

Physical Therapy Exercises and Procedures for Migraine

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Introduction

If you suffer from migraine headaches, physical therapy (PT) may be beneficial in reducing discomfort, improving mobility, and managing future headache symptoms. A cervicogenic headache occurs when a migraine headache is caused by a problem with your cervical spine (neck) [1].

The Cervical Spine's Anatomy

The seven cervical vertebrae in your neck are stacked one on top of the other. Soft, spongy intervertebral discs sit between those bones. On either side of your neck, there are joints where one bone articulates with another. The cervical vertebrae protect your spinal cord while also allowing you to move your neck in flexion, extension, rotation, and side bending motions. Your skull is supported by your upper cervical vertebrae. On either side of cervical level one, there is a joint that links to the occiput of your head and facilitates motion. Several muscles that support and move your head are in the sub occipital area, and nerves pass from your neck through the sub occipital area to your head. Neck discomfort and headaches may be caused by the nerves and muscles in this area [2].

Cervicogenic Migraine Symptoms

Cervicogenic migraine headache has numerous symptoms. These may include the following:

- Reduced range of motion in your neck
- Pain on both sides of your back of your head
- Pain in the back of your head that spreads to one shoulder
- Nausea
- Sensitivity to light or sound
- Dizziness or vertigo
- Pain in one side of your face or cheek

Symptoms of cervicogenic migraine are frequently triggered by sudden moves, or they may occur as a result of prolonged neck postures. The symptoms are usually described as dull and nonthrobbing, and they can last anywhere from a few hours to many days. If you're experiencing headaches and think you might be suffering from cervicogenic headaches, see your doctor. They can examine you and assist in making an accurate diagnosis of your illness [3].

Diagnosis: Your doctor may utilise certain tools to diagnose your cervicogenic headaches.

- Physical evaluation of your neck, including range of motion and palpation of your neck and skull
- Nerve blocks and injections for diagnostic purposes

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- X-ray
- Computed tomography (CT) scan
- MRI stands for magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)

When one-sided nonthrobbing headache pain is combined with a decrease of neck range of motion, cervicogenic headache is frequently diagnosed. Your neck imaging examinations should also reveal a recognised lesion, such as a bulging or ruptured disc, disc degeneration, or arthritic changes in your cervical spine. Once you've been diagnosed with cervicogenic headache, your doctor may recommend you to physical therapy.

Treatment

When you go to your physical therapist for headaches for the first time, they will interview you and collect a detailed history of your condition. You'll be asked about the onset of your pain, symptom behaviour, drugs you've tried, and diagnostic studies you've had done. Your therapist will also inquire about any previous pain treatments you've taken, as well as your medical and surgical background [4].

- A palpation of your neck and head may be part of the PT evaluation.
- Neck range of motion measures
- Strength measurements
- Postural evaluation

Following the evaluation, your therapist will work with you to design a treatment plan and rehabilitation goals for your headaches. After that, treatment can begin. Cervicogenic headaches can be treated with a number of different methods. Before beginning any treatment for your cervicogenic headaches, consult a healthcare expert.

The majority of cervicogenic headache treatments last four to six weeks. It's possible that you'll feel better after a few days of commencing therapy, or that your symptoms will fade over weeks. Some people have migraine headache pain for months after beginning therapy, and they use the strategies they acquired in physical therapy to help control exacerbations of their symptoms. Your therapist should be able to provide you with an estimate of how long your therapy will last. If the symptoms of a migraine headache persist after PT, you should see your doctor to discuss other therapy options for your headache suffering [5].

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