Cold Stone Therapy for Migraine Headaches

What is a Migraine?

‘Migraine’ comes from the ancient Greek word “hemicranos” which means “half-head”.

Approximately 50 million people in the U.S. suffer.

Cause of migraines are not known, why some people get them/some do not.

People over 45 who develop migraine headaches with an aura have a six-fold increased risk of having a stroke or heart attack. A migraine stroke occurs when the spasm of the artery feeding the visual fields on one side of the brain is very intense.

Women are most affected (3:1 vs. men) most commonly with premenstrual cycle.

- Approximately 70% of all women who get migraines can predict the onset of a headache around their cycle.
- Hormonal fluctuations (estrogen)
- With menopause, fluctuations stop causing a 65-70% less frequency of headaches

30-45 year olds have more migraines than any other age groups.

70-80% of migraine sufferers have a family history of migraines, why is not known.

17% of children are affected by severe and recurrent headaches in the U.S. Migraine medication is not recommended until more data shows that drugs can help. Avoid the triggers.
Key Points:

- Migraine attacks go beyond a serious headache and require serious attention.

- Migraines that start in a central location can rapidly spread; this is called spreading depression.

- A spreading depression can move into the trigeminal nerve (cranial nerve that affects the face). This can cause the blood vessels of the brain to constrict and then dilate.

- Migraine attacks can occur daily and can be devastating.

- People with migraines are more susceptible to epilepsy.

- There is localized brain inflammation.

- There is reduced production of energy.

- Low magnesium levels.

- There is high levels of glutamate. Glutamate is the brain's neurotransmitter that excites. Foods containing MSG can increase glutamate from twenty to fifty times.

Migraines are “classified” as:

- A headache only on one side of the head
- Pulsating or throbbing pain
- The can shift sides during the same headache, 1 in 10 thousand have this happen
- On average lasts 4-72 hours
- Pain must be severe enough to limit or impair normal activity
- Pain must be intensified by physical exertion
Classic and Common: ‘Aura’ and Prodrome.

Some have migraines with or without the aura, these headaches are different. The flashing lights often appear as a slow growing zig-zag neon light in half of the visual field. This occurs when the wave of brain depression spreads through the visual cortex of the brain. A number of symptoms can occur just before the headache begins.

- Localized numbness
- Feeling of weakness or tingling in a limb or side of the body
- Confusion
- Difficulty thinking or speaking
- Vertigo
- Olfactory hallucinations - smelling odors that aren’t there
- Auditory hallucinations
- Partial paralysis
- Decrease in or loss of hearing
- Reduced sensation
- Hypersensitivity to feel and touch

Usually this lasts from five to ten minutes and then subsides, to be replaced by the throbbing, intense headache. In some people it comes on so intensely, it causes vomiting.

Approximately 25% of “migraineur’s” have a classic kind of headache. The prodrome (sometimes called the pre-headache) may be experienced hours or even days before a migraine episode. With effective immediate treatment, they can abort the headache.

Symptoms typical of the prodrome are:

- Pain feeling “heavy” on their head
- Sharp pain in one area, “like a knife in my eye”
- Food cravings
- Constipation or diarrhea
- Mood changes-depression, irritability
- Muscle stiffness, especially the neck
- Fatigue
- Increased urination

During a migraine, the blood vessels in the brain expand in a process called vasodilatation. As the tissues surrounding the brain swell, the pain intensifies. Reducing inflammation reduces the triggering and pain.

Most ‘headache’ medicines increase blood vessel dilation which increases inter-cranial swelling, worsening the migraine. Taking too much of some medicines can cause “rebound headaches”.

Migraines for the past 20 years were thought to be only a vascular disorder, a problem with dilation of blood vessels. It is now believed that it is also a neurological disorder.

**Headache Contraindications**

*We must always refer to a primary care provider if the headache is so severe that they cannot stop throwing up, or is of recent severe onset. If the client has just developed these symptoms they must consult their physician before massage sessions can begin.*

*If they have commonly suffered with headaches, are familiar with their symptoms and have seen their healthcare provider and ruled out any medical issues, they are welcome to receive the Cold Stone Therapy treatment.*

Caution with headaches that:
- Appear in a new pattern
- Have a gradual onset but no remission
- Especially concerning if accompanied by slurred speech, numbness in any body region, and/or motor control difficulties

Could be due to infections (usually accompanied by high fever)
- Meningitis
- Encephalitis
Could be due to central nervous system injury and/or
- Stroke
- Tumor
- Aneurysm

Migraine Triggers

- Stress/Anxiety- #1 factor in getting migraines
- Caffeine-70-80% of sufferers are addicted to caffeine
- Foods containing MSG, tyramine, sulfates and nitrates (fast/junk food)
- Hormonal changes
- Lack of food (low blood sugar)
- Dehydration (can inhibit stimulation of blood flow and appropriate lymphatic drainage)
- Alcoholic beverages- red wine and beer (darker colored causes more headaches)
- Aged cheeses
- Chocolate-semi sweet (dark chocolate can get rid of headache)
- Poor sleep habits (quality sleep-too much/too little)
- Changes in weather including humidity, barometric pressure, temperature
- Smoking and/or tobacco products (nicotine)
- Perfumes or chemical odors-Sense of smell strongest, goes directly to brain
- Medications-side effects
- Bright or flickering lights-having picture taken
- Muscle tension
- Altitude (flight migraines)
- Motion-traveling, amusement rides
- Serotonin- Common for a migraine when it drops
- Poor nutrition
- Air pollution
- Loud and constant noise
- TMJ dysfunction
Migraine Relief

When using a cold application with the stones, stone therapy causes a decrease of pain, decrease of inflammation or swelling, and an increase of muscle tone.

Aromatherapy defined, is the gentle, non-invasive natural healing art that utilizes the scent of essential oils to promote general well-being, and promote balance and harmony within the body. Many essential oils have medicinal properties, but just the act of smelling specific oils can lift the mind and produce physiological changes that diminish migraine headache pain. The applications of the most effective of these essential oils are included in this workshop.

Try to ascertain what kind of migraine your client has. The four most common are:

- Tension/stress/ trigger: use essentials oils of clary sage, spikenard, helichrysum & lavender
- Food trigger: use essentials oils of lemon, licorice, peppermint & basil
- Environment trigger: use essential oils of roman chamomile, lavender, peppermint & rosemary
- Hormonal imbalance trigger: use essential oils of lavender, Melissa, geranium, and May Chang
Time Needed: 30-45 Minutes

Products Needed:

2 bath towels
2 washcloths-dark colors
1 hand towel
1 set of sheets
1 blanket
12 marble stones
Roller ball Essential oils or 5-6 drops of blend
1 metal bowl of cold water and ice

Procedure:

1. Ask client to come without makeup.

2. Place a wash cloth in metal bowl and place all 12 stones on top of wash cloth, separated by shape. Pour 50% ice and 50% cold water into the bowl enough to cover all stones, one hour before client arrives.

3. Place a bath towel at the head and foot of massage table on top of fitted sheet. Top sheet over the towels. Blanket over the top sheet.

4. Lower the lights in the massage room. I suggest no music on a pre-migraine.

5. Have client lay face up on the table with their head close to the edge of table and on top of bath towel. Place head cover on. Do not use a headband.

6. Ascertain which aromatherapy to use if not known what type of migraine/trigger they have.
7. Undrape client’s feet and wrap both with hot moist towels or rice packs.

8. Wrap feet with dry bath towel tightly to hold in the heat.

9. Head Squeeze: Place the heels of your hands on either side of their head above the temples (frontal bone edges). Gently and slowly squeeze inward for 20 seconds.

10. Head Squeeze, top & bottom: Place one hand on forehead, another at occiput. Traction both hands first upwards and then squeeze your hands together gently and slowly for 20 seconds.

11. Eye Orbit TP: using your index or middle fingers, pull back into the eye orbit release point and at the same time press your thumbs into their scalp. Hold for 20 seconds.

12. Orbital Ridge Press Downs: with index or middle fingers, press down all along the orbital ridge, one place at a time, from inside to outside, for 20 seconds each. At the same time, press your thumbs into their scalp.

13. Sinus TP: using index or middle fingers press down and into the sinus release point for 20 seconds.

14. Staying on the sinus point, do small circles 8 times (loosening the mucus).

15. Using 2-3 fingers, strip from sinus points to the ears 4 times.

16. Gently turn their head to the right.

17. Reach across and place fingertips of your right hand at the occipital ridge in the attachments.

18. Place other hand on their left deltoid.
19. Pull gently and slowly to the right at occiput and push left on deltoid; stretching in opposite directions. Hold for 20 seconds.

20. Gently turn head back to midline first, then to the left side and repeat, changing hands.

21. Place head back to midline.

22. Place all your fingertips along entire occiput attachments and simply hold. Let the client’s head relax onto your fingers, do not compress or work trigger points. Hold for 20 seconds and have client breathe deeply.

23. Keeping fingertips at their occiput; put your thumbs in the clients ears. Traction neck and ears, deeply and slowly for 20 seconds.

24. Blend rollerball of aromatherapy between your hands gently.

25. Apply essential oils to forehead, using 3 strips like a switchback, starting above eyebrow to hairline.

26. Apply one circle each of essential oils to temples, sinus points, chin and carotids.

27. Waft slowly over their face with alternating hands to stimulate the aromatherapy.

28. Forehead Thumb strip: using the flats of your thumbs just above eyebrows, press in deeply, pull up the fascia and then strip across towards the temple. Move up slightly, pull up and strip out. Keep moving up till you are at the hairline. Repeat.

29. Middle Finger Pull-Up: using your middle fingertips (one on top of the other) just above the right outer edge of one eyebrow, deeply and slowly strip up towards hairline. Continue this stripping straight up and across the entire forehead. Repeat.
30. Forehead Criss-cross: start at center just above the eyebrow. With your middle fingers, crisscross the fascia tightly together, moving up to hairline. Then start above the right eyebrow and crisscross up to hairline. Back to center and crisscross up, then above the left eyebrow and crisscross up.

31. Forehead Lift: place the palms of your hands (one on top of the other) at the bridge of the nose, and lift deeply and slowly all of the forehead fascia up towards the hairline. Do 4 times.

32. To re-activate the aromatherapy, massage the temples, sinus points, chin and the carotids gently in circles 4 times.

33. If client’s forehead is too slippery for stones, pat gently with towel to dry.

34. Take out one oval stone (there are 6) at a time.

35. First oval is placed on center of forehead just above the eyebrows. Second is placed to the right of the center stone above the right eyebrow and a third to the left of the center stone above the left eyebrow. If it is too intense, take off the stone(s) and place in the palms of your hands for 15 seconds and then replace.

36. Place an oval stone at both sinus points.

37. The last one at the chin horizontally. Be sure it is not resting on the lower lip.

38. Place two small eye half moon stones on each eyelid.

39. Take out two temple round stones. Using your fingertips, gently and slowly touch the temples with the stones resting lightly. If too intense, back away slightly. Hold this for 20-30 seconds. Use these same stones to apply pressure all around and into the skull. You can also place in their ears on the edges of the stones and pull back with traction.
40. Put rounds back in water and get the two large half-moon stones. With one stone in your hand, place it to the occipital ridge, starting on the side that the migraine is on. Add the second half moon stone to the other side and hold both to the occiput for up to 1 minute. Then traction the occiput with the marble stones for another 20 seconds.

41. Put the half moon stones back in the water and get the temple rounds, repeat to the temples and scalp for 20-30 seconds. Place back in the water.

42. Get the half moons again and repeat at the occiput for up to 1 minute.

43. Start removing all stones back to the water, from bottom to top. Remove the first stone you applied, last.

44. Place a dark colored washcloth in the bowl of water, wring out, fold in thirds and place across the eyes, pressing gently.

45. Lay your hands at the clavicle/trap area and hold. Ask your client to breathe in deeply and exhale 2-3 times.

46. Remove foot towels and re-drape with sheet and blanket.

47. Allow them to rest for up to 15 minutes if possible.

48. Remove the washcloth.

49. Assist your client slowly to a sitting position with complete support at the neck.

50. Wait to be sure they are not light headed before they get off the table.

51. The treatment is over and so is that headache!