

The Relationship Between Headaches and Acupuncture

Headaches are one of the most common discomforts people experience, and when they become chronic, they can significantly interfere with daily life. As more individuals look for options beyond medication, **acupuncture has gained attention as a natural and effective approach.**

Research and clinical experience show that acupuncture can help **improve circulation and regulate the autonomic nervous system**, which in turn can reduce the frequency and intensity of headaches. Rather than simply suppressing pain, acupuncture works as a holistic therapy that addresses underlying imbalances in the body and supports improvements in lifestyle-related issues.

For those who struggle with **chronic tension headaches or recurring migraines**, acupuncture offers a meaningful alternative—one that aims not just to relieve symptoms, but to support long-term, root-level improvement without relying solely on medication.

How Acupuncture Helps with Tension-Type Headaches and Migraines

Tension-Type Headaches (Headaches from Neck and Shoulder Tension)

Tension-type headaches—often caused by tight muscles in the neck, shoulders, and upper back—tend to respond very well to acupuncture. By relaxing stiff muscles and improving circulation, acupuncture helps ease that heavy, tightening discomfort many people feel.

When needed, I may also use **electro-acupuncture**, a gentle technique that sends low-frequency pulses through the needles. This helps the muscles move softly, improves blood flow, and releases deep tension.

Migraines

Migraines are thought to occur when blood vessels in the brain suddenly dilate. Acupuncture helps promote smoother blood flow and may reduce the likelihood of excessive dilation, which can lessen the frequency or intensity of migraine attacks.

For migraines, I **avoid electro-acupuncture**, as increased blood flow to the head may worsen symptoms. Instead, I focus on:

- Gentle trigger-point work
- Balancing the autonomic nervous system
- Calming stress-related tension

Since stress and irregular routines often trigger migraines, supporting the body's overall balance is especially important.

Why Neck and Shoulder Tension Causes Headaches

1. Reduced Blood Flow

When muscles stay tight for long periods, circulation decreases. This makes it harder for oxygen and nutrients to reach the head, allowing waste products to build up—leading to headache-related discomfort.

2. Nerve Compression

Nerves that run through the back of the head pass between neck muscles. When those muscles tighten, they can press on the nerves and cause dull pain in the back of the head or temples.

3. Reduced Blood Flow to the Brain

Chronic neck tension can affect the arteries that supply blood to the brain. When the brain senses reduced oxygen, it sends pain signals—resulting in headaches.

4. Poor Posture Adds Extra Strain

Leaning forward during smartphone or computer use puts extra load on the neck and shoulders. This constant strain can easily lead to chronic headaches.

Common Symptoms

- A heavy, tightening, band-like pressure around the head
- Strong stiffness or heaviness in the neck and shoulders
- Dull pain that lasts for hours—or even days
- Eye fatigue or a heavy feeling behind the eyes

These are all common signs of headaches caused by muscle tension.

When to Seek Immediate Medical Care

Please seek urgent medical attention if you experience:

- A sudden, severe headache unlike anything you've felt before
- Headache accompanied by nausea, visual changes, or numbness in the arms or legs

In traditional East Asian medicine, migraines are sometimes understood as a result of **imbalances in qi, blood, and body fluids**, or as disruptions in the functions of the **liver and kidneys**, as well as **autonomic nervous system imbalance**.

The head is considered a place where “clear yang energy gathers,” meaning that when the overall flow of qi and blood becomes disturbed, symptoms tend to concentrate in the head and neck. Stress, fatigue, and lack of sleep are thought to disrupt liver function, leading to rising qi or stagnation of blood, which can contribute to migraine symptoms.

However, I do not rely heavily on traditional theory alone. Instead, I use these concepts as **helpful reference points**, while basing actual clinical decisions on what I observe directly—such as:

- How your symptoms appear,
- What I find through palpation,
- How your body responds during and after treatment.

This approach allows me to blend traditional understanding with practical, hands-on clinical insight,

ensuring that each treatment is tailored to your body's real-time condition

The way migraines develop can vary greatly from person to person. Factors such as the degree of central sensitization, how strongly certain triggers affect you, and how much muscle tension contributes to your symptoms all differ from individual to individual. Your body's sensitivity to stimulation also varies, which is why people experience the effects of treatment in different ways.

My goal is not just to create temporary relief. I aim to help your symptoms improve and remain stable over time—supporting a state where your body can stay balanced and comfortable for a meaningful period.