



Dutch Physical Therapy
May, 2008 VOL 3

MONTHLY CALENDAR

- **May 8, 2008**
10th HYHY Seminar
Fibromyalgia
- **May 10, 2008**
Mother's Day
- **May 15, 2008**
Pitching Seminar
Randy Davis
- **May 26, 2008**
Memorial Day



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Understanding and Treating Headaches

Pain anywhere in the body is a signal that something is wrong. Headaches are no exception. Something triggers a headache—it might be something small or it could be more significant. It is very important to find out what triggered the headache and get it addressed as soon as possible.

With most pain, muscles in the area respond by tightening up as a protective mechanism. This causes more pain and loss of motion in the area. The upper and lower neck muscles are especially susceptible to tension. A physical therapist can help to relieve that tension and thus break the pain-spasm cycle, which often relieves the headache. If the headache is due to poor or sustained postures, or irritating movements of the neck, there is much that can and should be done by a physical therapist. First, it needs to be determined if work postures or other activities are contributing to the headache in any way. Physical therapists are experts on what positions and postures have the least amount of stress on various parts of the body. They can look at the way your job

site or home is set up and can make recommendations, if necessary, to eliminate and change harmful sustained work postures or repetitive motions that may be contributing to the headache. In addressing someone's headache, the therapist should focus on

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relaxing the neck muscles with postural corrections, gentle stretching and various types of manual therapy techniques that can be used. Cervical traction can relieve pressure in the joints of the cervical spine. Sometimes this is done manually.

The therapist would then assess

the posture of the neck, shoulders and upper back. An exercise program would then be developed to correct any harmful head and neck positions, increase postural strength and endurance and prevent pinching of the nerves at the base of the skull.

People who have been diagnosed with migraines and have had a history of neck problems should always rule out cerviogenic headaches in order to clarify the treatment approach of headaches and prevent being classified as a migraine patient.

Areas to be checked are: **Posture of Spine**, not only the neck and back, **positioning of the complete lower extremities** (fallen arches can affect the head and neck).

Education and prevention programs need to be taught to the patient so they can prevent their symptoms and avoid abnormal movement patterns.

Regardless of the cause of headaches, neck muscles and movement are always affected and this should always be treated by a physical therapist. *Phillippe Veeters, Owner Dutch PT*

“Men are what their mothers made them.” -Ralph Waldo Emerson

“The heart of a mother is a deep abyss at the bottom of which you will always find forgiveness.” -Honore' de Balzac

“The most important thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother.” -Anon