

# HEADACHES

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This month's talk is on....  
**ERGONOMICS OF SPORTS**

May 28th, 2005  
10:00 –11:00 am

If you are interested please sign  
up in the binder on the bookshelf  
located in the waiting room

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**Once my headaches stop, does  
the chiropractic care end?**

Your body continues to heal after the pain has gone. Continuing to have chiropractic adjustments helps to retrain your vertebrae to hold their healthy position. Your nervous system will function more efficiently and your body will be better able to heal itself. In time, exercise, a healthy diet, and periodic visits to the chiropractor will help you stay healthy, pain free, and live life to the fullest once again.

## Tension Headaches vs Migraines

**What is the difference between a  
Tension Headache and a Migraine?**

- It's generally a migraine where the head feels like it's going to burst. There is a deep, throbbing pain, localized on either one side of the head or the other. The patient usually can't stand light or noise. Nausea and impaired vision are common. Attacks come frequently and can last as long as a few hours to a few days. They are often set off by menstruation, too much alcohol, caffeine or smoking. When a misalignment causes migraines, the out of position vertebrae puts pressure on one or more nerves. As a result, the blood flow to the head is reduced. To compensate, the blood vessels in the head expand thus irritating surrounding nerves = **throbbing**

**migraine.**

- The pain of a tension headache is distinctly different. It's a dull, steady pain that grips the entire head. There is usually stiffness in the neck and tension between the shoulder blades. Attacks are often triggered by stress or fatigue. They occur frequently and can last hours. With a tension headache, the pressure on the spinal nerves is not severe enough to affect blood flow. However, contraction of the neck muscles and tearing of the muscle fibers irritate the underlying nerves within the neck. The irritated nerves signal for muscles to tighten, resulting in a cycle of spasm and pain throughout the head = **dull ache of a tension headache.**

**Note!! A misaligned vertebrae can put pressure on spinal nerves resulting in headache pain.**

## Anatomy of a Headache

Headaches are more than just an ache in your head. It involves other parts of your body too. At the core of your problem may be the spine, which often gets pushed out of alignment by poor posture or injury. Like wobbly, unbalanced building blocks, even misalignments in your lower back can throw off the stability of your upper back and even your neck. The body is always trying to balance

itself, therefore a misalignment towards one side in the back would very likely lead to an equal and opposite shifting in the upper back/neck. This may eventually lead to a tension head ache or a migraine. Certain substances, such as caffeine, alcohol, or cigarettes, preservatives (nitrites), can also contribute to migraine headaches.

## Massage Therapy and Headaches

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Headaches and stress; Stress and headaches. Often, both go hand in hand. When someone experiences a heightened amount of stress, headaches can often ensue. In turn, headaches can also lead to additional stress because of such things as poor sleep quality or diminished work capacity when meeting a deadline. Stress induced headaches are amongst the most common complaints reported by patients in most clinics. Normally, the first step is to determine the type of headache as the treatment approach varies. The Majority are Fibrocystic, or Stress headaches. Most of the remaining headaches include Migraines and Cluster Headaches.

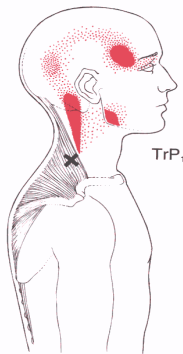
Stress headaches are treated primarily through relaxation and the release of spasms. Heat is often applied to muscles of the upper back to restore nutritional support (i.e. circulation) to the tissues and to augment trigger point therapy. Sometimes low grade joint mobilizations and mild neck stretches are employed.

Migraine & Cluster headaches are considered vascular and are treated differently than stress headaches. Cluster headaches are relatively rare. Typically there is no throbbing. There is intense pain to the eye and nose on one side and both may begin to water. The skin on the affected side may turn red. Often, the headaches occur 2-3 times per day lasting 10 minutes to 2 hours over a short period of time (5-6 weeks). The headaches "cluster" together.

Vascular headaches are triggered by such things as diet, weather changes, light effects, smells, and stress. Naturally, one tries to avoid the triggers, but it may prove difficult in some cases.

Treatment is similar to stress headaches, but heat is never added during an episode. Between episodes, heat may be added but care is taken if heat is the trigger.

Do your headaches hurt in the red zone?



## A Chiropractic Evaluation For Headaches

The Evaluation helps Dr. Rodwin plan the specific treatment and prevention program. It may include a health history, physical exam, x-rays and special tests if required. Dr. Rodwin asks specific questions to begin to determine whether they are tension or migraine headaches. A physical exam helps locate the cause of your headache and x-rays rule out other problems and may confirm your diagnosis.

**Health History:** specific questions will help determine if it is a tension or migraine headache that is felt.

**Physical exam:** your vital signs are checked, then your neck and back are examined. Using light pressure, Dr. Rodwin checks for stiffness, pain, or

muscle tension and for limited range of motion.

**X-Rays:** x-rays give a detailed view of how bones in your neck and back line up. Dr. Rodwin may spot misalignments and rule out other problems; like fractures or tumours. X-rays may determine the kind of treatment you'll need.

**Your Diagnosis:** your health history, physical exam and x-rays help Dr. Rodwin diagnose your tension or migraine headaches. They also help diagnose other kinds of headaches, like cluster or mixed headaches or those associated with bacterial infection, a tumour, or hemorrhage. Dr. Rodwin will recommend referral to another healthcare specialist, if necessary, for those problems.