Natural Ways to Ease Your Migraine

by JAIME SANDERS

The Benefits of Natural Remedies for Migraine

Living with migraine is challenging. Finding the right combination of medications to treat and hopefully prevent our pain can sometimes lead us on an unwanted rollercoaster ride.

Creating a well-balanced life where our stress, sleep, eating habits, and mental health are managed alongside our migraine can be just as difficult as well. What I have found on my 30-year journey with migraine is that incorporating some natural, alternative and complementary treatments into my routine has significantly increased my ability to cope with and manage my illness.

The following four treatments have helped me manage my migraine symptoms while also improving my mental health and sleeping habits.

Acupressure

Acupressure is a great complementary treatment for migraine. It offers quick relief when you are unable to get to your medications or if the migraine is mild enough to try to treat without them.

This technique uses pressure on specific pressure points to relieve pain. Here are four to try:

1. **Draw an imaginary line between the middle of both ears to the top of your head using your finger.** This is a pressure point that commonly relieves headaches, as well as dizziness and low energy.
2. **Move your finger from your shoulder to your neck until you feel a depression.** Apply pressure as needed in the area that is the most tender. This pressure point relieves migraine headaches as well as neck pain, shoulder tension, dizziness and stress.
3. **Slide your finger to the place where your thumb and index finger meet.** You should be able to feel a depression in this pressure point. Pressure applied to this point treats headaches that are in the front of your head. It also treats general pain and cold symptoms like sneezing and a runny nose.
4. **Locate the next point by placing your finger in the depression between your big toe and your second toe.** Feel where the tendons meet, then press where it is most sore. This will not only relieve migraine pain, but also anger, irritability, stress, menstrual pain and anxiety.

Massage Therapy

Massage therapy can help aid in migraine relief, as well as help relieve stress and tension from your body. Not only does it ease the pain of a migraine, it allows me time to decompress and re-focus myself.

I always come away from a massage feeling lighter, less stressed, and able to sleep more soundly. Some insurance companies offer discounts for massage therapy or you can look to see if there is a massage therapy school near you that offers deeply discounted massages. These two specific massages help with migraine pain:

Cranial Sacral Therapy

Cranial sacral therapy is a gentle, noninvasive form of bodywork that addresses the bones of the head, spinal column and sacrum. The goal is to release compression in those areas which alleviates stress and pain.

Cranial sacral therapy seeks to restore the natural position of the bones and can decrease stress from chronic injuries as well as provide relief from migraine headaches, neck and back pain, temporomandibular joint and more.

Trigger Point Therapy

A trigger point is a tight area within muscle tissue that causes pain in other parts of the body. Trigger point massage therapy is specifically designed to alleviate the source of the pain through cycles of isolated pressure and release.

In this type of massage for trigger point therapy, the recipient actively participates through deep breathing as well as identifying the exact location and intensity of the discomfort. The results and benefits of trigger point massage are releasing constricted areas in the muscles thus alleviating pain.

You can experience a significant decrease in pain after just one treatment. Receiving massage with trigger point therapy on a regular basis can help naturally manage pain and stress from chronic injuries.

Meditation

Learning how to listen to and become in tune with our bodies is a huge benefit to managing and coping with migraine. Through meditation, I have learned to lower my pain through breath and imagery.

Personally, it can be difficult for me to focus on a scene or thought while meditating. Instead, I imagine that I am breathing in white, healing light and letting go of my pain and discomfort while exhaling.

Next page: restorative yoga for migraine relief.

Meditation

There are many free resources for meditation that you can use. My health insurance company offers meditation and guided imagery downloads for free on their website. You can also download apps for your phone to help you meditate regularly.

Find a quiet space in your home where you can go and not be disturbed and devote 10-15 minutes a day to become centered and one with your breath and body. When you are not at home, guided affirmations can be used while at work, school, and even in the car.

Meditation takes practice and patience, but when incorporated into your daily life it is an added benefit to your overall wellbeing. You will begin to feel a sense of control over your pain with daily meditation.

Gentle/Restorative Yoga

Yoga is a great way to relieve stress, tension, and migraine headaches. It is a mild alternative to aerobic exercise, which can exacerbate migraine.

Yoga for migraine can be used both for the prevention and treatment of migraine headaches. For prevention treatment, the following poses should be practiced every morning. Hold each pose for up to one minute while focusing on breathing and repeating two to four times:

- Bridge
- Cat pose
- Child’s pose
- Down dog
- Janu sirsasana – head to knee forward fold (one leg tucked in, do on each side)
- Knees to chest
- Legs up the wall
- Pranayama breathing
- Puppy dog
- Savasana
- Seated eagle
- Seated forward bend
- Seated twist
- Standing forward fold
- Upward facing dog

Restorative yoga is best when you already have a migraine since movement can make it worse. The use of eye pillows, cold compresses, thick blankets, bolsters, and yoga blocks can help aid in relief while practicing the following poses:

- Child’s pose
- Corpse pose
- Legs up the wall
- Reclining bound angle
- Supported bridge pose
- Supported seated forward bend