

## THE ROOT OF YOUR HEADACHE

Written by Valecia Weeks, CPT  
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Have you ever wondered why headaches happen? Have you ever even pondered on what type of headache you may be having...or do you just decide that these nagging “progress stoppers” are just a part of life and just live with them? Sometimes we do just get so used to them being a normal part of life that we fail to realize that with a little proactive planning, there is something that can be done to manage and even prevent them.

Types of headaches come in many varieties. Following are a list of the different types of headaches that you can experience.

Migraine headaches occur when blood vessels in the brain become dilated, usually from an allergic reaction to food or the environment. Migraines can even be stress related. This type of headache usually begins with an interruption in the vision then suddenly an excruciating pain, which begins to take over what we deem as “normal life.” There are occasions when a migraine can be felt on both sides; but generally, only one side is affected. 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 massage techniques can also be effective in easing migraines or decreasing the frequency of these painful headaches.

Tension headaches are usually exaggerated by stress. Tension headaches can also be related to poor posture, jaw problems (such as temporomandibular joint disorder, or TMJ), and neck pain. Many people describe this type of headache as starting at the base of the skull and then moving in an arc over the ears and behind the eyes. Tension headaches are most often caused by poor posture, work station positions, and body mechanics, creating undue stress on the upper neck muscles.

Massage Options A treatment regimen that includes massage, attention to body position, and stress management can help prevent or greatly reduce the frequency of headaches, in turn reducing your reliance on medication. There are many different massage techniques, each with

specific approaches for treating headaches. Following is a short list of techniques often effective in treating recurring headaches.

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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.

Deep Tissue Therapies. 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.

By addressing the root of the problem, regularly scheduled massage 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.

For more information on the benefits of massage contact Valecia at:

[www.assuringhands.massagetherapy.com](http://www.assuringhands.massagetherapy.com)