



WHAT IS THE CONNECTION BETWEEN **NECK PAIN AND HEADACHES?**

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 Doctors of Physical Therapy are skilled at treating all types of headaches. Call Atlanta Human Performance Center today and set up an appointment with one of our highly trained Doctors of Physical Therapy!

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 when 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 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 Atlanta Human Performance Center, our physical therapist 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.

CONTACT US FOR AN APPOINTMENT

If you're struggling with recurring headaches and neck pain, call Atlanta Human Performance Center 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!

Exercises To Do Indoors

There are many exercises you can do in the comfort of your own home to maintain your fitness levels. In fact, here's a list of 4 exercises that can be done indoors so that you can stay fit this winter!

1. Yoga

Did you know that there are over 100 types of yoga? That's right! There's truly no shortage of ways to participate in this healthy activity. Most yoga sessions include breathing exercises, meditation, and poses that stretch and flex various muscle groups.

Not only does yoga improve your flexibility and muscle tone, it has also been shown to help with your mental health!

2. Push-ups

Traditional pushups can help you develop upper-body strength. This exercise targets the triceps, pectorals, and shoulders. They can also strengthen the lower back and core by engaging the abdominal muscles. The best part about this exercise is that it doesn't require any equipment!

3. Planks

Performing both side and front-facing planks has many benefits, including strengthening our cores. Practicing planks on a regular basis has been shown to improve posture, flexibility, balance, and coordination.

4. Squats

Squatting helps strengthen your lower body. This exercise specifically targets your glutes and quadriceps, though your hips, core, calves, and hamstrings all benefit from this movement.





PHYSICAL THERAPY TIPS

With Dr. Keith E. Evans, MD, PT, DPT, DN CERT. CEO/Director of Atlanta Human Performance Center

Exercise & Pain Relief

If you have back or joint pain, there are probably some times when all you want to do is lie in bed all day. It's tempting, but it might make the problem worse. Doctors used to prescribe bed rest for back pain and other chronic pain conditions, but studies have found that people who exercise and stay flexible manage their pain much better than those who don't.

If you do have a chronic pain condition like back pain or hip, knee, or shoulder problems, you shouldn't begin an exercise program without guidance. Check with your

physical therapist first. They have the expertise to help you develop an individualized exercise program. Have a professional; a physical therapist show you what is appropriate to do given your condition.

Here are 7 exercises/activities you should do to alleviate pain:

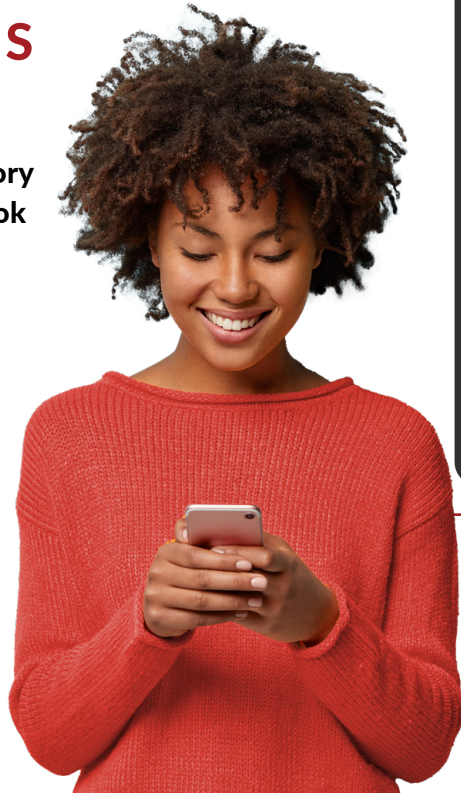
1. Walking
2. Swimming
3. Yoga
4. Tai Chi
5. Pilates
6. Stretching
7. Aerobics

Discover how our team of specialists can get you moving pain-free again! Call (404) 346-1526 or visit www.ahpcpt.com.

WE WANT TO HEAR YOUR SUCCESS STORY!

Click below to tell your PT story and leave your review. We look forward to hearing from you!

★ REVIEWS



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Who Do You Know That Needs Physical Therapy?

Do You Have Friends Or Family That Cannot:

- ✓ Move without pain
- ✓ Sit for long periods
- ✓ Bend and move freely
- ✓ Walk for long distances
- ✓ Balance confidently & securely
- ✓ Live active and healthy

CALL (404) 346-1526 TO SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT WITH OUR DOCTORS OF PHYSICAL THERAPY TODAY!



VALENTINE'S WHITE CHOCOLATE RASPBERRY SMOOTHIE

- 1 tbsp white chocolate chips
- 1/2 cup nonfat vanilla greek yogurt
- 3/4 cup frozen raspberries
- 1 cup almond milk/milk of choice
- 1/2 cup ice
- Fresh raspberries for garnish (optional)

In a small microwave safe bowl, heat white chocolate chips about 30 seconds and stir until smooth and melted through. Set aside to cool slightly. Add all ingredients, including melted chocolate, to a blender (or bullet, food processor, etc). Blend until smooth. Pour into glasses and top with fresh berries. Enjoy!



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