

HEADACHES: Your Posture May Be The Cause

Do you suffer from headaches? If you do, you're not alone. Headaches have been reported to be the number one reason patients seek medical attention.

There are many causes of headaches. But, did you know that how you sit, lie and stand can cause headache pain?

As you sit reading this, ask yourself these questions:

- Are your feet resting squarely on the floor?
- Is your low back pressed against the back of the chair?
- Are your shoulders relaxed?
- Is your head resting squarely over your shoulders?

If you answered "no" to these questions, your sitting posture could cause increased tension in the shoulder and neck muscles. Thus poor posture, the experts say, can cause or intensify a common tension headache.

How Does It Happen?

"The next time you have a headache, check your position," suggests Gary Souza, PT, who has been treating headaches in Diamond Bar for 16 years. "See if you can decrease your pain by correcting your posture. If so, you may be able to decrease or prevent your headaches by improving your postural habits."

Souza offers this comparison: It's easier to carry a heavy object if you hold it in close to you. You probably would be able to carry a 12 pound bowling ball longer, for example, if you hold it close to you. If, however, you hold the same ball at arm's length in front of you, you would only be able to carry it that way for a very short time. Your muscles would get tired and ache.

The same principle applies to carrying the weight of your head. When your head is resting squarely above your shoulders, there is very little tension on the muscles of the head and neck. If, instead, your head is resting forward of your trunk, a great deal of muscular activity is required.

Physical therapists are specialists in caring for aches and pains, and can provide exercise programs specifically designed to correct faulty posture.

Gary M. Souza, PT and Associates has been treating headaches, TMJ and providing quality care since 1981. With state of the art equipment and the most qualified staff in the area, our hands on, one-on-one care has proven effective results. We are contracted with hundreds of insurance companies.