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Tension can cause dull aching headaches that affect your quality of life. Massage therapy has been increasingly linked to relieving the pain of chronic tension type headaches.



ON THE INTERNET:

According to Web MD, **30 to 80%** of the adult American population suffers from occasional tension headaches and approximately : **3%** suffer from chronic daily tension headaches.

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CHILL OUT

Many Americans suffer from tension headaches for many different reasons. In some cases, the cause may be hereditary, while others are the result of lifestyle or environment, such as poor posture, bad eating habits, a new child or a combination of any stress-inducing factors. Massage therapy can help you deal with the pain while you figure out how to mitigate the factors that might be causing the headaches.

The American Journal of Manipulative Physiological and Therapeutics reports researcher Cristina Toro Valseco from the University of Granada has shown that a 30-minute massage on cervical trigger points improves autonomic nervous system regulation in chronic tension headache patients. Patients also exhibit a better psychological state and “reduce the stress and anxiety associated to such a disturbing disorder.” Patients reported relief of symptoms within 24 hours after the massage.

According to a study by the National Headache Foundation, stress is the most frequent headache trigger,

MANAGING STRESS IS A GOOD WAY TO KEEP HEADACHES AT BAY.



with 88 percent of patients from rural and urban areas reporting stress as the cause for ensuing headaches and exacerbating headache symptoms.

Managing stress is a good way to keep headaches at bay. It's true that stress is a part of most everyone's life. Finding ways to manage stress, such as making massage therapy a regular part of your health regimen, can help you relieve the pain of tension headaches.

3 kinds of stress

GOOD STRESS is stress that isn't unhealthy. Good stress can be caused by things such as running a marathon and beating your personal best or receiving a promotion at work. You experience a feeling of excitement and adrenaline.

TOLERABLE STRESS is temporary, serious stress that is buffered by supportive relationships. This is the kind of stress felt during the loss of a loved one or job. In these situations, you have the inner strength and people around you to get through.

TOXIC STRESS occurs when something happens that produces a prolonged activation of the stress response system. Chronic illness may cause toxic stress, for example.

PREVENT STRESS

LEARN TO LET GO and accept the things you cannot control. Sitting in traffic and getting antsy? There isn't really anything you can do but wait it out, so try turning on the radio and singing along. Studies have shown singing reduces stress, lowers the heart rate and decreases blood pressure.

GET A GOOD NIGHT'S REST with seven to eight hours of sleep so your body will be at its best and you have the energy to deal with stress.

EAT RIGHT AND REGULARLY. Fight off headaches triggered by hunger by eating a well-balanced meal every four hours or so. Make sure to eat whole foods and foods offering healthy amounts of protein.

DRINK MORE WATER. Many people believe drinking eight glasses of water is adequate, but there is no scientific proof that backs this up. Your intake needs depend on what you're doing, what time of year it is and whether or not you are sweating.

EXPLORE NEW WAYS TO RELAX. Yoga and meditation are effective ways to prevent headaches and lower stress levels. Other forms of exercises, such as running or boxing, can also relieve stress. And, of course, massage therapy helps. Find what works for you and then stick to it.

+ HAVING A STRESS MANAGEMENT PLAN IS THE BEST WAY TO PREVENT AND RELIEVE HEADACHES. IDENTIFYING THE CAUSE OF YOUR STRESS AND THEN DEALING WITH WHAT TRIGGERS YOUR STRESS ARE KEY TO RELIEVING PAIN.