

# MIGRAINES & TENSION HEADACHES

## MANAGING MIGRAINES & TENSION HEADACHES THROUGH MASSAGE?

**What Are Migraines?:** A migraine is marked by moderate to severe pain and throbbing in the head, and can be accompanied by nausea as well as sensitivity to light. In some cases, these painful headaches are preceded or accompanied by a sensory warning sign, such as flashes of light, blind spots or tingling in your arm or leg. Fortunately, management of migraine pain has improved dramatically in the last decade. Although there's still no cure, medications are now much more effective. Additionally, alternative treatments like massage have been found to reduce the frequency and severity of migraines.

**How Can Massage Help Manage Migraines?:** Massage is a great way to manage stress and relieve tension, two of the main causes of migraine headaches. Research at The Touch Institute of the University of Miami School of Medicine found that massage therapy decreased the occurrence of headaches, sleep disturbances and distress symptoms while increasing serotonin levels in adults with migraine headaches. Massage therapists can provide services designed to reduce symptoms associated with migraines, so you experience lasting relief and peace of mind.

**Is There Lasting Relief?:** Migraines and other types of headaches are one of the most common complaints seen in the doctor's office today. The Mayo Clinic recommends that patients with migraines spend at least a half-hour each day doing something either relaxing or that involves the relaxation of muscles. If you have any pressing concerns, please consult your doctor.

## Massage Therapy Relieves Tension Headaches

In the United States alone, more than 60% of the 45 million Americans who suffer from chronic headaches suffer from migraines. The disorder can be debilitating and typically results from high stress levels and/or lack of sleep. So it's no wonder why so many people want to know how to relieve tension headaches.

### Massage has two roles when it comes to treating migraines and tension related headaches:

In a proactive role, massage treatments are performed on a regular basis to help the body maintain an optimal level of relaxation and stress-relief. This approach reduces the chances of migraine attacks and tension headaches significantly by relaxing muscle spasms and trigger points. In a comfort role, massage is done to ease the pressure brought on during a migraine or tension related headache. By focusing on the neck, shoulders, and head, massage can decrease the pain and discomfort brought on by migraine or tension headaches. A recent study showed that massage therapy recipients exhibited fewer migraines and better sleep quality during the weeks they received massage, and the three weeks following, than did participants that did not receive massage therapy. Another study found that in adults with migraine headaches, massage therapy decreased the occurrence of headaches, sleep disturbances and distress symptoms. It also increased serotonin levels, believed to play an important role in the regulation of mood, sleep and appetite.

### Benefits of Relieving Tension-Related Headaches

- ❖ Decreases occurrences of tension headaches, sleep disturbances and distress symptoms
- ❖ Allows one to maintain a level of relaxation and stress-relief, reducing the chances of stress induced migraines
- ❖ Massage for headaches can also reduce muscle spasms and trigger points