What to Include in Your Migraine Coping Box to Prepare for Future Migraines

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Assemble Your Migraine Survival Kit

Migraines are relentless, and while some people are fortunate enough to have recognized their migraine triggers, others of us are impacted by factors we can't necessarily control – like the barometric pressure, for example.

While I spend a lot of my time trying to be as self-aware as possible so I can see the signs of a migraine before it becomes full-blown, I occasionally find myself caught off guard or waking up in a full blown attack. It's frustrating for someone who considers herself to be a bit of a control-freak in nature to not see an attack coming or be able to control it when it arrives. For me, migraines aren't something that a pain pill can fix. They may shorten the length of my migraine from eight hours to six, depending on the strength of the pill, but they never dull the pain or the symptoms of numbness, vomiting, speech impairment and vision loss.

For those times that I do miss the signs and I am unprepared, I realized that there's still a level of proactive preparation you can do, and it comes in the form of a 'Migraine Survival Kit'. A migraine survival kit is something you can pack up and keep in your purse or vehicle or at work at all times, so, when a migraine strikes and you miss the signs, you're prepared to tackle the beast head-on.

Assembling Your Kit

- **Pain relievers** – Pain relievers don't necessarily work for everyone when dealing with a migraine, but they can sometimes help take the edge off. Keep a bottle of your choice of pain relievers in your migraine survival kit to try and reduce the severity of a migraine before it begins.
- **Essential oils** – Some essential oils, such as Lavender and Peppermint oils are known to reduce pain. Lavender is known for pain relief and relaxation and has anti-inflammatory, anti-microbial and sedative properties to help relieve muscle tension and spasms and headache. Peppermint oil contains menthol, an organic compound with local anesthetic properties which helps to alleviate discomfort. Peppermint oil also has antibacterial, antiviral, anti-inflammatory, and antispasmodic properties. Rub lavender or peppermint oil on your temples and the back of your neck during a migraine attack to help reduce tension and take the edge off of your pain.
- **Water** – Many times, migraine sufferers are not as hydrated as they should be. Water is an essential part of your migraine comfort kit as it will not only remind you to drink more, which can act as a preventative in your migraine battle, it will also keep you hydrated during an attack.

- **Cold pack/wash cloth** – Nothing feels better than putting a cold press on your eyes and forehead when you're suffering from a migraine. It won't make the migraine go away, but it can certainly help make things a bit more bearable. If you aren't able to keep a cold pack on you, keeping a dry wash cloth that you can soak in cool water at the time of a migraine attack is an alternative that can be just as effective.
- **Sunglasses/eye mask** – I personally experience a high degree of photosensitivity (sensitivity to light) when I'm having a migraine. Unfortunately, I'm also fairly light-sensitive outside of a migraine episode,

too. Some things that I find help with photosensitivity include wearing polarized sunglasses, utilizing the anti-glare on my rear view mirror whenever possible, sleeping while wearing an eye mask, and avoiding driving during twilight. These are things I do both during and outside of a migraine episode as sometimes glares can trigger my migraine attacks. Keep sunglasses or an eye mask in your kit if you also experience photosensitivity.

- **Migraine diary** – If you keep a migraine diary to document your symptoms and possible triggers (foods you ate, the weather, etc), having this on you at the time of a migraine attack is important so you can document exactly what you're feeling when you're feeling it instead of going back and trying to remember everything after your episode has ceased. A migraine diary not only helps you avoid possible triggers in the future, it can be a good way to keep track of important information or any changes to your migraines for your next doctor's visit.
- **Prescribed migraine medication** – If you're doctor has prescribed you migraine medication, be sure to keep this on you at all times as well. I have a habit of leaving my Maxalt in the medicine cabinet which has left me in a few helpless situations previously. Now, I keep one in my migraine survival kit so I have it with me at all times. It's important to take your medication as prescribed and be sure not to mix it with other pain relief medication without consulting your doctor first!

These are the necessities I keep in my emergency migraine survival kit. What are some of the key items you keep in yours?