

Massage Therapy for Tension Headaches



Tension-type headaches are among the most common reasons for a patient to consult a physician. Tension-type headaches (TTH) are common, with a lifetime prevalence in the general population ranging **between 30% and 78% in different studies.**

[(2007) The global burden of headache: a documentation of headache prevalence and disability worldwide. *Cephalalgia* 27:193-210]

Massage is considered effective for use on tension type headaches, including improving mood and pain sensitivity.

[Short-term effects of manual therapy on heart rate variability, mood state, and pressure pain sensitivity in patients with chronic tension-type headache: a pilot study.

[*Journal of Manipulative Physio Therapy* 2009 Sep. 32(7):527-35]

Using a specific protocol and techniques outlined in the *Journal for Public Health*, a skilled massage therapist can reduce not only the frequency, but also the duration of chronic headaches.

Post hoc analysis confirmed that **headache frequency was significantly lower** during the weeks of massage treatment (weeks 5–8) than during the baseline weeks (weeks 1–4).

A **reduction in number of headaches per week was noted** for all subjects within the first week of massage treatment.

Additionally, the mean **number of headaches per week was reduced from 6.8 during baseline to 2.0** during the treatment period.

[*American Journal of Public Health*, 2002 October; 92(10): 1657–1661]

Number of Headaches Per Week Reduced

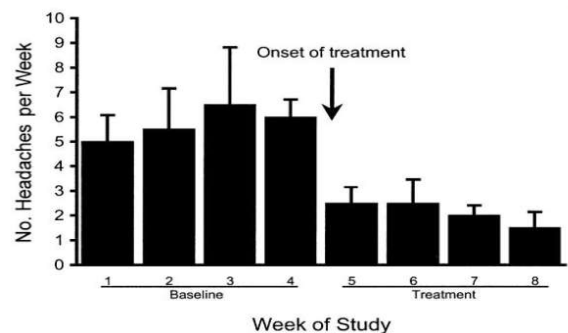


FIGURE 1

—Mean number of headaches per week experienced during baseline and during massage treatment.