

## MEAD STREET PHYSIOTHERAPY TIPS TO MANAGE YOUR HEADACHE

1. **Identify your triggers.** Keep track of your headaches in a headache diary for a month, noting what you ate that day, what the weather was like, where you were, etc., to identify patterns. Once you know what triggers your headaches you can take steps to reduce the frequency.
2. **Reduce your stress.** While avoiding stress completely is impossible, reducing its effects is not. Learn about biofeedback, purchase and play relaxation tapes, take long baths, get a massage – all things that can minimise the effects of stress on your body.
3. **Take control of your life.** Do not put everyone else first.
4. **Stop smoking.** Smoking is a risk factor for several kinds of headaches. Even breathing cigarette or cigar smoke can trigger a headache for some people.
5. **Avoid too many over-the-counter medications.** They can stop being effective and cause rebound headaches, which begin when the medication wears off. If you take the maximum dosage of pain relievers for your headaches more than two or three times a week, you should talk to your doctor.
6. **Limit alcohol.** If you drink, limit your intake to an occasional drink or two. Beer and red wine are particular headache triggers for many people.
7. **Get regular sleep.** Maintaining regular sleep habits (going to bed and getting up at the same time, even on weekends) is particularly important for migraine sufferers. Oversleeping can be a migraine trigger. Similarly, fatigue can cause tension headaches.
8. **Eat regular meals.** Missing a meal can trigger headaches for many. Eating a healthy diet rich in carbohydrates and low in fat and drinking plenty of water to keep well hydrated are also important.
9. **Exercise regularly.** Regular exercise, whether it is walking the dog or parking a distance from the mall, is an important stress reducer. Start gradually: a rigorous aerobic workout can induce headache if you have not warmed up or are not used to exercise. A physiotherapist can assist you in modifying the exercises to suit.
10. **Have your eyes checked.** Staring at a computer screen all day can cause eyestrain, which can lead to tension-type headaches. Some people invest in a pair of glasses that provide optimal vision at the distance from the screen.
11. **Sit up straight.** Notice how you cradle the phone on your shoulder, how you carry your purse, how you sit behind the wheel of your car. Each of these can put undue strain on neck and shoulder muscles, leading to neck or tension-type headaches.
12. **See a physiotherapist** for information on how to sit at your computer.
13. **If you have neck symptoms,** try a massage as a treat.
14. **Talk to your doctor or physiotherapist** to help determine the type of headache or headaches you have.
15. **Treat your headache early.** You end up taking more tablets if you do not take enough early.
16. **Be positive about change.**

# HEADACHE DISABILITY QUESTIONNAIRE

Name: ..... Date: .....

*Please read each question and circle the response that best applies to you.*

1. How would you rate the usual pain of your headache on a scale from 0 to 10?

NO PAIN      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10      WORST PAIN

2. When you have headaches, how often is the pain severe?

NEVER      1-9%    10-19%    20-29%    30-39%    40-49%    50-59%    60-69%    70-79%    80-89%    90-100%  
                  1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10      ALWAYS

3. On how many days in the last month did you lie down for an hour or more because of your headache?

NONE      1-3      4-6      7-9      10-12    13-15    16-18    19-21    22-24    25-27    28-31  
                  1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10      EVERY DAY

4. When you have a headache, what percentage of the time do you miss work or school for all or part of the day?

NEVER      1-9%    10-19%    20-29%    30-39%    40-49%    50-59%    60-69%    70-79%    80-89%    90-100%  
                  1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10      ALWAYS

5. When you have a headache while you work (or study), how much is your ability to work (or study) reduced?

NOT REDUCED      1-9%    10-19%    20-29%    30-39%    40-49%    50-59%    60-69%    70-79%    80-89%    90-100%    UNABLE TO WORK  
                  1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

6. How many days in the last month have you been kept from performing housework or chores for at least half of the day because of your headaches?

NONE      1-3      4-6      7-9      10-12    13-15    16-18    19-21    22-24    25-27    28-31  
                  1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10      EVERY DAY

7. When you have a headache, how much is your ability to perform housework or chores reduced?

NOT REDUCED      1-9%    10-19%    20-29%    30-39%    40-49%    50-59%    60-69%    70-79%    80-89%    90-100%    UNABLE TO PERFORM  
                  1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

8. How many days in the last month have you been kept from non-work activities (family, social) because of your headaches?

NONE      1-3      4-6      7-9      10-12    13-15    16-18    19-21    22-24    25-27    28-31  
                  1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10      EVERY DAY

9. When you have a headache how much is your ability to engage in non-work activities (family, social) reduced?

NOT REDUCED      1-9%    10-19%    20-29%    30-39%    40-49%    50-59%    60-69%    70-79%    80-89%    90-100%    UNABLE TO PERFORM  
                  1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

10. How many headaches have you had in the past month?

NONE      1-4      5-8      9-12    13-16    17-20    21-24    25-29      EVERY DAY

11. How many painkillers have you taken in the past week?

Name of tablet.....No. of tablets.....      Name of tablet.....No. of tablets.....

12. What things contributed to you developing a headache?

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13. What did you do to ease your headache?

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## Headache Diary

<b>Date</b>	<b>Severity</b> 1 2 3 4 5	<b>Disability</b> 1 2 3 4 5	<b>Headache Triggers</b>	<b>Relief Measures</b>	<b>Duration</b> <b>(Hours)</b>
<b>1</b>					
<b>2</b>					
<b>3</b>					
<b>4</b>					
<b>5</b>					
<b>6</b>					
<b>7</b>					

NB. Women should circle dates of menstrual flow

