

Headaches: A Pain in the Neck

My headache is such a pain in the neck!

Yes, you're probably right, and you're not alone.

Thousands of individuals suffer from headaches. Some get a headache every once in a while, while others suffer from headaches daily. A headache is a symptom, or a signal from your body that something is wrong. There are many causes of headaches, and we must work together to find that cause in order to properly treat your headache.

The key to diagnosing and treating headaches effectively: understanding what is causing them in the first place. This is done through a thorough history and examination. If we don't understand your headache, then we'd just be throwing a bunch of treatments at it hoping they work!

Traditional headache treatment options usually include one, or a combination of the following:

1. **Anti-inflammatory medications** (including ibuprofen, Advil, and Tylenol)—commonly taken

to temporarily reduce inflammation

2. **Muscle relaxers**—prescribed to help reduce muscle tension
3. **Opioid/narcotic pain relievers**—prescribed in an attempt to mask the pain

These traditional treatment options may not provide complete resolution of your headaches because they are covering up the symptoms like a Band-Aid and not addressing the reasons "WHY" you have a headache.

Why do I have a headache?

There can be many reasons "WHY". Your soft tissues, (including muscles, nerves, joints, ligaments, tendons, and fascia), your posture, workstation setup, or stress can trigger headaches. Sugar, caffeine, food sensitivities, and allergens are also common causes of headaches. If the underlying cause of your headache is not addressed, your body will just continue to signal you that something is wrong, and you will become dependent on medication.



If you have a headache, you're not alone. Nine out of 10 Americans suffer from headaches. Some are occasional, some frequent, some are dull and throbbing, and some cause debilitating pain and nausea. What do you do when you suffer from a pounding headache? Do you grit your teeth and carry on? Pop a pill and hope the pain goes away? There is a better alternative.

Research shows that interventions commonly used in chiropractic care, including spinal manipulation, improves migraine and cervicogenic headaches, as well as acute and chronic neck pain. —American Chiropractic Association (ACA)

Nearly 78% of headaches are **cervicogenic headaches**.

“Cervicogenic” headache simply means that your headaches are referred pain from your cervical spine (neck). These headaches are mechanical in nature and are **directly affected by movement, posture, and repetitive positions**. Are there certain movements or body positions that trigger your headache? Do specific activities or work-related tasks make your headaches worse? Does a headache develop during a stressful day? We must work together to find the cause of your headache so it can be effectively treated!

What will you do that's different from the other things I've tried?

After a thorough history and examination, we are often able to identify “WHY” you have headaches. Once we know

Cervicogenic Headaches

- **The most common type of headache**
- **Referred pain from your neck**
- **Directly affected by movement, posture, and repetitive positions**
- **Easily fixed with chiropractic care!**

“WHY”, we can choose the appropriate treatment tool that will work best for you. We have a variety of tools, but many cases respond to chiropractic manipulation and/or Active Release Technique (ART). ART is a movement based soft tissue technique that treats problems with the muscles, nerves, joints, ligaments, tendons, and fascia that are the result of injury or repetitive stress and tension. Since most cervicogenic headaches result from continuous stress and tension in the neck—aka, poor posture—ART often reduces your headache quickly and effectively.

We can treat the spinal joints and soft tissues, but if the poor posture and bad movements don't change, you will continue to need us, just like you continue to need the medication. We also prescribe specific exercises to improve your movement and posture, thus fixing your headache. Once you know and understand the movements that cause your headache and what movements fix it, YOU can take control of your own health and stop your headaches (with a little help from us)!

Did you know? There are many different types of headaches!

1. **Cervicogenic headache:** discussed above
2. **Migraine headache:** intense pounding pain, often associated with sound or light sensitivity, blurry vision, nausea, and dizziness
3. **Tension headache:** described as a “tight band around your head”; often triggered by stress
4. **Cluster headache:** intense piercing pain, usually behind one eye; attacks occur in “clusters” and are 3-4 times more common in men
5. **Sinus headache:** pressure-like pain usually surrounding the nose and eyes; usually associated with a sinus or upper respiratory infection
6. **Hormone headache:** usually caused by a drop in estrogen; most common right before menstruation and preceding or during menopause
7. **Exertional headache:** triggered by exertion during physical activities like weight lifting or running