Movement and exercise when you live with migraine

Exercise Facts and Tips

- ✅ Exercise is good for everything in health including prevention of cancer, vascular disease and dementia.

- ✅ Exercise will enhance brain health and it can improve migraine.

- ✅ It is not easy to exercise when you live with migraine

- ✅ The key to moving more is to be flexible, gentle and persistent in your practice.

- ✅ Seeking support and advice from allied healthcare professionals can be helpful.

Many people with migraine struggle to stay active

- Migraine attacks can be triggered by some activities. They disrupt every part of life, including your workouts or outdoor activities.

- If you live with frequent attacks, and need to keep your daily tasks going, exercising can be a challenge. Optimize your medical care and treatments.

Is there scientific proof that exercise can help migraine?

- Many studies demonstrate the benefit of exercise, at different levels.

- Studies have focused on mild aerobic and yoga, but any fun activity that gets you moving is likely to help your body, your mood, and your sleep.

Triggered by exercise... should I give up?

NO! Of course not. Here are a few tips:

- Try to determine which aspect of the exercise triggers you (posture, environment, duration, effort level). If it can be adjusted - great!
- We know that warming up/cooling down are both important but sometimes neglected. Take the time to do it.
- Always stay hydrated, fueled up with healthy snacks and protected from light and other triggers if necessary.
- Work with a professional (ie. kinesiologist, physiotherapist, etc).
- Gradually increase the intensity and
- duration of your training to improve your capacity and tolerance to intensity. If nothing works…consider another type of activity (even if it can be frustrating at first).

Adapt. Adjust. Be Patient. Ask for Help!

Find your way to exercise: A checklist
It's a journey with many phases

Migraine™ Canada

Adjust and adapt

☐ Start with activities you are familiar with, but explore new things as well.

☐ If taking classes, ask for adaptations to your needs.

☐ Explore different types of workouts or activities to fit your energy/pain level for that day.

☐ Try online programs. YouTube has tons of resources that are free.

☐ Work with a kinesiologist or physio therapist to adapt and find what works for you.

☐ Discuss with your healthcare provider for any medical limitations and also reassurance and encouragement.

Be gentle and kind to yourself

☐ Some people are natural athletes and others are not. Some enjoy exercise and some don't. If you avoid exercise because"you're not in shape", or "you are not good", take it one step at a time. No one is too old to reconnect with their body.

☐ If you are starting exercise after a period of being inactive, do so gradually. Don't expect to pick up where you left off.

☐ Exercise should be fun! Take the opportunity to let go, shake away the bad juju.

☐ Laugh a bit!

Have patience and never give up

☐ If you realize you do not like an activity, let it go, try something different.

☐ Track your activities in a headache diary or a calendar. Observe and record how you feel after exercise.

☐ Try to exercise regularly. Aim for short, more frequent sessions.

☐ Respect your limits, but dare to push yourself a bit. You'll see that the limits will change over time and allow more movement.

☐ Celebrate your successes and persistence!

☐ If you need to take a break for a while, try again when you are feeling up to it.

A few comments on different activities:

- Walking is a great way to start!
- Jogging includes some shocks on the spine and sometimes it is difficult for people with neck pain.
- Cycling/Peloton is done in a bended position with the head extended and is sometimes difficult for the neck. An indoor bicycle (sitting posture) may be a good option.
- Yoga requires strength, balance and some flexibility.There are also a lot of twists. Essentrics or Pilates may be alternatives.
- ANY outdoor activity adds the pleasure of being active. Dancing, gardening...exercise is not all in the gym.

Running in place Pelvic lift Squats

Lunges Leg de abduction Deadlift

Elastic bands are a good alternative to weights.