

# Health & recovery

The Newsletter About Integrative Manual Therapy

Issue 2

## Integrative Manual Therapy and Headaches

### A Solution to the Chronic Headache Problem

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Over 28 million Americans suffer from headaches on a regular basis. Statistics show that 18% of women and 6% of men have significant pain and lost time from work on a regular basis due to headaches.

There are various types of headaches, including Migraine, Tension, and Cluster headaches. Other types include headaches caused from eyestrain, sinus and postural problems. More serious types requiring prompt medical intervention include any new onset of headaches, which may indicate medical conditions such as encephalitis, meningitis, aneurysms, head injuries or brain tumors.

The approach to headaches from an Integrative Manual Therapy™ viewpoint is quite different than the typical medical model. IMT can help those suffering from headaches that have not responded to treatment because IMT seeks to locate the actual cause of the headache and helps the body to heal the problem, which works to alleviate the headaches.

From the perspective of IMT, everyone's body is doing the best it can at any given time; even people suffering from severe chronic headaches. What we see, is a body trying to protect itself. The body will use pain, spasm and compression to protect itself from possible harm. An example would be: someone who has muscle spasms and pain in their belly. A practitioner could try to massage it out, place hot packs or ice



**Ralph Havens, PT, OCS**  
Owner Mission Hills Physical Therapy

packs on the problem area or give pain medications to try and help. However, if the person is having appendicitis, the pain and spasm is an indicator of a more serious problem and he or she needs to see a doctor.

When we see someone with pain, spasms, compression and suffering from headaches, and serious medical problems have been ruled out, we look for the cause. Instead of trying to merely stop the muscle spasms or pain, with IMT, we have an assessment technique to locate the underlying cause or causes. When the underlying cause is found, and specific hands-on treatment is directed to these areas, many times the result is a decrease and often elimination of headaches permanently.

## RISK FACTORS that cause *by Ralph Havens, PT* **HEADACHES** and what to do about them

“Although headaches can be incapacitating, most of them are not associated with serious illness. But because they *can* be so debilitating you should get them treated appropriately as soon as possible. Physical therapy is very effective in eliminating this problem.”

**T**here are some common causes of headaches, however, the important thing is to find the underlying cause to your headache. I believe, only then can true healing occur.

With that in mind, we have found common causes of chronic headaches to include: biomechanical problems of the spine, low back and head; disruptions of membranes in the head and spine known as the “dura”; restrictions along arteries and veins of the spine or head; and even areas of the digestive tract which can be affected by food allergies or toxins.

There can be many more causes of someone’s headache but the ones listed are common. With IMT, we are able to assess the whole body and find the underlying cause or causes for the headache. We look for what the body is protecting? Which area is the primary area in need of treatment? And more importantly, what can we do to help the body fix that problem?

It may seem like a daunting task to help the body heal some of these problems. But, through our hands-on techniques and assessments we can

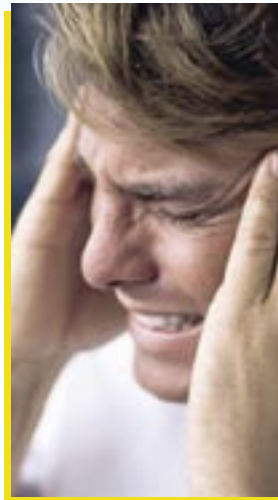
monitor the changes in the primary area, the area that we find to be the underlying cause, and feel when the patient’s body is starting to heal.

For example, a common cause of headaches is a descended sacrum.

The sacrum is a flat bone at the bottom of the spine and when someone suffers a blow to the head or a whiplash, the force can travel down the spine and cause the sacrum to be stuck in a descended position. This in turn, places a tension on the dura or lining of the spinal cord and the base of the skull. Over time this tension can result in headaches and other

spinal pains. In this case, gentle manipulations to free the descended sacrum can result in less tension in the base of the skull and eliminate a headache.

The dura or lining of the spinal cord can also develop tensions anywhere along the spine. This can be due to injuries such as whiplash or other injuries to the spine. Any tension on the dura can limit mobility around the base of the head and contribute to headaches. By finding the primary



# Tips and Tricks

## EASY EXERCISES TO RELAX YOUR NECK



1. Tuck your chin in and drop your head slowly forward. This will relax the muscles in the back of your neck.

2. While sitting in a straight chair, catch the fingers of your right hand under the chair seat to anchor them and to keep your shoulder down while tipping your head to the left. This will stretch and relax the muscles on the right side of your neck. Repeat on the other side.



3. Roll your shoulders in a circular motion.

4. Shrug your shoulders up toward your ears and then relax them all the way down.



areas of restriction around the dura and spinal cord, specific hands-on treatment can be directed to the area and free the restriction, resulting in a reduction of headaches.

There are conditions called “membrane wall disruptions”, which are basically areas of tension and stress that can be present anywhere along the arteries and veins of the body. The membrane wall disruptions can limit mobility of the head, neck, rib cage, or spine. If these are found, specific “disruption of membrane” techniques can be used to help the body heal the problem areas, resulting in less tension throughout the body and head.

Many times dietary changes help. Specific “detox” diets consisting of elimination of gluten or processed sugar can be remarkable in their affect on a patient’s symptoms.

With Integrative Manual Therapy, we can find these types of problems and develop a treatment plan specific to the findings in your body. With specific hands on assessment methods, we are able to determine what your body is telling us. Once we have the data, we develop specific treatment plans, which fully address each area in need of treatment. These are the primary areas, the underlying causes that are keeping your headaches from going away. By locating and treating these underlying causes, we can help your body heal.

The real proof is in the way the patient feels and how his or her life changes.

I encourage you to check out M.Z.’s story at [www.missionhillspt.com](http://www.missionhillspt.com). We have helped numerous people with headaches. Everyone is unique and we believe everyone is able to heal with the right help.

Ralph Havens, PT, OCS  
[www.missionhillspt.com](http://www.missionhillspt.com)

# FAQ

## - Frequently Asked Questions About Integrative Manual Therapy

### **I get a clicking in my jaw and a headache starts right after that. What is causing that?**

The clicking is from a movement of the disk in the jaw joint. When this is irritated it can cause the surrounding muscles to tighten which will cause the headache.

### **I get a headache after working on my computer for about an hour. What should I do?**

This could be from eyestrain or from bad posture while sitting at the computer. Get your eyes checked. Make sure the monitor is at the correct height and distance from your eyes. If you find yourself leaning forward, it is too far away. If you find yourself trying to lean backward, it is too close. Get up frequently to stretch and move about.

### **I get headaches sometimes after I eat. Can food cause headaches?**

Yes, the foods most known to cause headaches

are wine, cheese, nuts, soy sauce, citrus fruits, alcohol, caffeine and food additives such as MSG or sodium nitrate.

### **I have a lot of sinus headaches. Can't I just get some medication to take care of them?**

Medications, such as over-the-counter analgesics or anti-depressants are sometimes prescribed. However, these only mask the real problem. Virtually any sinus medication can and has been known to cause headaches. So medication is not always the answer. It is much better to find out what is triggering them and handle that.

### **My headaches sometimes go away after I drink some water. Why is that?**

Dehydration is a common cause of headaches. Drinking a lot of water only once or twice a day doesn't work because the body can only absorb a certain amount at one time. So the best thing to do is drink water frequently throughout the day.

## **Do you need to see a Physical Therapist for your headaches? Take this simple test...**

YES	NO	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do you get headaches while working at your computer.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do you have a clicking noise in your jaw associated with your headaches?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do you get headaches with certain activities?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do certain movements of your head/neck cause headaches?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do you get headaches after working with your arms overhead?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do you get pain in your shoulders or arms associated with your headaches?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do you get headaches at work?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does your neck get tired before getting a headache?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are you waking up with headaches in the night?

### **Results:**

If you have answered yes to any of these you should be checked out by your physician and/or physical therapist.



# Featured Doctor

## Dr. Jim Turnage



**H**olistic Family Physician Dr. Jim Turnage is Board Certified by the American Board of Family Physicians and is a Fellow of the American Academy of Family Physicians. In addition, he has a Doctorate in Clinical Psychology and a Master's Degree in Public Health.

Dr. Turnage is also Board Certified in Holistic Medicine by the American Board of Holistic Medicine (ABHM). Members of the ABHM believe that Holistic Medicine is the art and science that addresses the whole person, body, mind, and spirit. The practice of holistic medicine integrates conventional and complementary therapies to prevent and treat disease, but most importantly to promote optimal health.

Dr. Turnage specializes in care for the whole person, utilizing therapies such as trigger point injections, medical acupuncture, osteopathic manipulation, medical management. In addition Dr. Turnage utilizes complementary therapies such as homeopathy, supplements, mind-body methods, hypnosis and counseling.

Dr. Turnage is currently working with Mission Hills Physical Therapy on a series of Helping You Help Yourself workshops, which are hosted at Mission Hills Physical Therapy every two months. For details, please visit [www.missionhillspt.com](http://www.missionhillspt.com) or call 619.543.1470.

For more information on Dr. Jim Turnage please visit [www.drjimturnage.com](http://www.drjimturnage.com).

# SUCCESSES

## What patients are saying . . .

IMT has been useful in helping me with balance, reducing my sensitivity to environmental stressors and migraines. I have fewer migraines since starting IMT, when before I had at least 4-5 migraines per month. Thank you for your excellent work.

—S. M.



I was rear-ended while stopped at a stoplight. Before the accident, I had no previous back or neck problems. As a result of the accident, I started having back, neck and hip pains and would get constant migraines.

This greatly affected my mobility and my ability to work.

Previously, I was fairly active - I played sports and consistently worked out at the gym. At work, I could sit for hours at a time in front of the computer.

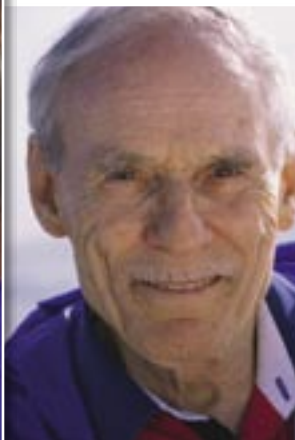
After the accident, things completely changed. Trying to sit in front of the computer was very difficult. I had pain throughout my body. I would not be able to



stand or sit for more than a minute before experiencing pains in my back or neck.

My doctor referred me to Mission Hills Physical Therapy. After going to physical therapy a few times a week for a few

weeks I noticed that, incrementally, I would be able to stand and sit up a few minutes longer than the previous week before experiencing any pain. Soon, I was able to sit or stand for hours. Eventually, I had no pain at all in a day.

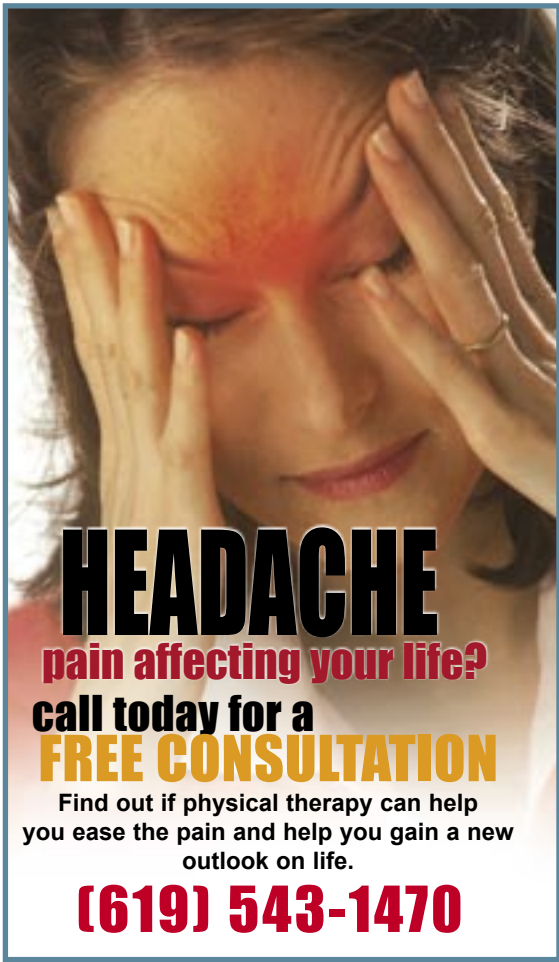


After receiving physical therapy for about four and a half months all of the problems I was experiencing have been fixed.

It is the best I have felt in a very long time. My body feels stronger and more flexible. It has been about a month since I last went to physical therapy, and I have

not had any problems. I have been able to revert back to my normal lifestyle without any problems. Thank you Mission Hills Physical Therapy.

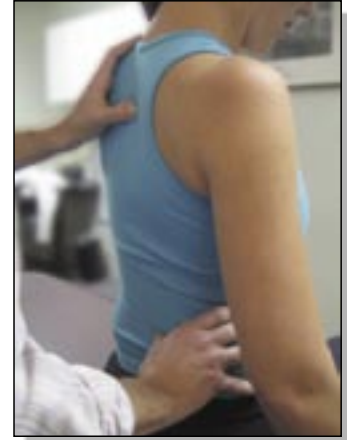
—J. L.



**HEADACHE**  
 pain affecting your life?  
 call today for a  
**FREE CONSULTATION**  
 Find out if physical therapy can help  
 you ease the pain and help you gain a new  
 outlook on life.  
**(619) 543-1470**



A physical therapist owned practice located in the heart of San Diego; we specialize in Integrative Manual Therapy™. Our approach is to work with the individual as a whole. We look at underlying causes that hold physical conditions in place then treat those so the patient's condition is cleared and their health restored. Each patient receives an objective examination in order to determine the nature of their problem, including structural causes, areas of dysfunction and any predisposing activities or events. Treatment will consist of gentle, specific, hands-on techniques. You may be given specific exercises or movements to do at home so you have control over your symptoms and can learn how to work specifically on your problem.



**We can help you recover and achieve Whole Body Health.**  
 Call us today for a free consultation at  
**(619) 543-1470**  
[www.missionhillsppt.com](http://www.missionhillsppt.com)

**INSIDE:**  
**Integrative Manual Therapy and Headaches**  
**A Solution to the**  
**Chronic Headache Problem**

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