

Headaches and neck pain

Who has never suffered from headaches or tensions in the neck or shoulders?

Nowadays, especially in large cities it is getting more and more common to suffer from it.

Headaches are mainly due to: muscle tensions, eye problems or vascular problems (In women, migraines are often linked with periods).

Those due to muscular tensions are now seen more often. The human body is not meant for a sedentary life, it is therefore difficult to sustain the same position for a long time.

Muscles are elastic structures needing to adapt constantly the body position to several situations. In order to remain elastic they need to contract and stretch. These movements will also increase blood movements which will increase oxygenation, nutrition of the muscles as well as draining them from the waste materials they've produced.

Long hours spent at work doing a repetitive job or in front of a computer will limit these movements and prioritise the use of certain muscles instead of others.

Computer use also presents other issues like: the tendency to bend the head forward in order to get it closer to the screen or the keyboard which considerably tires the neck but also the eyes muscles (eyes tiredness being on its own a source of headaches).

Headaches and muscular tensions can originate from other Factors:

- Stress: a stressed person will have a tendency to dig the head into the shoulders by contracting the shoulders and neck muscles without relaxing or stretching them.
- Accidents like whiplash or other accidents affecting directly or indirectly the neck.
- Tensions in the face and mouth muscles, especially after certain dental treatments.

It is evidence that in most cases the origin of the problem can't be suppressed (spend less time at work or in front of a computer...). Nevertheless, it is possible to improve the muscles quality which will, in most cases, reduce the headaches.

A few little tricks:

- A balanced diet rich in fruits and vegetables associated with a sufficient water intake limits the storage of waste in the muscles and helps the drainage.
- Ergonomic assessment of the workstation can improve posture and limit tensions.
- Getting up from the workstation on a regular basis even for a few minutes, walking and stretching your neck can limit the built up of muscular tensions.
- Regular sport or physical activity (even light activity) helps improving muscular elasticity and oxygenation; in most cases it can also help decrease stress levels.

If the headaches or neck and shoulders tension persist there are several medical or alternative treatments available which can suppress or at least relieve the problem.

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