



NEWSLETTER



WHAT IS THE CONNECTION BETWEEN NECK PAIN AND HEADACHES?

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WHAT IS THE CONNECTION BETWEEN NECK PAIN & HEADACHES?



RAVI BATES,
PT, Partner – STAR
Physical Therapy

by Ravi Bates, PT, Partner – STAR Physical Therapy

Are your headaches coming more frequently and lasting longer? Do you notice tension in the upper back and neck every time you get a headache? You may be experiencing a cervicogenic headache.

The good news is that our physical therapist can provide you with the guidance you need to resolve your headaches once and for all!

There are all sorts of reasons why headaches may develop. From environmental factors like weather changes and exposure to certain perfumes or other scents to stress and allergies, headaches happen to the best of us.

However, some headaches may be a bit more predictable than others. Factors like the type of mattress you sleep on, the pillow you use, or even the desk chair you sit in at work can all impact your risk for experiencing regular cervicogenic headaches because of the intricate network of nerves and muscles in your neck.

Our physical therapists are skilled at treating all types of headaches. Call STAR Physical Therapy today and set up an appointment with one of our highly trained physical therapists!

How Neck Pain Leads To Headaches

The majority of the time, neck pain starts as a seemingly small concern. A crick in your neck here or there may begin to develop more frequently, and before you know it, you're dealing with neck pain everyday.

Sometimes what causes your neck pain is a bad habit that you don't think twice about, like watching TV at the end of a long day, keeping your neck at an odd angle as you enjoy your favorite show. Or maybe your headache/neck pain starts from your posture as you type at your desk every day hunched over.

We usually consider these poor habits to be harmless. But the reality is that they could be putting undue stress on your neck, and if you aren't careful, this could translate to a headache.

One of the most common ways to trigger pain in your neck that radiates to the head is through weightlifting or other sports related injuries. The forces that occur while lifting something heavy or participating in a contact sport can be the beginning of a cervicogenic headache.

The cause of the issue isn't always as simple to identify. Getting a physical therapy assessment can help to clarify the source of the pain and more importantly, the solution.

Why Posture Is So Important To Feel Good

Working with a physical therapist can help you identify whether or not your headaches may result from neck pain or strain. One of the most common causes of headaches due to neck pain is forward head posture. Forward head position means that you are slouching!

A prolonged slouched posture leads to strain on the muscles, ligaments, and joints of your neck. Over time your body will start to alert you to this posture by sending pain signals. Typically you will adjust your posture for a minute and then resume the offensive position. Eventually, your body's alert system will get stronger and include discomfort at the base

Continued inside.

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of your head. If you fail to take the warning, a full-blown cervicogenic headache will likely follow.

There are specific ways that you can tell if your posture is causing cervicogenic headaches, including:

- The pain in your neck/head is worse at the end of a workday.
- The pain starts in your neck and moves into your head.
- The pain subsides when you switch positions (i.e., moving from sitting to standing).
- Neck pain/headaches develop after a change in circumstances, such as starting a new job with a new desk chair or getting a new car.

Working with a physical therapist to improve your posture with exercises is an effective way to overcome chronic neck and back pain.

How Physical Therapy Can Help Your Posture

Our spine is designed to move, which means our posture should also move. At STAR Physical Therapy, our physical therapists will guide you through a series of stretches, postural corrections, and strength-building exercises that can help you begin training your body to practice better posture, thereby reducing your neck pain.

Stretching the muscles in your neck to alleviate neck strain can reduce the severity and regularity of your headaches. Stretching and strengthening the muscles that have grown tight and weak along the back of your neck



and those along the shoulders can help you find relief from the tension that is causing your pain.

Understanding your ideal posture and how to manage it throughout your day can help you be proactive and find a solution for your sore neck. Learning specific exercises/movements on how to improve your posture is one of the most effective solutions. It seems small, but consistently it has been shown to help!

While you can try many simple activities at home, working with a physical therapist is the only way to ensure that what you are doing won't potentially lead to more significant injury.

If you're struggling with recurring headaches and neck pain, call STAR Physical Therapy today for a comprehensive assessment. We're here to help you learn what steps you can take to alleviate and prevent your pain once and for all!

Healthy Recipe

CHERRY-BERRY OATMEAL SMOOTHIES



INGREDIENTS

- ½ cup quick-cooking rolled oats
- ½ cup light almond milk
- ¾ cup fresh strawberries
- ½ cup fresh dark sweet cherries
- 1-2 tbsp almond butter
- 1 tbsp honey
- ½ cup small ice cubes

INSTRUCTIONS: In a blender combine oats, almond milk, and the next four ingredients (through honey). Cover and blend until smooth, scraping container as needed. Add ice cubes; cover and blend until smooth. If desired, top each serving with additional fruit.

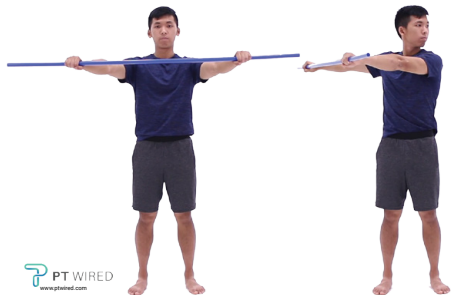
<http://www.eatingwell.com/recipe/259841/cherry-berry-oatmeal-smoothies/>

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Exercise Essentials

STRETCHES SHOULDER

Start by standing up straight holding a dowel down in front of you with both arms straight. Raise both arms up to shoulder height and rotate your arms and torso over to one side while simultaneously rotating your head over to the other side until you feel a stretch in your neck. Hold for 30 seconds and repeat for opposite side.



PT WIRED
www.photimed.com

Patient Success Spotlight

"I've been going to Star for 4 weeks now. I go 3 times per week. My initial evaluation was thorough and it was so nice to learn more about the root of my pain! **The staff at Star are the kindest most sincere people.** I'm treated with dignity throughout my recovery. My plan of care has been very effective and I feel motivated to continually improve!" – **Holly R.**



Staff Spotlight



DERRA HOWARD

Southshore Outside
Marketing Representative

I like working at STAR because of the people. It is truly a friendly and welcoming work environment.

I think something people may be surprised to learn about me is that I love to spend time with my family. I am very family oriented. I live an hour from my hometown of Houma, but whenever they have an event I'm on my way there.

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STAR PT Workshops!



LEARN MORE ABOUT ANY UPCOMING WORKSHOPS ON OUR WEBSITE!

Be sure to stay up to date on new Star PT Clinics workshops by visiting our website! Just look for the "Workshops" tab or scroll down to find the section pictured above!

UPCOMING NECK PAIN AND HEADACHE WORKSHOPS AT STAR PHYSICAL THERAPY

8/7 @ 6:30PM

**ALGIERS
CLINIC**

8/8 @ 6:30PM

**LAKEFRONT
CLINIC**

8/1 @ 6:00PM

**COVINGTON
CLINIC**

8/9 @ 6:30PM

**NEW ORLEANS EAST
CLINIC**

8/8 @ 6:00PM

**SLIDELL
CLINIC**

COME BACK TO STAR PT!



- Has an old pain flared up?
- Are you suffering from a new pain?
- Do you want to be healthier, stronger, and more active?

If you answered yes to any of these questions you need to come back to STAR Physical Therapy. Call us today!