



Forrest Hill Physiotherapy

COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

- **Physiotherapy**
- **Real Time Ultrasound Imaging**
- **Clinical Pilates**
- **Continance Physiotherapy**
- **Massage therapy**

Is it a Headache or a Neck Ache — the difference?

Most of us will be familiar with the term **Headache**. But did you know that there are various types of headache? Migraines for example, can present with or without a plethora of symptoms ranging from visual auras, auditory sensitivity to nausea. Many people may also suffer from tension headache, and may notice an increase in their symptoms when they are suffering from stress or fatigue. A less well-known form of headache is termed a **cervicogenic headache**. According to recent studies, 14-18% of chronic headaches can be categorised as cervicogenic in nature, which means that they are quite literally a pain in the neck (and head)!

A cervicogenic headache is a form of headache arising from a muscle or skeletal disorder of the neck region. Cervicogenic headache can be described as a referred pain into the head from the neck via neural or nerve pathways. Cervicogenic headache sufferers will most commonly present with:

- **Pain with neck movements or awkward, sustained head postures that also reproduce a headache**
- **Restriction in neck range of motion**
- **Headache that is one-sided and does not change sides**

Physiotherapy can help with the treatment of various forms of headache, and in particular



cervicogenic headache. A full physiotherapy assessment may include checking neck range of motion, palpation to locate the source of the headache, identification of poor postures and assessing muscle strength.

Physiotherapy treatment will help by:

- **Restoring muscle function and coordination**
- **Joint and soft tissue mobilisation techniques**
- **Postural cues including postural taping**
- **Reviewing work, sport and lifestyle ergonomics**

Read over the page for a detailed case study. If you've ever had neck pain or frequent headaches, then this might help to understand the treatment process we can offer should the need arise in the future.

READ OVER THE PAGE →

Your Newsletter ... Your Choice

We aim to inform not offend and twice yearly we would like to send you informative health and fitness tips in the form of this mailed newsletter .

If you would prefer not to receive these, then please email info@forresthillphysio.co.nz with your full name and 'Unsubscribe' in the subject line.

Alternatively, if you would like to receive this by email then please email us with 'Email Newsletter' in subject line with your name too.

Thanks! While we enjoy helping you to help yourself to better health and fitness. we are happy to assist your recovery as required!



PILATES CLASS SCHEDULE for 2012

Mon	9.30am, 5.30pm
Tue	10.30am
Thu	9.30am, 12.30pm, 5.30pm
Sat	9.30am, 10.30am

- Some individual sessions are required before you join a class
- A Physiotherapy pre-screen appointment may be required
- Our instructors have over 30 years of combined Pilates teaching experience
- Full liaison with your Physiotherapist is assured



Cervicogenic Headache—a case study.....

Mrs L is a 42 year old female who has worked in office administration over the last 20 years. Mrs L has suffered with intermittent headaches over this time. She has been at her current job for 2 years, and had noticed that her headaches had become more intense and frequent since she started this job, which includes more data entry and answering phones. Mrs L recalls being involved in a motor vehicle accident at age 17, and remembers having some mild whiplash symptoms that resolved over the next few weeks.

Mrs L's headaches are always right sided. She notes that they can start behind the right eye or forehead. Mrs L also feels that her neck is very stiff and painful, particularly on the right side, underneath the skull. She finds it very difficult to get comfortable at night and will often discard her pillow and can't sleep on her stomach. Mrs L will often wake with a headache and stiff neck in the morning. Mrs L has varying severity of headache or neck pain on most days. She is worse when she has to stand to prepare a meal, sit at the computer for over 10 minutes or vacuum. Her worst pain is holding the phone between her

right ear and shoulder when she is talking. Mrs L was taking both ibuprofen and panadol multiple times daily and used her wheat bag often to relieve her symptoms.



Mrs L sat with an excessive 'chin poked' posture. Her right shoulder was more elevated and rounded than on the left. She had great difficulty turning her head to the left and side bending her head to the right. Both these movements gave her a right sided headache. Mrs L's upper neck mobility was limited and pressure on her upper right neck reproduced her headache.

Initially, Mrs L was asked to make some changes to the layout of her work station including keyboard and phone placement, as well as

computer screen height to suit her. Mrs L also organised a replacement chair with more lumbar support. Physiotherapy treatment included soft tissue and joint mobilisation and manipulation, as well as a progressive neck stabilisation programme to restore her deep neck flexor muscle control and endurance. Mrs L started brisk walking for 20 minutes/day and was instructed on work-based exercises to do regularly to offload her neck.

Mrs L made good progress with physiotherapy. She had a reduced frequency and intensity of headache and neck symptoms. Mrs L has cut down her pain relief to once every few weeks. She has also improved her exercise tolerance and is walking up to 45 minutes during the week. Mrs L has also now started clinical pilates, monitored by a physiotherapist, which has been catered to her specific requirements.

“Physical fitness is the first requisite of happiness”

Joseph H. Pilates

“Return to Life” - 1945

The “Overhead Reach” a top tip for 2012 ! ...a pause/recovery tool...

We need to look after our spines on a continual day to day basis if our later years are to be comfortable and “relatively” pain free.

Sitting or bending for prolonged periods of time can often be problematic for our spines, especially if our posture and position is not perfect.

One solution is to stand often and simply reach to the sky. This very act has the remarkable effect of elongating your spine and countering the compressive forces of sitting or bending. For example, gardening or picking up the kids.

So, remember to reach upwards whenever you can, especially after sitting at work, at the movies and those long car or plane trips. Take breaks wherever and whenever you can.

Believe us, this one works really well if you do it often. Don't forget too any exercises that your Physiotherapist has taught you. As much as we like to see you, most of us live busy lives, so prevention is a better goal.

If standing up really is impossible, then try over the back of a chair instead, as shown.

