



Burrard Physiotherapy

You' re In The Right Hands

Monday to Friday 7am to 6pm
Saturdays 8:30am to 3:00pm

#1020–1200 Burrard Street
corner of Davie Street

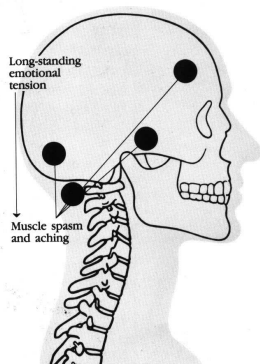
TIPS FOR THE SEASON AHEAD

HEADACHES

Two-thirds of the population suffer from headaches. A large proportion of these are caused by disorders of the neck or by stress and tension. In most cases, the headaches can be successfully treated with physiotherapy and recurrences can be prevented.

Headaches can come from irritation of the first three vertebral levels of the neck, whose nerves supply the three upper joints of the neck and their supporting ligaments and muscles. These nerves carry the sensation of pain and aching to the head. These nerves are also closely linked with the nerve that carries pain to and from the face. By this complex interconnection of nerves, a disorder of the upper neck joints and muscles can cause both neck pain and pain felt in the head or face (referred pain).

Stress and tension are experienced by many people as a part of everyday life. Tension may cause muscle tightness in the head, jaw and shoulders. If this persists, aching may develop in these muscles. Many of these muscles can refer pain to the head. Commonly, the head-ache is felt at the back of the head, in the temples, forehead or behind the eyes. It may be accompanied by dizziness or light-headedness. Headaches are frequently worsened by neck movements, or by holding the neck bent forward for long periods, such as while reading or writing.



HOW CAN YOU PREVENT HEADACHES?

Posture: Chest lifted, shoulders relaxed, head level and over the body, chin tucked in, neck should feel long, straight, relaxed and tall.

Work: Avoid working with your head down for long periods. Stretch and change position frequently. Redesign your work area if necessary.

Exercises: Keep your neck joints and muscles flexible and strong with correct neck exercises.

Relaxation: Recognize when you are tense. Regularly check that your shoulders and jaw are relaxed. Avoid hunched shoulders and clenched teeth.

Sleeping: Use a pillow to support the natural shape of your neck. Contour pillows may fit some people but not all. Often a dense feather pillow works the best.

Physiotherapists can help with your cervical headaches in a number of ways. We can provide you with expert postural analysis and assess your movement, strength, flexibility and joint mobility. We can help you to work out whether the neck or emotional tension is the likely cause of your head-aches. We can assess your work station and suggest simple modifications. Often there are simple strengthening exercises and stretches that can make all the difference. Manual therapy such as joint mobilization or manipulation can be an effective treatment for headache arising from neck problems.

If other possibilities are suspected, or if the headaches do not respond to treatment, your physiotherapist will refer you to your medical practitioner.

CLINIC HAPPENINGS:

We bid farewell to **Christie Stokes**, who has been covering our vacation time for the six months. Christie will be continuing her working vacation with a 4 month stint up at Fernie before heading out east for a while. She has been a great help over the summer and hopefully will decide to head back this way next year. Replacing Christie to cover vacations will be **Ian Shepard**. Ian has his masters degree in physiotherapy from Adelaide University in Australia and is also a certified acupuncturist. We welcome aboard **Andrew Ewert** who will be working Monday and Friday afternoons in the clinic as well as working full time at our WCB rehab program at the YWCA. Andrew also is a certified acupuncturist. Andrew and Bryn studied together at Queens University. As always, if there are any topics you would like to see covered in our newsletter, please do not hesitate to e-mail us at bphysio@shaw.ca.