaches:

Traction and inflammation headaches can occur as a **symptom of a simple illness such as a sinus infection, or more serious conditions such as a brain tumor, stroke, and meningitis.** The **variety of symptoms for traction and inflammation headaches can vary, and that’s why it is important to follow the diagnostic process of your doctor.**

Step 3

Physician Consultation

Now that you've created your journal and organized your thoughts about diagnosis and treatment options for your headaches, if you haven't already seen your physician, you're now well-prepared to do so. Should your physician consultation indicate the possibility or diagnosis of tension headaches, or otherwise indicate the need for physical therapy, you can use this form with your physician or access it online at PTbyBodyPros.com/appointments.



PTbyBodyPros.com

Body Pros Physical Therapy | Physical Therapy Rx

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FAX PRESCRIPTIONS TO: (678) 965-2550

Patient Name: _____ Date: _____

Contact #1: _____ D.O.B. _____

Treating Doctor: _____ Office Phone: _____

Diagnosis: _____ ICD-10 Code: _____

Progress Reports to Doctor: Monthly Weekly Other: _____

PHYSICAL THERAPY:

- PT Evaluation Only
- PT Evaluation and Treatment

Modalities:

- Cervical/Lumbar Traction
- Gait Training
- Moist Heat/Cold Pack(s)
- Electrical Stimulation
- Neuromuscular Re-education/PNF
- Iontophoresis/Phonophoresis
- Ultrasound
- Manual Therapy
- Therapeutic Exercise
 - PROM AAROM
 - AROM PROM

OTHER SERVICES:

- Vestibular Rehab Therapy (VRT)
- Fall Risk Assessment and Prevention
- Balance Testing and Training
- Work Conditioning/Work Hardening
- Protocol: _____
- Other: _____

MODE / IMPROVE: Function Mobility Strength ROM Flexibility Endurance Posture

Frequency: Therapist Discretion 5x week 3x week 2x week 1x week

Duration: 12 weeks 10 weeks 8 weeks 6 weeks 4 weeks 3 weeks 2 weeks

Statement of Medical Necessity:

I certify that the Rehabilitation procedures prescribed for this patient are medically and therapeutically necessary, and they require skills of a licensed Physical Therapist/ Respiratory Therapist, and Occupational Therapist.

Physician's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Treating Your Headache

Frequently, muscle tension will refer pain to the head. This is why evidence-based tension headache treatment addresses many areas in the body other than the head. In most cases your neck will be the primary source of the nerve irritation causing tension headaches. Depending on your unique symptoms, you may benefit from one or more of the following physical therapies and treatment modalities:

- **Manual therapy techniques** - This may include manual mobilization of the neck to assist recovery, restore range of motion, reduce muscle spasms and stimulate circulation.
- **Therapeutic exercises:** To promote postural improvements, improve flexibility, and increase strength.
- **Functional training in self-care and home management** - To provide a home treatment plan for preventing recurrence, including guidance for diet and lifestyle changes.
- **Therapeutic modalities** - This may include ultrasound to relieve pain, deep heat to promote blood circulation, infrared light therapy (cold laser) and/or electrical stimulation to promote healing, blood circulation, and relieve pain.

Taken together, all of the treatments listed above are clinically proven to decrease the muscle tension and inflammation contributing to tension headaches. This treatment protocol can also identify and address any dysfunctional musculoskeletal movements that may be contributing to poor head and shoulder posture; poor posture increases the stress to the neck and contributes to the nerve irritation causing the headaches.

For tension headaches, manual physical therapy like the cervical stretch shown here has been proven effective as part of a complete treatment plan.



Step 5

Preventing Future Headaches

2-Phases

By breaking your treatment into two phases, you can focus on where you are in the treatment process and what you need to do to follow a natural progression towards an outcome that reduces or eliminates your headaches.

Phase 1: Managing & Reducing Acute Pain. Your first objective is to reduce the pain with the ultimate objective of eliminating it. As your physical therapy work progresses, you will be learning strategies that work best for you to avoid headaches and manage the pain when it occurs. Your Phase 1 physical therapy may include:

- **Evaluation** - The therapist will obtain a patient history, performing relevant systems reviews, and selecting and administering specific tests and measurements to obtain data which will then be used to make clinical judgments for your treatment plan.
- **Therapeutic stretches and exercises** - You learn stretches and strength exercises proven most effective for relieving and preventing pain associated with tension headaches.
- **Modalities** - Your Body Pros therapist has a variety of modalities that can be applied. The most common are ultrasound, infrared light therapy, and electronic stimulation. These modalities are used to help relieve pain, increase blood circulation and promote healing.
- **Manual therapy treatments** - These may include manual mobilization of the neck to assist recovery, restore range of motion, reduce muscle spasms and stimulate circulation.

Phase 2: Work To Prevent Chronic Recurrence. Prevention of frequent and chronic tension headaches may include a combination of drug therapy, physical & manual therapy, diet, exercise, and lifestyle changes:

- Specialized home exercise and stretching program. You will receive a customized program to follow independently. In addition, you should schedule periodic follow-up visits to check progress, review indications for additional physical therapy treatment or referral to a physician.
- Diet and lifestyle changes are always an important factor for managing and preventing recurring tension headaches. Your Apex team can provide recommendations for nutritionists or referrals to other counselors with the expertise you desire for life-long wellness support.

**To get started with the Body Pros Physical Therapy Headache Program:
Call the location nearest you or go online today for a free consultation.**

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