

Headaches

Oh Those Nagging Headaches. Could They Be Coming From Your Neck?

Do you ever get headaches late in the afternoon while at work? Well you're not alone.

A number of people get headaches at this time of the day due to neck problems.

Whether it be from car accidents, stress, constant phone use, or a computer monitor that is not positioned correctly, can all lead to muscular spasm and weakness in the neck.

These, in turn, lead to headaches. You may even have a chronic weakness in the neck from an old injury that has made you an easy target for recurrent headaches.

What are some symptoms of neck problems?

1. Headaches (including migraines)
2. Neck pain and stiffness in the upper back
3. Light headedness
4. Dizziness
5. Nausea and vomiting.

Automobile accidents are a common cause of these problems. Victims tend to move their necks less often because of the pain they experience. As a result atrophy (the loss of muscles) develops along with weakness; the result is chronic pain and headaches. Quite literally, the neck muscles are not strong enough to hold up the weight of the head.

The elderly, also, often experience neck and headache pain. In their case, arthritis is the culprit due to changes in the bones of the neck and the resulting stiffness and weakness of surrounding muscles.

What can be done to help?

The goal of any therapy is to gently relieve muscular spasm and then re-strengthen the neck.

Regardless of the cause, the resultant headaches are treated by relieving neck spasms through **trigger point therapy, manipulation**, or physical therapy. Once the spasms have been relieved, the muscles are re-strengthened by a physical therapist. Then, hopefully, the patient's headaches will disappear.

Trigger point therapy involves a series of injections with a very thin needle and a local anesthetic. The physician finds the triggers of the muscular spasm and then gently injects these areas. Over time, the trigger points which are spasmed release themselves. This, in turn, leads to increased movement of the neck.

When **Manipulation** is used, the physician or therapist uses his/her hands to diagnosis and treat problems. Sometimes palpation (touch) is used as a diagnostic procedure to detect soft tissue changes or structural abnormalities, other times corrective maneuvers are used to relieve restrictions of mo-

tion. Consequently, proper manipulation directed to the neck and head, over time, affords relief of neck pain and headache symptoms.

During the day you should stretch your neck out in order to keep tension from developing.

Move your neck in different directions throughout the day and night. Move your head and neck flex, extend, side bend, and rotate your head. Hold each position for approximately 5 seconds.

If you are experiencing problems with headaches or neck pain may be we can help. Remember, the goal of any therapy is to gently relieve muscular spasm and then re-strengthen the neck.

Key Facts About Low Back Problems (What You Need To Know)

Eight out of ten adults will have low-back problems at some point in their lives.

Next to the common cold, low back symptoms are the most common reason for physician visits.

Back problems are the leading cause of disability in patients younger than 45 years of age.

Headaches

What Can I Do For Myself To Prevent Back Problems?

1. Exercise regularly to tone and strengthen muscles.
2. Sit in a chair with good lower back support that you are able to put in a reclining position.
3. Rest your feet on the floor or a low stool if you sit for long periods.
4. Roll up a towel and place it behind your lower mid-back if you have to drive for long stretches. Get out of the car often, and do some walking and stretching exercises.
5. Wear comfortable, low-heeled shoes with cushioned insoles.
6. Sleep on your back or on your side with your knees bent and a pillow between them.
7. Place your work station at a comfortable height if you stand while you work.
8. Keep objects close to the body when lifting. Avoid lifting while twisting, bending, and reaching.
9. Use a lumbar corset if your job requires frequent lifting.

Should I Stay Home and Lye In Bed?

In the majority of acute back pain cases, it is worse if you remain in bed all day long. If you do, you will weaken your lower back muscles, and it will take you longer to recover.

What Activities Can I Do While I Recover?

Begin an exercise program slowly. Start with an endurance activity like walking (treadmill), bicycling, or swimming. Aerobic exercise can begin within two weeks of symptom onset and can be increased gradually 5-10 minutes a day until you're exercising for 20-30 minutes. But, be warned, It is typical for symptoms to worsen when you first begin your exercise routine. If your pain continues beyond three days, or if you experience pain down your leg or have trouble controlling your bowels or bladder, you should see your physician immediately.

Treatment Of Soft Tissue Injuries (i.e., Muscles, Ligaments, and Tendons)

We at Sobel Family Medicine & Physical Therapy have come to realize that there are many ways to treat soft tissue injuries. What works for one patient may not work for the next.

Over the past ten years, we have developed a treatment plan for injuries which is based on a foundation of professional and personal knowledge. Our new physical therapy and exercise facility will help us take better care of your needs when it comes to soft tissue injuries. Our approach re-directs patients away from the more traditional treatments of prescription painkillers and extended bed rest (especially since recent

studies have linked bed rest to a more prolonged period of recovery). Instead, we encourage a more active, self-involved solution through a program which emphasizes exercise, stretching, and the re-strengthen of muscles.

Our goal is to have our patients return to their regular activities as quickly as possible. In order to achieve this, we have enlisted a group of specialists with different backgrounds and philosophies.

Together, we bring you a comprehensive foundation of medical skills and knowledge rarely encountered in a family practice. This joint effort gives you the chance to live life to the fullest!

- **Dr. Larry Sobel**, Family Practitioner - Trigger Point Therapy
- **Dr. Bruce Sobel**, Family Practitioner - Manipulation
- **Dr. Arthur Schurgin**, Anesthesiologist and Chronic Pain Specialist – Epidural Blocks
- **Dr. Bruce DeMartino**, Chiropractor - Manipulation
- **Audrey Sobel**, Licensed Physical Therapist - Rehabilitation of Soft Tissue Injuries
- **Kelly Tourek**, Exercise Physiologist - Muscle Training and Re-strengthening

Headaches

Reason to not smoke

- Lung Cancer
- Heart Disease
- Facial Wrinkles
- Body Odor
- Teeth Discoloration
- Osteoporosis
- Ulcers
- Poor Circulation
- Lip Cancer
- Tongue Cancer
- Restaurants
- Stuffy Nose
- Taste of Food
- Pneumonia
- Asthma
- Chronic Bronchitis
- Shortness of Breath
- Oxygen Ashes
- Social Rejection
- Disability Cost
- Alienation
- Heart Attacks
- Strokes
- Death
- Low-Weight Babies
- Coughing
- Sputum
- Emphysema
- Family
- Second-Hand Smoke
- Children
- Dry Cleaners
- Hair Odor
- Girlfriends / Boyfriends
- Dancing

- House Odors
- Pets

Now we have made our point so subtly, think about putting this habit to rest.

You say that you have tried to quit in the past and have failed?

Good!

That puts the odds in your favor.

Most successful smoke-stoppers have seriously tried to quit smoking at least 3 times in the past.

We realize that it is very difficult to stop smoking.

That is why we have a program to help you.

Our program involves four 30-minute sessions with our smoking counselor. If you are interested, call or ask one of our staff members how you can begin to break this habit today.

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