

FIGHT MIGHTY MIGRAINE WITH AYURVEDIC TREATMENT

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ABSTRACT

Migraine patients who don't reply to conventional therapy, develop unacceptable side-effects, or are reluctant to require medicines resort to complementary and alternative medicines (CAM). Globally, patients are seeking various non-conventional modes of therapy for the management of their headaches. There are variety of the way that Ayurveda can bring balance to life and treat the basis reason for migraines Diet therapy, Lifestyle modification, Massage Therapy, Yoga therapy, Meditation therapy, therapy, Aromatherapy, Pranayama, Soothing heroin (Nasya). An Ayurvedic Treatment Protocol (AyTP) comprising Shiroshuladi vajra rasa, Ardha narishwar rasa, Maha lakshmvilas rasa, Shadbindu taila, Apmarga taila, Pathyadi Kashaya, Godanti bhasma together with regulated diet and lifestyle modifications like minimum 8 h sleep, 30-60 min morning or evening walk and abstention from smoking/drinking, was tried for migraine treatment. The duration of the therapy was 90 days. Home remedies for migraines can facilitate your get obviate that pesky headache naturally without visiting a doctor or a drug store. Some Herbs employed in Migraine: shirisha, yastimadhu, vidanga, tilam, bhrungraj. Although pain relievers and migraine abortive medications can help, long-term use can cause medication overuse headaches. These headaches may cause more complications, that's why ayurvedic therapy is often preferred over conventional therapy.

KEYWORD: CAM, AyTP, Alternative Therapy, Ayurveda, Migrane, Herbs.

What is migraine?

Migraine may be a complex upset, which is prevalent across the planet and getting eliminate it permanently are often a difficult situation to realize through conventional medicines.^[1] This can be because there's no such medicine designed particularly for treating your migraine headache. This can be the explanation why people are more open towards medicine like Ayurveda, acupuncture and herbal medicines. Migraine headache is characterized united of the foremost common primary headache disorder, where someone experiences a pulsatile throbbing sensation within the head on the unilateral side. Migraine headaches can affect a person's life by hindering the productivity of a personal. It's often related to comorbidities causing a greater degree of disability. Migraine pain will be triggered by variety of psychological and physiological stressors. Various researches have shown that psychological stress, sleep deprivation, lack of exercise, fasting, and alter in atmospheric condition can trigger migraine headaches. The intensity and frequency of migraine headaches vary between individuals and therefore the symptoms may

include nausea, vomiting, sensitivity to light and visual disturbances. Conventional therapies for migraine are often related to side effects, because of which most of the migraine patients are reluctant to require these medicines and like complementary and alternative medicines (CAM). Migraine is among common sorts of a headache that continues to pose an enormous challenge to the medical world because of its incompletely understood etiology and unpredictable nature. This can be more so when over the years an episodic migraine in some persons progresses to chronic, refractory or medication overuse headache.

Migraine could be a complex disorder characterized by a recurrent episode of a severe headache which is most frequently unilaterally (only one side) and should be related to visual or sensory symptoms which are called an "AURA" that happens before the pinnacle pain or it should also occur during or after. Migraine is that the commonest variety of a headache largely affecting the urban population. About 15-17% of girls and 5-7% of men are full of this disorder. Though a migraine may

occur all told age groups; it's highly prevalent within the people of 18-45 years. Migraine attacks are characterized by recurrent headaches with a unilateral or bilateral location, pulsating nature and moderate to severe intensity causing significant debility. World Health Organization has ranked migraine 6th among disability causing diseases. There is no established cause and cure for a migraine. Though diverse theories are brought forward from time to time by experts, none of those are ready to provide long-term prophylactic treatment. On the contrary, the prolonged use of painkillers further triggers Medication Overuse Headache (MOH) and other side effects.^[2]

Classification of Drug in Migraine

Medications work in two ways to treat migraine. The first is acute or abortive treatment. These medicines treat migraine attacks and stop the symptoms. The other is preventive treatment, which reduces the frequency of migraine attacks. You may need preventive treatment if you have four or more migraine attacks per month, the attacks last 12 hours or more, or if acute treatment is not relieving your migraine symptoms. Doctors follow guidelines and recommendations from experts in the field when choosing migraine treatments.

The classes of acute treatment migraine drugs include

Analgesics treat pain and include both over-the-counter and prescription medicines. Ergots work to balance brain chemicals and constrict blood vessels. Nausea is a common side effect. Triptans work in much the same way as ergots. However, they are more specific for migraine. Common side effects may include flushing, tingling, sleepiness, and throat or chest tightness. Small molecule CGRP blockers are not approved to prevent migraine but are effective for rapidly treating acute migraine episodes. They are an oral pill that can be taken with other migraine drugs. The main classes of preventive treatment migraine drugs include: Antidepressants also balance brain chemicals that play a role in migraine. Side effects vary depending on the drug. Anticonvulsants are drugs that treat seizures through various effects on the brain. Common side effects include sleepiness and weight changes. Beta blockers drugs in this class commonly treat high blood pressure. Dizziness, fatigue and nausea are common side effects. Botulinum toxins are injected to prevent migraine in people with 15 or more headache days each month. Common side effects include headache, neck pain, and pain at the injection site. Monoclonal antibody CGRP blockers are the first class of drugs specifically produced to prevent migraines. They block a molecule thought to instigate migraine and increase migraine pain and intensity. This drug is injected under the skin. Common side effects include redness at the injection site, constipation, or muscle spasms or cramps.^[3]

How do they work?

Drugs used to prevent migraines were actually developed to lower blood pressure, prevent seizures or treat

depression. But they were later discovered to also help with migraines, so the drugs were prescribed in what's called an "off-label" use. CGRP inhibitors are a new class of medicines that address migraines head-on. Four drugs in this class have been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration: erenumab, fremanezumab, galcanezumab and eptinezumab. CGRP stands for the scientific name of a protein that's naturally found in the nervous system. The protein is released from nerve endings, including those surrounding the brain, where it widens blood vessels and may promote inflammation and pain. CGRP inhibitors work by blocking the protein and preventing or reducing pain in the process.

How effective are they?

These drugs were associated with an average reduction of three to five headache days per month in people with frequent migraines. Although that might seem pretty modest, it's about the same benefit gained with the drugs traditionally used to prevent migraines. And the word average is key; some people had much better results. "Based on the clinical trials, these new drugs aren't necessarily more effective than the drugs that we've had, but there are some positives," Dr. Soni says. First, they have what's called a longer half-life, which means patients only need to take them once a month or once every three months instead of daily. Another positive is they generally cause fewer and milder side effects than other drugs — mainly irritation at the injection site or constipation. They also don't typically interact with other drugs in a way that is dangerous for the people taking them.^[4]

General Management of Migraine

There are a number of ways that Ayurveda can bring balance to life and treat the root cause of migraines. In addition to specific research-based treatment options listed above, other integrative therapies help manage migraine headaches.

1. Diet therapy

- a. Dosh specific nutrition: Depending on the dosha(s) involved in headache and also the patient's constitution, the patient must be instructed to eat a diet that pacifies the aggravated dosha.
- b. Avoiding or minimizing migraine trigger foods: Migraine trigger foods can be different in every individual and finding these trigger foods can help to minimize migraine headaches.

2. Lifestyle modification

Migraine (Ardhavabhedaka) can be prevented by following a healthy lifestyle. Maintaining a regular sleep schedule, eating routine and working habits and avoiding migraine triggers can reduce the frequency and severity of migraine headaches. Some of these healthy lifestyles include a good diet and exercise routine, night's sleep, a morning routine, & a low-stress lifestyle.

3. Massage Therapy

Massage therapy and stretching exercises can also help minimize the severity and frequency of migraine headaches. It is very important that migraineurs get the proper amount of sleep.

4. Yoga therapy

Since stress is an important factor in creating both migraine and tension headaches, yoga can without a doubt help in preventing these types of headaches. Yoga can also help with tension in the muscles of the neck, back and head which contribute to headaches. Yoga helps to release tight muscles and improve blood circulation in that region. Yoga helps relax the mind as well.

5. Meditation therapy

Stress is a major contributor to both tension and migraine headaches. Reciting mantras and doing breath meditation can reduce stress. In this meditation, sit in a comfortable position. There are many types of meditations available.

6. Herbal therapy

A mixture of herbal essential oils can help to alleviate the headache. Peppermint essential oil in massage oils and balm can with help with migraines.

7. Aromatherapy

Essential oils can enter the body through the skin, nasal passages, bronchioles, lungs, and gastrointestinal tract.

8. Pranayama

Different types of breathing exercises have different effects on the body, mind, and spirit. Breathing practices purify nadis (subtle channels that carry prana through the field of mind). If the headache is due to Vata vitiation, one can benefit from alternate nostril breathing (Anuloma Viloma). If the headache is due to pitta vitiation, doing lunar and shitali pranayama can help and if due to Kapha dosha vitiation, solar and kapalabhati pranayama can be beneficial.

9. Soothing nose drops (Nasya)

Putting about 5 drops of Brahmi ghee in each nostril can alleviate the pain of migraine headaches. In Vata type headaches, placing 3-5 drops of warm ghee in each nostril can help to calm down the headache.

Many of these integrative therapies help and are effective but should be taken with the advice of the expert or Ayurveda Physician.^[5]

How Ayurveda Views Migraine?

Ayurveda and Yoga therapy are two ancient Indian systems of medication whose integration offers a holistic approach. Migraine treatment in Ayurveda is mentioned as Ardhavabedhaka that describes one-sided pain which is intense and piercing in nature. It also states that Ardhavabedhaka is attributed to numerous causes, like daytime sleeping, fasting, and fear, intake of dry food

items, stress, alcohol, weeping, anxiety, and grief. Ayurveda promotes mind-body medicine during a very comprehensive manner and thus influences physiological processes including autonomic modulation to manage the disease. Ayurvedic treatment for migraine headaches involves the elimination of vitiated Kapha Dosha which successively helps to prevent the forthcoming Kapha disorders and associated Pitta disorders. This could be achieved through the administration of samshodhana (Panchakarma-Bio-purificatory techniques, kaya virechana (therapeutic purgation), Pathya ahara (wholesome regulated diet) and vihara (wholesome regulated lifestyle). All of which help maintain homeostasis balance between all dosha for prevention and treatment of diseases.^[6] According to the vaidyas, conventional ayurvedic practitioners, the treatment works on the principle that migraine occurs whenever the acid-alkaline balance within the stomach is disturbed. This, in step with them, ends up in greater pitta, a step utilized in Ayurveda to seem at a human health utilizing the heart beat and affects body functions. The treatment that's prescribed is meant to revive the balance. The cure is additionally passionate about the change within the lifestyle of those patients. Though considered genetic in nature, variety of environmental factors trigger migraines like anxiety, change within the meals consumed, and other environmental factors. An external stimulus like excessive noise, light, stress, and tension all contribute to increasing migraine pains. Weak digestion is additionally a contributing factor that increases ama within the flesh and prevents proper blood flow within the body and brain. Ayurveda and allopathy cite irregular eating habits like long intervals between meals as triggers for migraines also.^[7]

Ayurveda

There is some controversy on exactly when the practice of Ayurveda began, as it was first passed down in an oral tradition, and not written in texts. Many believe its origins date back over 5000 years. The Vedic civilization in Southeast Asia migrated south to create Ayurveda and north to create Traditional Chinese Medicine and Homeopathy. Ancient rishis spent countless of hours meditating together, and the concepts of Ayurveda became known to them. A rishi is considered, in Ayurveda, to be an enlightened saint or a sage of insight. Supposedly, rishis were given information directly from God. Rishis studied nature and were felt to understand the natural law of the universe, including natural human rhythm and the connection to the world. The oral tradition began as rishis passed on this knowledge from one generation to then next. During this time, individuals were studied as unique beings who became imbalanced when their systems became disconnected with nature. Disease manifestation occurred when the natural healing of the body was impaired. Eventually, this knowledge was written in a text, the Charaka- Samhita. This text is still considered one of the most authoritative texts on Ayurveda. Vaidyas (Ayurvedic physicians) carried this knowledge with them and treated many patients using

this approach. The approaches to treatment, involving dietary changes, herbals, use of massage, and purification practices, all offer novel ways to balance the physiology. Eventually, this Ayurvedic knowledge spread to other parts of the world. In 1835, the British imposed a ban on Ayurveda to allow Western medicine to flourish. Ayurveda was still quietly practiced, and continued to survive during this time. Ayurvedic centers were not supported, and were, in fact, suppressed from spreading this ancient wisdom. After India gained independence in 1947, Ayurveda slowly became practiced again in larger numbers. Finally, in 1971, Ayurveda was allowed into India's official state health care system. From that time on, Ayurveda flourished not only in India, but in Greece, Europe, Japan, Australia, and Russia, along with North and South America. With its widespread practice, understanding migraine from an Ayurvedic perspective can be helpful to our understanding of this disease process as a whole.

I believe that our goal, in addition to treating symptoms with medications and injections, should also be to allow patients to understand why they are suffering and to offer them tools to find balance. We have been blessed with modern medicine in that it provides us with many options to treat severe headaches and associated symptoms so that our patients do not suffer needlessly. Medications are also offered to assist with treating the disease. According to Ayurveda, having a migraine is considered "a spiritual intervention from the divine. The severe pain of the migraine is believed to occur so we can be reminded of our imbalanced state. The pain is meant to encourage us to become more connected not only with ourselves but also with the natural laws that define u."^[8]

Migraine Treatment in Ayurveda

In Ayurveda "Ardhavybedaka" is described by Charaka Samhita in siddhi sthana (9/74-78). Charaka explains Ardhavybedaka as cutting and churning type of pain in the half part of the head, ears, eyes, and forehead. So we can compare Ardhavybedaka with a Migraine. Charaka also mentioned that if a headache is very severe than it may diminish the power of vision and hearing. The treatment course is decided by evaluating the history of patients and according to the individual's Prakriti.

A migraine is caused by mainly Pitta and Vata Dosha. Some classics describe it as Tridoshaja. In a research paper by Vd Prerak Shah, CLINICAL STUDY OF 'MIG-17'. NASAL DROPS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF ARDHAVYBEDAKA W.S.R. TO MIGRAINE, 'Mig-17' Nasal Drop was shown to have success and that it is capable of breaking the Samprapti (Pathogenesis) of a Migraine. The drugs used in 'Mig-17' are indicated for Urdhvajatrugata Vikara in classics. Amalaki due to its Sheeta Potency lowers the aggravated Pitta. Yastimadhu removes excessive Kapha. Sunthi due to its hot property pacifies Vata and Kapha and increases the penetration power of the formulation. In addition to Sunthi is also

recognized by modern science and they have done research showing its effectiveness in Migraine. Aritha is described as Urdhva shodhana in classics, so it has the potency to clear the blocked channels (Strotoshodhana). Urdhvajatrugata Rogas (Diseases of the supraclavicular region) and their management have a special place in Ayurveda. Shirah (Head) being the prime seat of knowledge and also the prime controller of the entire body has been termed as Uttamanga (superlative organ). Hence, the diseases occurring in the Urdhvajatru have been very clearly highlighted in the Ayurvedic classics along with their management. Nasa (nose) has been considered as the gateway to Shirah. Nasya karma is indicated to uproot the deep-seated diseases of the head.

Vaidya Gaurang Joshi describes it as follows: According to Ayurveda, Migraine is Tridoshaj Vyadhi and among Tridosha Vata and Pitta are predominant factors. Vata controls the nervous system and the activities of the brain and imbalance in Vata trigger the disease. We can consider all the Vata prakopak (aggravating) Ahaar(diet) and Vihar(lifeStyle) like sleeplessness, stress, extreme cool condition, Irregular food habits. Pitta is also considered as one of the cause so Pitta aggravated diet like spicy food, junk food, beverages, stress is also the important causes of a Migraine. As per Ayurveda, if a Migraine dominated with Vata dosha patient may have dryness of skin and the pain is very acute. If it is dominated by Pitta patient may feel Redness and Burning sensation in the eyes. If it is dominated by Kapha than the patient may experience fatigue, depression, and headache with a dull throbbing pain. Vaidya Balendu Prakash has developed Ayurveda Treatment Protocols and treats patients using the age-old Ayurvedic concept of aahar (diet), vihaar (lifestyle) and aushadh (medicines). Using in-house prepared Ayurvedic formulations, coupled with a regulated diet and lifestyle, the treatment brings complete and sustainable relief from migraines. During the treatment period of four months, this protocol works to eliminate the root cause of Migraine, restore the metabolic balance of the body and restores fitness and health.^[9]

Ayurvedic home remedies for migraine

Dealing with migraine pain can never be easy. Home remedies for migraines can facilitate your get obviate that pesky headache naturally without visiting a doctor or a drug store. It's proposed that the administration of ginger tea can help abort the prophylactic effects of migraines and supply relief from its symptoms. Other remedies may include applying a hot pack or cold pack and easing the pressure on the scalp by wearing goggles, hat, or headband. The patients with migraine are photophobic, during this case, they'll attempt to dim the lights of their video display while working for late hours, use dark curtains to avoid excessive lights in their house, head massage, yoga, exercise, and meditation also can provide relief from migraine symptoms.^[10]

Ayurvedic protocols for migraine

The duration of the therapy is generally 90 days. Ayurvedic Treatments Protocols and Formulations commonly used for Migraine.^[11]

- i. Shiroshuladi vajra rasa
- ii. Ardha narishwar rasa
- iii. Maha lakshmvilas rasa
- iv. Shadbindu taila
- v. Apmarga taila
- vi. Pathyadi kashaya
- vii. Godanti bhasma

Herbs used in Migraine

- i. Shirisha (Albizia lebbek)
- ii. Yastimadhu (Glycyrrhiza glabra)
- iii. Vidanga (Embelia ribes)
- iv. Tilam (Sesamum indicum)
- v. Bhrungraj (Eclipta alba)

Side Effects of Migraine

Before severe migraine attack comes on in full force, someone likely have multiple warning signs or symptoms. Some common symptoms include: pulsing pain around the eye, temples, face, sinuses, jaw, or neck, nausea or vomiting, sensitivity to light or sound, scalp tenderness or pressure, dizziness or unsteadiness.

How does Ayurvedic treatment differ from traditional migraine treatment?**Using a conventional approach, migraine is treated with**

Over-the-counter or prescription pain relievers, migraine drugs (pills, nasal sprays, or shots), anti-nausea drugs, antidepressants, anti-seizure drugs, botox injections, lifestyle changes, self-care remedies. Although pain relievers and migraine abortive medications can help, long-term use can lead to medication overuse headaches. These headaches may cause more complications.

Ayurveda, on the other hand, uses

Body detoxification, herbal remedies, dietary and lifestyle changes, relaxation techniques Since Ayurvedic medicine doesn't use prescription drugs, there isn't a risk of medication overuse headache.^[12]

Body Detoxification: An Overview

These days, the word detoxification can be heard ubiquitously and is often used casually as well. However, to understand its real essence, what it means and how can its potential be harnessed can make a world of difference. So, what does detoxification mean? Essentially, detoxification is medicinal and refers to the natural removal of toxins from the body. On a day-to-day basis the liver, kidneys, intestines lymphatic systems are doing this work continuously for us. Then why is there the need to have an additional detoxification programme for the body? We are exposed to so many chemicals – be it in our food supply, the air we breathe, daily we use cosmetics, and other chemical agents in cleaning. Some of these are very harmful and can cause potential

damage. To make the liver and kidney more efficient we can adopt some healthy practices, which subsequently help to flush the toxins out.

So how does detoxification work?

There are various detox diets ranging from total starvation fasts to juice fasts, to food modification approaches and those that often involve use of laxatives, diuretics, vitamins, minerals and/or 'cleansing foods'. These all subject the body to undue stress and work only for the time being.

Detox diets may severely limit energy and nutrient intake, posing various risks to your health. Some groups of people should never do detox diets.

There is no medical research which can support this approach, though.

Then what should be done?

Detoxification should be a lifestyle change where focus is more on eating clean food. It results in cleansing of the body, nourishing and recharging it. One should first focus on reducing the toxin load to the body then eating such foods, which can provide healthy nutrients that will help in refueling the body. The focus should be to detox all aspects of life. These toxins are usually the reason for stalled weight loss inspite of exercise and right diet. So, adopting the right program can boost one's health and help in weight loss. It will also make one feel happier and healthier from within.

How Do You Know If You Need To Detoxify

Detoxification is needed if you are suffering from the following:

- i. Unexplained Fatigue
- ii. Poor gastro-intestinal elimination
- iii. Blemishes and irritated skin
- iv. Allergies
- v. Sign of poor immunity like repeated infections
- vi. Puffy eyes
- vii. Acidity and bloating
- viii. Continuous disturbed attention
- ix. Irritated mind
- x. Frequent mood upsets

Emotionally unstable, depressed, unmotivated and lacking energy and enthusiasm for life

All these are indications of correcting the fuel of our body. Giving a clean healthy diet to your body is a process of self-cleansing and self-healing. What we give to the body is what we reflect in our physical and mental health. In the coming week we shall see, how to start a Detox Programme and ways to cleanse your body.^[13]

Herbal Remedies

Migraines aren't typical headaches. If you experience them, you know you may experience pounding pain, nausea, and sensitivity to light and sound. When a

migraine strikes, you'll do almost anything to make it go away. Natural remedies are a drug-free way to reduce migraine symptoms. These at-home treatments may help prevent migraines, or at least help reduce their severity and duration.

1. Avoid Unhealthy Foods

Diet plays a vital role in preventing migraines. Many foods and beverages are known migraine triggers, such as: foods with nitrates including hot dogs deli meats, bacon, and sausage, chocolate, cheese that contains then naturally-occurring compound tyramine, such as blue, feta, cheddar, parmesan, a and swiss alcohol especially red wine, foods that contain mono sodium glutamate(MSG), a flavor enhancer foods that are very cold such as icecream or iced drinks processed foods, pickled foods, beans, dried fruits, cultured dairy products such as, buttermilk, sour cream, and yogurt, a small amount of caffeine may ease migraine pain in some people. Caffeine is also in some migraine medications. But, too much caffeine may cause a migraine. It may also lead to a severe caffeine withdrawal headache.

2. Apply lavender oil

Inhaling lavender essential oil may ease migraine pain. According to 2012 research, people who inhaled lavender oil during a migraine attack for 15 minutes experienced faster relief than those who inhaled a placebo. Lavender oil may be inhaled directly or applied diluted to the temples.

3. Try acupressure

Acupressure is the practice of applying pressure with the fingers and hands to specific points on the body to relieve pain and other symptoms. According to a 2014 systematic review trusted source, acupressure is a credible alternative therapy for people in pain from chronic headaches and other conditions. A separate study found acupressure may help relieve migraine-associated nausea.

4. Look for feverfew

Feverfew is a flowering herb that looks like a daisy. It's a folk remedy for migraines. According to a 2004 systematic review trusted source, however, there's not enough evidence that feverfew prevents migraines. Still, many people claim it helps their migraine symptoms without side effects.

5. Apply peppermint oil

The menthol in peppermint oil may stop a migraine from coming on, according to a 2010 study Trusted Source. The study found that applying a menthol solution to the forehead and temples was more effective than placebo for migraine-associated pain, nausea, and light sensitivity.

6. Go for ginger

Ginger is known to ease nausea caused by many conditions, including migraines. It may also have other

migraine benefits. According to research trusted Source, ginger powder decreased migraine severity and duration as well as the prescription drug sumatriptan, and with fewer side effects.

7. Sign up for yoga

Yoga uses breathing, meditation, and body postures to promote health and well-being. Research Trusted Source shows yoga may relieve the frequency, duration, and intensity of migraines. It's thought to improve anxiety, release tension in migraine-trigger areas, and improve vascular health. Although researchers conclude it's too soon to recommend yoga as a primary treatment for migraines, they believe yoga supports overall health and may be beneficial as a complementary therapy.

8. Try biofeedback

Biofeedback is a relaxation method. It teaches you to control autonomic reactions to stress. Biofeedback may be helpful for migraines triggered by physical reactions to stress such as muscle tensing.

9. Add magnesium to your diet

Magnesium deficiency is linked to headaches and migraines. Studies show magnesium oxide supplementation helps prevent migraines with aura. It may also prevent menstrual-related migraines.

10. You can get magnesium from foods that include

Almonds, sesame seeds, sunflower seeds, brazil nuts, cashews, peanut butter, oatmeal, eggs, milk.

11. Book a massage

A weekly massage may reduce migraine frequency and improve sleep quality, according to a 2006 study Trusted Source. The research suggests massage improves perceived stress and coping skills. It also helps decrease heart rate, anxiety, and cortisol levels.^[14]

Dietary Changes to Prevent Migraine

Celiac disease testing with any unexplained GI or neurologic deficits, trial of lactose-free diet, Avoid chocolate and tyramine-rich foods, avoid alcohol, especially beer and wine, avoid concentrated sweets and diets high in sugar, eat small, frequent meals to avoid hypoglycemia, limit caffeine consumption to 1 cup per day, eliminate altogether if possible, lifestyle modifications to prevent migraine, moderate exercise activity of 30 min 3-4 times per week, maintain normal weight, sleep 7-8 hours a night with a regular sleep schedule (under sleep and oversleep both can trigger migraines), stress reduction is key – incorporate relaxation and meditation techniques on a daily basis, even if it means slowed, focused breathing for 5 min per day, quit tobacco as it is pro-inflammatory and can be a trigger.^[15]

Relaxation Techniques

To learn how to relax and cope with migraines and headaches, you need to become familiar with your own

breathing patterns and change them in ways that will help you relax. Your breathing pattern is often disrupted by changes in emotion. Some people who are anxious tend to hold their breath and speak in a high-pitched voice as they exhale. On the other hand, some people who are depressed tend to sigh and speak in a low-pitched voice as they exhale. Here are a few relaxation exercises. But first, be sure that you have a quiet location that is free of distractions and a comfortable body position. As hard as it sounds, try to block out worries and distracting thoughts.

Rhythmic breathing: If your breathing is short and hurried, slow it down by taking long, slow breaths. Inhale slowly then exhale slowly. Count slowly to five as you inhale, and then count slowly to five as you exhale. As you exhale slowly, pay attention to how your body naturally relaxes. Recognising this change will help you to relax even more.

Deep breathing: Imagine a spot just below your navel. Breathe into that spot, filling your abdomen with air. Let the air fill you from the abdomen up, then let it out, like deflating a balloon. With every long, slow exhalation, you should feel more relaxed.

Visualized breathing: Find a comfortable place where you can close your eyes, and combine slowed breathing with your imagination. Picture relaxation entering your body and tension leaving your body. Breathe deeply, but in a natural rhythm. Visualize your breath coming into your nostrils, going into your lungs and expanding your chest and abdomen. Then, visualize your breath going out the same way. Continue breathing, but each time you inhale, imagine that you are breathing in more relaxation. Each time you exhale imagine that you are getting rid of a little more tension.

Progressive muscle relaxation: Switch your thoughts to yourself and your breathing. Take a few deep breaths, exhaling slowly. Mentally scan your body. Notice your headache, if you have one, and other areas that feel tense or cramped. Quickly loosen up these areas. Let go of as much tension as you can. Rotate your head in a smooth, circular motion once or twice. (Stop any movements that cause pain!) Roll your shoulders forward and backward several times. Let all of your muscles completely relax. Recall a pleasant thought for a few seconds. Take another deep breath and exhale slowly. You should feel relaxed.

Relax to music- Combine relaxation exercises with your favorite music in the background. Select the type of music that lifts your mood or that you find soothing or calming. Some people find it easier to relax while listening to specially designed relaxation audio tapes, which provide music and relaxation instructions.

Mental imagery relaxation: Mental imagery relaxation, or guided imagery, is a proven form of focused

relaxation that helps create harmony between the mind and body. Guided imagery coaches you in creating calm, peaceful images in your mind -- a "mental escape." Identify your self-talk, that is, what you are saying to yourself about what is going on with your migraines or headaches. It is important to identify negative self-talk and develop healthy, positive self-talk. By making affirmations, you can counteract negative thoughts and emotions. Here are some positive statements you can practice.

1. I am healthy, vital, and strong.
2. There is nothing in the world I cannot handle.
3. All my needs are met.
4. I am completely and utterly safe.
5. Every day in every way I am getting stronger.
6. Let go of things I cannot control.

Meditation-There are lots of approaches to meditation. All make you stop and observe. That means you stop the flow of thoughts in your mind and concentrate on a single thing, typically your breathing. Done on a regular basis, meditation, or "mindfulness practice" as some call it, can help your response to pain, including migraine.

Yoga-This ancient Hindu practice mixes careful breathing and calming meditation with body poses that help stretch and strengthen your muscles and tendons.

Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT): This is a psychotherapy approach that helps you change thought patterns and behaviors that can make you more tense and may raise your risk for a migraine attack. Ask your doctor or mental health specialist about a professional who can help you with this approach.

Biofeedback- This technique uses electronic devices to measure breathing rate, heart rate, skin temperature, skin perspiration, muscle tension, and other physical responses. It then "feeds back" this information in the form of graphs or sounds from a computer that suggest you are getting more tense or less tense. Over time you try to learn to control your body's response so that you're less tense. Some research suggests this could help with migraine.^[16]

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