



SYMMETRY ALLIANCE  
EMPOWERING REHABILITATION PROFESSIONALS

## SUCCESSFUL MIGRAINE TREATMENT, BY SOWING:

**S**leep

**E**at

**E**xercise

**D**rink

**S**tress reduction

The acronym SEEDS was coined by:  
Lawrence Newman MD, Professor of Neurology at NYU Langone Medical Center, New York

The following pages were created by:  
Lisa Farrell, PT, PhD, AT,C  
[lisa@symmetryalliance.com](mailto:lisa@symmetryalliance.com)

## HEALTHY SLEEP HABITS

- ESTABLISH STANDARD SLEEP TIME
  - Have a regular bedtime, where you go to bed when you are sleepy enough to fall asleep.
  - Set a fixed rise time where you wake up and get out of bed at the same time. This is more important than having a regular bedtime.
  - Keep this schedule every day, even on weekends.
  - Allow enough sleep time (for adults, 7 – 9 hours) so that you wake up refreshed.
- AVOID
  - Caffeinated substances after 12pm (Coffee, tea, soft drinks, chocolate, etc).
  - Alcohol within 3 hours of bedtime.
  - Nicotine within a few hours of bedtime.
- BED IS FOR SLEEPING OR INTIMATE ACTIVITIES ONLY
  - Do NOT read, watch TV, use the phone, etc.
- PREPARE FOR SLEEP ABOUT ONE HOUR BEFORE BED
  - Do quiet activities like making a puzzle, listening to music/relaxation meditation, reading with a soft, yellow light\*, taking a warm shower/bath, etc.
  - No disturbing images, heavy exercise, heavy meals, bright lights, or electronic light producing devices\*\*.
  - Write down a list of your next day activities and leave the paper as well as your thoughts, planning, or worries in a room outside of your bedroom. Have the attitude that the day is over and it is time for sleep, not time to do anything else.
- PREPARE THE ROOM
  - Cooler is better. Recommend setting the temperature 2 degrees below your daytime temperature (Range 62 -75 degrees Fahrenheit).
  - Dark with no night lights. If can't darken, then use eye mask. Keep a flashlight within reach if you get out of bed or if the power goes out.
  - Control noises that bother you with earplugs or sound screening device.
- TROUBLE GOING TO SLEEP OR STAYING ASLEEP
  - If can't fall asleep within 20 minutes, or if you wake up and can't go back to sleep easily during the night, don't stay in bed. Get out of bed and do a quiet activity (minimize light exposure) until you are sleepy.
  - Quiet activity suggestions: Read or listen to something soothing or do a puzzle using a softer light.
  - Learn to pay attention to what it feels like to be sleepy and allow yourself to go when you feel this.
  - If have a problem sleeping through the night, stick to getting out of bed at the usual time regardless of the amount of sleep. Then, go to bed at the regular time.
- NAPS
  - Try to avoid taking a nap, however if you need a nap, then limit to NO more than 20 minutes to avoid affecting your ability to sleep at night.

After implementing these behaviors, if you continue to not have good sleep, here are some resources to help you find a sleep specialist:

- Behavioral Sleep Medicine Specialists (<https://my.absm.org/BSMSpecialists>)
- American Academy of Sleep Medicine (<https://sleepeducation.org/>)

\*Light signals to the brain's pineal gland to not secrete melatonin, which is a hormone that normally acts to induce sleep in response to darkness.

\*\*After dark, use blue light blockers.

## MIGRAINE DIET

Avoid foods you've identified as triggers. Also, eat regularly because hunger is a common trigger. Skipping meals can be just as bad as eating the wrong thing.

### Pain-Safe Foods:

- **Meats:** Fresh and non-processed meats, poultry, and fish.
- **Gluten Free Grains:** Rice, Quinoa, Oats, Buckwheat.
- **Seeds (and seed butters):** Chia, Flax, Hemp, Sunflower, Sesame, Pumpkin/Pepita, and Poppy.
- **Vegetables:** Asparagus, Artichokes, Beets, Bell Pepper, Bok Choy, Broccoli, Cabbage, Carrots, Cauliflower, Celery, Chickpeas, Collards, Cucumber, Eggplant, Jicama, Leeks, Kale, Parsnips, Romaine, Scallions, Shallots, Spinach, Sprouts, String Beans, Sweet Potatoes, Squash (all kinds), Swiss Chard, Turnips, and Zucchini.
- **Fruits (Sulfite free dried fruit):** Apples, Apricots, Blackberries, Blueberries, Cherries, Cantaloupe, Cranberries, Elderberry, Grapes, Honeydew, Mango, Nectarine, Peaches, Pears, Pumpkin, Pomegranate, Prunes, and Strawberries.
- **Spice & Condiments:** Dijon, Distilled White Vinegar, Ghee, Olive Oil, Modest amounts of Honey, Stevia, Salt, Pure Maple Syrup, and Vanilla Extract.

### Pain-Triggering Foods (Italized foods are considered highly associated as trigger for migraine):

- **Dairy:** *Milk (cow and goat), Cream, Yogurt, Sour Cream, Buttermilk, Aged or Ripened Cheeses (Cheddar, Mozzarella, Gruyère, Emmenthal, Stilton, Brie, Gouda, Romano, Parmesan, Feta, Bleu, Camembert).* Some can tolerate cheeses with no additives like Ricotta, Cream Cheese, Cottage Cheese, Fresh Mozzarella, Fresh Goat Cheese, or Boursin.
- **Meats:** *Smoked, Cured, Organ, and Processed Meats (preserved with nitrates or nitrites) such as Bacon, Sausage, Ham, Turkey, Salami, Pepperoni, Pickled Herring, Smoked/Dried Fish, Bologna, Beef or Chicken Livers, and Hot Dogs. Eggs (limit 3/week).*
- **Fruits:** Figs, Dates, Avocados, Raisins, Raspberries, Red Plums, Passion Fruit, Papaya, Pineapple, Apples, Peaches, Bananas, Kiwi, and Citrus (including Juices). Possibly Tomatoes.
- **Vegetables:** Corn, Onions, Peas, and Broad Beans such as Lima, Fava, Lentils, and Navy. Possibly Olives and Mushrooms.
- **Nuts and Nut Butters**
- **Wheats:** Fresh Yeast-Risen Baked Goods like Bread, Cookies, Cakes, Doughnuts, Sourdough, Bagels, Pizza Dough, and Soft Pretzels.
- **Artificial sweeteners:** *Aspartame (Equal, NutraSweet), Saccharin (Sweet'n Low)*
- **Alcohol:** *Beer, Red Wine, Port, Sherry, Champagne, and Whiskeys;* If consumed, the safest alcohol is clear in color, like vodka or white wines (yellow color is not acceptable).
- **Caffeinated and Decaffeinated Drinks:** *Tea, Coffee, Cola* (Herbal Teas can sometimes be triggers)
- **Miscellaneous:** *Chocolate, Cocoa, Monosodium Glutamate (MSG; synonymous with "hydrolyzed fat", "hydrolyzed protein" or "all natural preservatives"; frequently in Asian foods, Meat Tenderizers), Soy Products (Soy Sauce, Miso, Tempeh, Soy Protein Isolate/Concentrate), Natural Flavors, Soups from Bouillon Cubes, Vinegar (except white vinegar), and Fermented, Pickled, or Marinated Foods (Sauerkraut, Cucumbers).* Possibly Carob.

\* When you make long term dietary adjustments to reduce headache, it is advised that you consult with a registered dietician to make sure that you are consuming a nutritionally balanced diet. The provided list contains foods that the sources referenced mostly agree on. It is not an exhaustive list of foods, especially for the pain safe foods. Because everyone reacts differently to foods, those listed here may or may not be triggers for you and needs to be tested to better understand how you react.

Adapted from: 1) Heal Your Headache by David Buchholz, MD; 2) <https://www.pcrm.org/health/health-topics/a-natural-approach-to-migraines>; 3) Mayo Clinic's Brochure produced by: American Academy of Neurology

## EXERCISE\*

Moderate intensity exercise that is performed regularly over time can decrease headache frequency by releasing endorphins, which are natural painkillers. However, if you haven't been exercising for a while, it is important to build up the frequency and intensity *slowly*, and ideally, it would be best to work with a trained health care provider who can design an exercise program that is specific for you.

### RECOMMEND:

- Frequency: 150 minutes of exercise that is spread out over a week.
- Type: walking, jogging, bicycling, swimming, dancing, etc.
- Intensity: Use a 2-step process

1. Calculate your target heart rate to determine what moderate intensity exercise for you

- a.  $220 - \text{your age} = \text{Maximum heart rate}$
- b. Multiply your maximum heart rate by either 0.70, or 0.80
- c. Example for a 60-year-old:
  - 1)  $220 - 60 = 160$  beats per minute (bpm)
  - 2)  $160 \times 0.70 = 112$  bpm
  - 3)  $160 \times 0.80 = 128$  bpm
  - 4) Moderate exercise = target heart rate range is 112 to 128 bpm
- d. Determining your target heart rate:
  - 1)  $220 - \underline{\hspace{2cm}} = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$  (Maximum heart rate)
  - 2)  $\underline{\hspace{2cm}} \times 0.70 = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$
  - 3)  $\underline{\hspace{2cm}} \times 0.80 = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$
  - 4) Your target heart rate range =  $\underline{\hspace{2cm}}$  to  $\underline{\hspace{2cm}}$

\*If you are on a **Beta Blocker medication** for your heart, use this method to calculate your target heart rate since Beta Blockers do not allow you heart rate to go as high as normal:

- a. To determine your target heart rate, sit still for 5 minutes, and then, take your resting heart rate, and then, add 20 to the number. This is your maximum target heart rate for exercise.
- b. Example:
  - 1) If the resting heart rate determined to be 80 bpm.
  - 2)  $80 + 20 = 100$  bpm
  - 3) Keep your heart rate near 100 bpm as you exercise.
  - 4) Also, pay attention to how you feel while exercising at your calculated heart rate. Does it feel too hard or do you have difficulty catching your breath? If so, reduce the intensity.

2. Calculate your heart rate to make sure that you are exercising at a moderate intensity

Two Methods to choose from:

- a. Heart rate Monitor
- b. Count the number of heart beats.
  - 1) Count your pulse at your wrist or neck for 15 seconds.
  - 2) Double the number twice and this is your heart rate.
  - 3) For example, if you count 20 beats in 15 seconds, 20 doubled is 40, and doubled again, is 80. So, your heart rate would be 80 beats per minute.

\*REMEMBER: Exercise should not cause a headache nor cause a headache to worsen. Stop if this happens and contact your health care provider to discuss how to proceed. Also, if you are starting an exercise program on your own, always check with your physician first.

## **DRINK**

### **AVOID**

- Alcoholic drinks
- Caffeine

### **STAY HYDRATED**

- Drink at least eight 8-oz glasses of water per day
  - Dehydration is a common headache trigger.
  - Staying hydrated can decrease headache.
  - To help you remember, use Drinking Water Reminder or Tracker Apps

# STRESS REDUCTION

## Techniques & Tips to Help Deal with Stress

Stress is a part of life! How you handle it can make a big difference!

Relaxation is a great way to help you cope with and decrease the effects of stress.

### Techniques & Tips to R-E-L-A-X

- **Find what works for you.** Practice different relaxation techniques to stimulate the parasympathetic nervous system (AKA “rest and digest” response) to help the reduce the body’s stress response. Here are some techniques to try:
  - **Relaxation Breathing Techniques:** The goal is to shift the breath to slower and deeper breaths. Here are a few examples: diaphragmatic, alternate nostril breathing, rhythmic breathing (e.g. 4 second inhale, 7 second hold, 8 second exhale).
  - **Progressive Muscle Relaxation:** This technique cultivates an awareness of where you hold stress and tension in the body. It has you first tensing, then relaxing, each muscle group. It is even more beneficial when combined with deep breathing.
  - **Visualization:** This technique uses the power of imagination to help promote relaxation through guided imagery. For example, spend a few minutes imagining yourself floating peacefully in a calm ocean while being rocked by gentle waves and covered by a warm breeze.
- **Don’t try too hard.** Be gentle with yourself and allow relaxation to happen naturally. Even if you don’t think it is working, there are still physiologic effects occurring when you practice.
- **Be kind to yourself.** Pay attention to your self-talk. Recognize when you have critical thoughts, like not getting it right or becoming distracted while doing the technique. Negative self-talk doesn’t promote relaxation. Having a kind attitude towards yourself, as you would toward a good friend or family member, does promote relaxation.
- **Take time throughout your day.** You may need reminders to practice relaxation. Place Post It notes in convenient places or set a timer on your phone or computer.
- **Takes practice and commitment.** Learning how to master the skill of relaxing takes practice and making it a regular part of your day and sticking to it is key to reaping the benefits of relaxation.
- **Use an app.** There are many online apps available to help you practice relaxation techniques. Here are just a few that you can try: Calm, Insight Timer, ‘Stop, Breathe, and Think’, Headspace, 10% Happier & Simple Habit.

Remember to add breaks to each day! **Everyday activities** that also promote relaxation and are just as beneficial to reducing stress, such as:

- Talking to a friend or family member
- Asking for help when there is too much to do
- Saying “no” when doing too much
- Volunteering (yes, helping others can be gratifying and stress reducing)
- Getting a massage
- Enjoying a hobby
- Listening to soothing music
- Exercising, especially aerobically

# STRESS REDUCTION

## Techniques & Tips to Help Deal with Stress

### Going Beyond Basic Relaxation Techniques & Activities

Meditation incorporates relaxation techniques as part of formal practice; however, most practices have additional benefits for dealing with stress. Here are some examples of meditation practices: contemplative prayer, Yoga, Tai Chi, and mindfulness.

In particular, mindfulness meditation not only promotes relaxation, it expands awareness, enhances the ability to focus, and helps develop emotional control. If you chose mindfulness meditation to help you improve how you deal with stress, it is suggested that you take a course to learn about the basic principles and how to overcome misconceptions and challenges. With its expanding popularity, you could start by searching for mindfulness classes in your local area or online. Here are a few additional resources to help you:

<b>Mindfulness Meditation Books (January, 2021)</b>
The Headspace Guide to Meditation and Mindfulness: How Mindfulness Can Change Your Life in Ten Minutes a Day by Andy Puddicombe
Mindfulness: An Eight-Week Plan for Finding Peace in a Frantic World by Mark Williams and Danny Penman with Forward by Jon Kabat-Zinn
Soul Centered: Transform Your Life in 8 Weeks with Meditation by Sarah McLean
The Mindful Teen by Dzung X. Vo, MD, FAAP
Loving-Kindness: The Revolutionary Art of Happiness by Sharon Salzberg
The Mindful Self-Compassion Workbook: A Proven Way to Accept Yourself, Build Inner Strength, and Thrive by Kristin Neff and Christopher Germer
Radical Compassion: Learning to Love Yourself and Your World with the Practice of RAIN by Tara Brach

<b>Relaxation and Mindfulness App Suggestions (June 2021)</b>	
There are a few apps that offer their meditations for free. However, most apps offer a few free meditations, however if you want to use the full library, you have to subscribe by paying fee. When the app is subscription fee based, they usually have free trial before charging you. Be sure to cancel at the end of the trial if you don't want to be billed for the subscription.	
<b>Smiling Mind</b> A non-for-profit app developed by psychologists and educators that provides free programs for all ages.	<b>Mindfulness Coach</b> Free training app offered through the US Department of Veterans Affairs.
<b>Headspace</b> Great teaching app by a highly-regarded meditation teacher and animations are super helpful with lessons being taught. Free trial, after sign up with email, but after trial ends, then subscription fee based.	<b>Insight Timer</b> Have thousands of free meditations, lectures, podcasts, and more taught by a variety of teachers. This app is tailored toward practitioners who have had some training.
<b>10% Happier</b> A variety of expert meditation teachers lead different courses that range from the basics to more expert level. Some free meditations, after sign up with email, but mostly subscription fee based.	<b>Simple Habit</b> 5-minute meditations tailored toward practitioners who have had some training. Some free meditations, after sign up with email, but mostly subscription fee based.
<b>Calm</b> Large variety of single sessions and multi-day courses that ranges from introducing the basics to more advanced, unguided meditations. Features customizable sounds and scenes. Some free meditations, after sign up with email, but mostly subscription fee based.	<b>Stop, Breathe, &amp; Think (AKA My Life)</b> App is tailored toward practitioners who have had some training. Some free meditations, after sign up with email as well as subscription fee based after a trial period.

## **STRESS REDUCTION**

### **Techniques & Tips to Help Deal with Stress**

If stress is overwhelming, and you can't manage it alone, it is recommended that you seek help from a trained behavioral specialist. In particular, search for a specialist who is trained in cognitive behavioral therapy. Here are a few possible resources:

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists/cognitive-behavioral-cbt>

<https://www.apa.org/about/apa/organizations/associations>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_psychology\\_organizations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_psychology_organizations)



## Additional Resources:



The Headache Center  
from Johns Hopkins Medicine

### Vitamins and Dietary Supplements

**Before you take any vitamin or supplement, *check with your physician to see if it appropriate for you.***

Certain vitamins and food supplements may provide a benefit in terms of headache prevention. Many unsubstantiated claims can be found on the internet and at health food stores. The best evidence exists for the agents below (published peer reviewed, randomized controlled trials, albeit small ones in some cases). Side effects are typically mild.

Start with these:

- B2/Riboflavin – up to 400mg / day
- Magnesium (use any type where the 2<sup>nd</sup> word ends in “ate”, like citrate or glycinate) – up to 400mg 2x / day (GI Distress and/or diarrhea possible)
- Coenzyme Q<sub>10</sub> – up to 100mg 3x / day

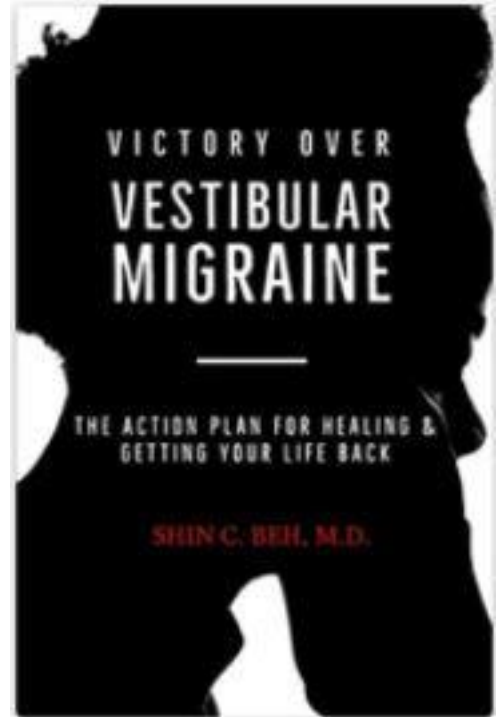
Check with your migraine specialist before using these:

- Butterburr (*Petasites hybridus*) extract, IMPORTANT: Petadolex brand (Must be pyrrolizidine alkaloid free), 50–75mg twice a day with food (expensive)
- Feverfew (*Parthenium integrifolium*), 50mg+ per day (inexpensive)
- Melatonin – There is some weaker evidence that melatonin, a hormone that helps regulate sleep, may help headaches if 3–6 mg is taken an hour or so before bedtime. Significant side effects are rare. Check with your physician before taking if you have an autoimmune disease/disorder. Probably most useful in treating cluster headaches.

There are a few companies that package more than one of the above vitamins / supplements into a single pill for convenience. One such product is “Migravent”, info. available at [http://www.migravent.com](http://www.migravent.com;).; another is “MigreLief”, info. available at <http://www.migrelied.com>. We do not specifically endorse any brand name item, nor do we have any financial interest in any of these products.

## Additional Resources:

I recommend that you read the book, *Victory Over Vestibular Migraine*, by Shin C. Beh, MD, if you have Vestibular Migraine. Dr. Beh has provided a great resource for patients to not only understand Vestibular Migraine, but he also provides a comprehensive reference for treating the problems that occur with this complex disease. He has a great deal of experience with working with patients and he also has authored many research papers and continues to actively do research in this area. He is a neurologist that specializes in vestibular disorders and he is founding Director of University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center's Vestibular Neurology and Neuro-Visual Disorders Clinic in Dallas, Texas. For appointments, call: 214-645-8300

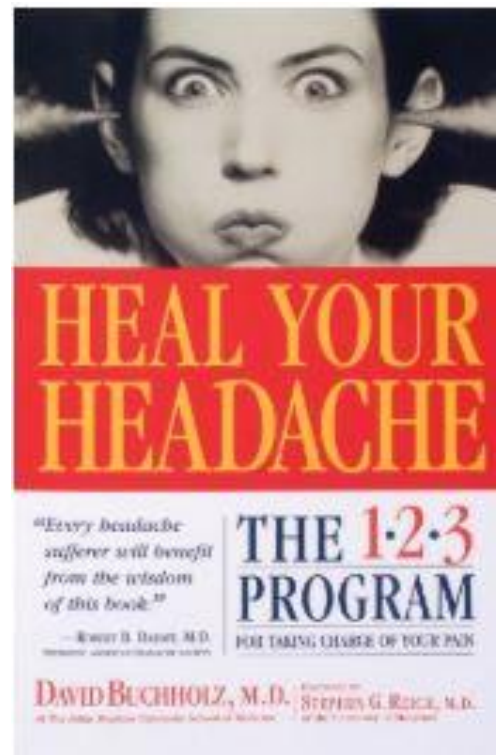


I recommend that you read the book, *Heal Your Headache (HYH)*, by David Buchholz, MD. This is a great resource for understanding what are triggers for migraine and it provides information about how to manage migraine. In particular, it provides in depth guidelines about food triggers (the *HYH Migraine Diet*).

When you read it, I suggest that you read it all the way through before you decide if you want to follow the *HYH migraine diet*. I suggest this because if you only read part of it, and only partly commit to doing the diet as recommended, you may not see any benefits. If your symptoms don't get any better, then you may think that the diet is useless, when in fact you didn't follow it as recommended.

The *HYH migraine diet* is intended to be followed strictly for at least 4 weeks to see if you have an improvement in symptoms. For some, they may need to follow the diet strictly for up to several months. Those that need to follow it for more than 4 weeks are the ones that notice that the diet helps (even slightly), but the symptoms are easily triggered.

If you feel overwhelmed about what you can and cannot eat by choosing to strictly follow the *HYH migraine diet*, then please seek the help of a nutritionist, who can work with you and help set up a customized nutrition plan.



## Additional Resources:

I want also to suggest Alicia Wolf's "The Dizzy Cook" book as a fantastic resource to help you successfully follow the *Heal Your Headache Migraine Diet*. She includes in the book: her journey with vestibular migraine (your diagnosis may be different than hers, but managing migraine headaches is the same), foods that should be eliminated, food to embrace, more than 90 recipes, and how to reintroduce foods.

Remember, the *HYH migraine diet* is not supposed to be followed strictly for the rest of your life because it doesn't allow for a nutritionally balanced diet long term. The intention is to get control of the headaches, and then, slowly reintroduce foods to see which ones are your triggers and which ones aren't. From what I understand, most people only have up to four food triggers. When reintroducing foods, I suggest **not** starting with the ones that are considered the top triggers for headache (caffeine, alcohol, chocolate/cocoa, dairy, processed meats, foods that contain MSG or artificial sweeteners).

