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# MIGRAINE MONSTER

## A few simple lifestyle tweaks can help reduce the frequency of the dreaded attack

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Headache, nausea, dizziness, cognitive issues, sensitivity to light, sound and scent – migraine attacks are debilitating. Those who get migraines know the reign of discomfort and terror that they bring. Suffering brought upon by migraine differs from person to person. Shirish M Hastak, regional director, neurology, at Global Hospital, Mumbai, says, “Migraine is a chronic syndrome where headache is one of the key features. Other symptoms associated with it are nausea, vomiting, photophobia (light sensitivity) and phonophobia (sound sensitivity).”

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### TAMING THE MIGRAINE MONSTER

A few simple lifestyle tweaks can be immensely helpful in reducing the frequency of the dreaded attack

**1 Meditation**  
Slow deep breathing, especially deep belly breathing or A pranayama practice, such as pranayama, helps in relaxing the nervous system. It also has been found to be effective in reducing the frequency and intensity of the attacks.

**2 Good sleep**  
Lack of sleep can increase the frequency of migraine attacks. Aim for 7-8 hours of sleep each night. If you are unable to sleep, try taking a warm bath before going to bed. Avoid caffeine and alcohol in the evening and morning, and avoid bright lights and screens.

**3 Caffeine drinks**  
Drinking too much coffee or tea can lead to dehydration, which is a common trigger for migraines. Limit your intake to one or two cups a day.

**4 Peppermint essential oils**  
Peppermint essential oils can help reduce the frequency of migraines. You can use it in a diffuser or apply it to your temples.

**5 Acupuncture**  
Acupuncture has been found to be effective in reducing the frequency of migraines. It works by stimulating the body's natural painkillers.

**6 Head massages**  
A head massage can help reduce the frequency of migraines. Use a gentle massage oil and focus on the temples and the back of the head.

**7 Eat right**  
A diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains can help reduce the frequency of migraines. Avoid processed foods, sugary drinks, and alcohol.

If you have ever felt that throbbing pain on one side of the head and intense pulsing, you have encountered the dreaded migraine.

Avoiding migraine attacks can be challenging, as experts still can't put a finger on what makes migraine inducing neurons fire in the first place. But the pain can be managed with a thorough understanding of the triggers.

Sailee Modi, an Ayurveda consultant at Vedicure Healthcare and Wellness, says, “Migraine manifests in different ways. The emotional causes are stress, tension, shock, depression, anxiety and suppressing tears, whereas physical causes include controlling natural urges such as urination, flatulence, bowels, intense workout, excessive exercises or exertion.”

Excessive food intake, consuming meals when the previous meal is not digested, skipping meals, having acidic foods and indigestion are triggers, too. Exposure to bright light, loud sound, sudden changes in climatic conditions and humid climate can make symptoms worse. Most migraine attacks require some form of medication, and the earlier a migraine attack is treated, the better are the chances of improvement.

## **1 Meditation**

“Slow deep breathing, especially deep belly breathing or Adham Pranayama, has a powerful impact on relaxing our nervous system. Practice deep belly breathing in the morning and evening for at least five minutes each,” says Namita Piparaiya, founder, Yoganama Wellness.

## **2 Good sleep**

“Lack of sleep can increase our stress hormones and the frequency of migraine attacks,” says Piparaiya. She suggests sleep hygiene, which entails going to sleep and waking up at the same time every day, spending as much time in natural light during the day as possible, and avoiding screens in bed.

## **3 Caffeine drinks**

Sipping on beverages that contain caffeine, such as tea or coffee, may provide some relief when you are experiencing a bad headache. But, do not overdo caffeine, as it can lead to anxiety, restlessness, irritability and even insomnia.

## **4 Peppermint essential oils**

Try dabbing some onto your temples and gently rubbing it in. Also, if a loved one is nearby and willing to give a you massage, put a couple of drops into some lo ion and have them rub your neck and shoulders. It can be extremely soothing.

## **5 Acupressure**

With your index finger and thumb, squeeze hard on the webbing on your other hand between your index finger and thumb. There are acupressure points on the “third eye” (between your eye brows), on the back of the jaw bone, behind the ear and a handful of other spots.

## **6 Head massages**

“Providing nourishment to the mind helps in rejuvenating the nerve endings and thereby reducing the pain,” says Modi. Oiling the scalp with herb-in fused medicated oils nurture the roots and helps the brain in functioning smoothly.

## **7 Eat right**

B-complex vitamins treat symptoms naturally. A warm diet that includes khichdi, one pot meals and soups with minimal spices also helps. If migraine is accompanied by hyper acidity, the use of herbs such as cilantro and aloe vera can be helpful.

A light, well-balanced, vitamin-packed diet will help relieve migraine symptoms.