

Headache/migraine protocol for at home massage

Considerations:

Ensure that you are drinking enough water throughout the day. Also, eliminating, or reducing the amount of gluten that you eat may help reduce or eliminate headaches and migraines. Please remember that deep breathing and shoulder and neck stretches will help with reducing the frequency and severity of headaches.

Preparation:

Have the person getting massaged (client) lay down, face up (supine) on a comfortable surface for both you and them. Do not use a pillow for this Massage unless necessary to accommodate for physical limitations. Make sure you are using a lotion or oil that does not soak in easily. Coconut oil works well for this as long as no allergies are present.

Protocol:

1. Traction: Begin your massage session with gentle traction. You may use hands only, or hands and feet as shown in EPOCH's video.

Apply traction with a slow and consistent pull. Do not jerk or pull too hard. Do not twist head either direction while pulling. Instruct client to take deep breaths.

2. Occipital massage: Do not use lotion for this portion of the massage. You will want to use medium to firm pressure.

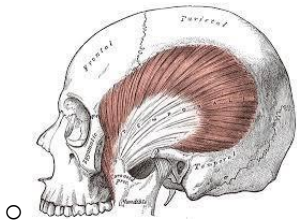
- Find the occiput (the bone at the back of the skull). Apply a firm pressure directly on the bone with your fingertips. Slowly move fingers from

inward (of the body) to outward (of the body). Use small circular motions if desired. Instruct client to release full weight of head into your hands.



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- Move slowly down the sides of the neck in a side to side motion. With firm consistent pressure. Ensure that you are not moving in front of the diagonal muscle called the SCM. (see video for procedure). This is an endangerment zone.
 - Return to the occiput and work up the back of the skull over the Occipitalis. There is a lot of connective tissue on the back of the skull and you need to work slowly and oppositionally.
3. Scalp massage: Do not use lotion for this portion of the massage. Use medium to firm pressure or whatever is comfortable for the client.
- Work your way up from the back of the skull to the sides of the head. You will want to focus on the temporalis muscle:



Use small, firm, circular movements to work around this muscle and it's attachments. Use holds when necessary.

- Work your way to the top of the head using oppositional strokes to stretch connective tissue and work underlying tension.
- Hair pull (see video for technique)

4. Temples and face: You do not need to use lotion for this but can at the request of the client. Use a sensitive face cream or equivalent and not oil for this portion of massage so as not to aggravate skin or clog pores.

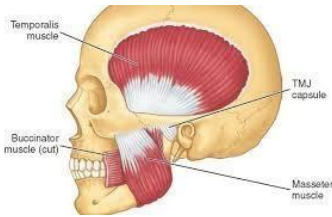
- Using small gentle (not firm) circles massage temples, focusing on bony areas. If you feel any small, hardened, pea shaped "lumps" hold pressure on them until they dissolve or soften. Do not apply firm pressure to this area!
- Transition to the forehead and use figure eight motions to release tension. Apply medium pressure in vertical, horizontal, and figure 8 methods to relieve tension and pain.
- Apply pressure to "drilling bamboo" points on forehead.



Use any combination of fingers to make this comfortable on yourself and ask client if you need to move slightly in any direction. They will be able to tell you if you are on the point or not.

- Hold for 10 seconds and release. Repeat as desired.
- Transition to the sinuses. Use lotion so that the skin does not pull or tear. Using a smooth gliding motion, scoop under the cheekbone from medial to lateral (inside to outside) and using multiple fingers drain as appropriate.
- "Under pupil point": Apply steady pressure to the cheekbone under where the pupil of the eye would be. Use light to medium pressure as this can be sensitive to some people.

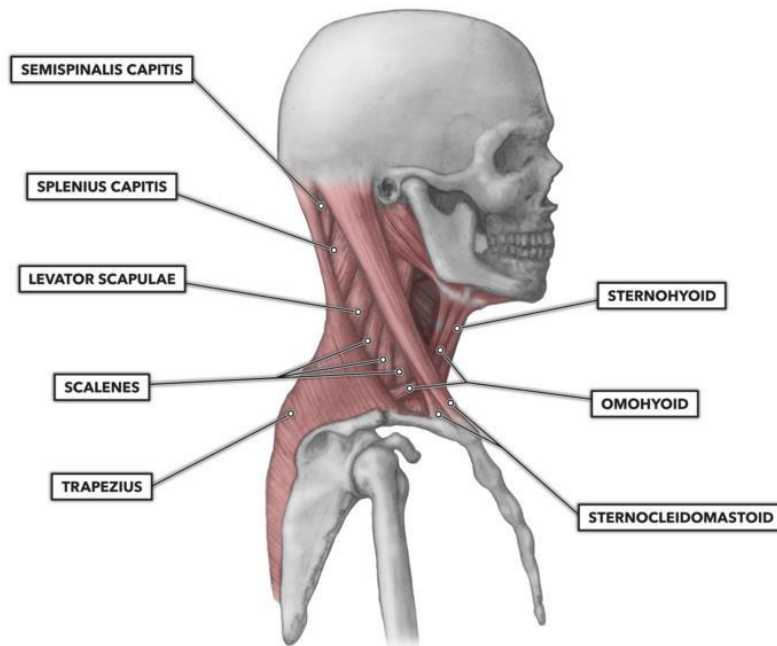
- Transition to the masseter. This is the powerful muscle of the jaw. This muscle assists in chewing. It attaches to the cheekbone and then to the lower jaw (mandible). This muscle also over contracts and engages when people sleep if they grind their teeth.



Using lotion, use slow straight strokes down the length of the muscle as the client slowly opens their mouth. Do this the desired number of times. Using cross fiber strokes (side to side), massage the attachment of the masseter to the cheek bone. Encourage your client to relax their face as much as possible during this part of the massage.

- Transition to the neck: By this point your client will be fully relaxed and ready for what comes next. Continually encourage them to relax their face and back of their head if you feel them tense up or not be fully engaged in the massage. Use lotion for this part of the massage (but not too much or you will not be able to have good traction to connective tissue).
 - Using slow strokes, feel down the side of the neck and massage the semispinalus capitis, splenius capitis, levator scapulae, scalenes, and trapezius. In other words, the muscles of the neck Do this as many times as you wish in long, slow strokes. Use the pressure that is preferable to the client. You may turn the head side to side to get maximum benefit and stretch. Focus on areas of connection with the scalenes. This is above the clavicle or collarbone. This will often result in sharp shooting pain down the arm and into the front and back of the upper torso. This is normal. Lighten pressure but do not stop the massage. Do NOT cross the

SCM boundary into the front of the neck.



THIS COMPLETES THE MIGRAINE/HEADACHE PROTOCOL.

You will likely want to continue to the shoulders in order to experience maximum benefit. We will review this protocol next week. You may also add cupping and gua sha to this at any time. I will show this to you in a second video this week. You will not have a protocol for this. There is no proper length of time to complete this session. For some of you, you will be finished in 15 minutes. For others you will still be working at 45. Enjoy the time to practice and we will see you next week!