

Do you want to get rid of migraine?

By Serge Michaelson

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Note to readers

This publication contains the opinion and ideas of the author. It is intended to provide helpful information on his personal experience in curing the migraine disease.

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I

There seems to be nobody in the world who doesn't know what a headache is. This ailment is so widespread that people often don't go to a physician but use analgesics which can be bought from a pharmacist without a prescription. There may be many reasons for the headache: stress, insomnia, bad weather, and many others. Many types of headache are treatable: it is often sufficient to take an analgesic pill and the headache is over. Physicians and pharmacists continue to develop new and more efficient medicines to treat this "common" illness.

However, there are some types of headaches which are very resistant to treatment. One of the most terrible and painful of them is migraine. This disease is known to mankind since ancient times and a very large part of the world population suffers from it. Migraine

is manifested in the form of sporadic attacks of severe headache accompanied by nausea and vomiting. Migraine attacks can last from several hours to two or three days, their frequency may vary amongst different people from several times a year to several times a month. Migraine occurs at ages of 15-20 to 60-70 years, often suffered by people completely healthy in all other respects. Women suffer from migraines two to three times more often than men. According to the World Health Organization, about 15 percent of the adult population more or less regularly experiences migraine attacks. Since the world population is about seven billion people, this means that more than one billion of them suffer from migraine and need an efficient way to treat it!

In the days when someone suffers from a migraine attack, he or she almost completely falls out of normal life: working and family plans break down, business meetings are canceled. The most annoying thing is that people suffering from this disease are often quite healthy and active in all other respects. You can be quite successful and a valuable employee at your company, but if you have to go on sick leave many times a

year due to such attacks, your employer will most likely begin to think about terminating your employment contract. If you are a businessperson and have good relationships with your partners, they also may dislike it if you often cancel long-planned meetings because of your migraine, and may begin to think whether it is worth continuing to deal with you. Migraine attacks may also negatively influence the relationship with your family.

Since migraine often torments young and active people, it can negatively affect or even destroy their career. I am acquainted with doctors, who were forced to cancel the reception of patients because of their attacks, self-employed persons who closed their shops in time of illness, actors and lecturers who had to cancel their concerts and speeches before a large audience.

Needless to say how important it is to find effective means to fight the disease. Unfortunately, such means are currently either not available or very expensive, so that each patient has to deal with migraine alone, and simply to endure excruciating pain during attacks. Doc-

tors' recommendations are generally not effective. Among them, for example, advice to avoid factors that fuel the disease. But first, these factors are themselves not very well known and often different for different people. And how can a modern, actively working person strictly follow such recommendations as to sleep and eat every day at the same time, avoid stress, physical and mental fatigue, and so on? This advice may be good for a patient lying in a coma, but not for an active modern person! Also recommended are fresh air, rest, silence and dim lighting, low physical and mental activity, but again, these are good tips which help very seldom. Drug treatments are also not very effective and increase the risk of side effects associated with overdose. In addition, really effective drugs are very expensive. In some American university hospitals migraine treatment by surgery is practiced¹. Of course, this operation costs a lot of money and not so many people can afford it. The folk remedies for migraine are also unproductive.

¹ Kung T.A., Guyuron B., Cederna P.S., Migraine surgery: a plastic surgery solution for refractory migraine headache, *Plast. Reconstr. Surg.* 2011 Jan; 127(1): 181-9.

Until recently, the author of this book also belonged to the billion people who sometimes suffered from migraine. My attacks were not very frequent - "only" three or four times a year, but they lasted many terrible hours, and those few days in the year turned into a living hell. My professional activity does not require a permanent presence in the office, therefore, as a rule, I have experienced the migraine attacks at home and they did not affect my work. But once I was invited to one of the universities in the city of D, to give a talk on the results of my research work (I am a physicist by profession). The journey was long, it took about five hours by train, and when I finally got a room in a hotel, I felt the approach of a headache. For a while I tried to fight with it with pills, but they did not help and soon I realized that this was the beginning of a migraine attack. It was about 8 p.m., my talk was set for 10 a.m. next morning. From my previous experience I knew what awaited me: it was to be twelve to fifteen hours of slowly and steadily increasing excruciating pain, until the terrible attacks of vomiting at the end of the process. I had to expect therefore, that by the beginning of my talk I would be, at best, completely exhausted after a sleepless night of pain, or at worst, just

at the peak of the attack. I did not want to cancel my talk in any case. The situation seemed hopeless. And then, in spite of quite a severe headache, I began to think.

By profession I am a research scientist. My research has nothing to do with medicine, chemistry or pharmacy. But the habit of asking questions "Why, how, what is the reason?" and to seek answers, of course belong to my profession. Therefore I began to think about the reason for my migraine attacks, why they occur in one way as opposed to in another way and how could I stop or prevent these attacks. After half an hour I had a *hypothesis*. I thought that if I carry out a certain procedure (which will be explained below) now at the initial stage of the attack, maybe I will be able to stop it. I tested my hypothesis and, oh wonder, I felt better! Half an hour later I could quietly fall asleep. Although my headache did not instantly disappear, I clearly felt that it began to subside. The next morning I woke up completely healthy and was able to successfully give my talk.

Later there was another case when a migraine attack caught me in a rather critical situation. My family and I were returning from a vacation, I was driving a car, and we had to return by a certain time. The way was not easy: the sun blinded my eyes, atmospheric pressure was falling (the next day there was a thunderstorm), the traffic was heavy, and driving the car required the highest concentration. As a result, I got a headache. This was again a migraine. To remain in service and to bring my family back home in good time, I remembered about my accidentally discovered method and applied it. It worked again! We were able to return from our trip safely and on time.

Later I began to apply my method not only in critical situations, but every time and quite deliberately. It has worked in all cases without exception! Moreover, each time I understood more and more of the mechanism of the migraine attacks and in the method of their prevention. Finally I was able to reduce my last "attack" down to about thirty minutes. I felt the occurrence of a tiny pain point inside my skull, applied my technique, lay down for 15-20 minutes and the pain

went away completely! Without my method, I would have suffered many long hours.

Finally I realized that I had discovered an extremely effective method of treating migraine and decided to write this little book. The method is very simple, everyone can easily use it not only at home but also in hotels and even en route, for example in a train or plane (that is, if you are *not* a driver; if you are driving a car, you will have to stop for a while to apply this method). This method is not related to any surgical treatment and does not use any chemicals. You won't need to swallow pounds of drugs that may have side effects. Using this method you won't destroy your health, you will only use the strength of your own body. And, last but not least, this method costs nothing! It's completely free; you won't pay a cent for it! The only thing that you will need to do is:

- (i) listen to your body and respond to signals that it sends to you: if you begin to feel a small but growing headache, do not try to convince yourself: "I will bear it, maybe, it will simply go away again!", but instead

- (ii) make a simple procedure that will take you two or three minutes; this procedure is a key point of my method; I will discuss it in detail later,
- (iii) lie down to rest for 15-20 minutes.

The sooner you move to step (ii), i.e. do not endure the pain and wait until it becomes unbearable; the sooner you stop the attack, the easier it will be.

Below I will explain why my method works and how I came to the idea that it should work. Read carefully and try to understand the main point. It is not simple to fight such a severe illness as migraine; it may be that your type of illness differs from mine, therefore be active in trying to solve *your* problem, listen to *your* body and modify my method, if necessary.

I will start with a description of my type of migraine. If your ailment has similar symptoms, I'm pretty sure that my method will help you too. If your symptoms are different, well, try to understand the essence of my method and to adapt it to *your* type of migraine. It may happen that the reasons for your migraine are the same but only the manifestations of the disease are

different. Listen to yourself, try to understand your disease, as I understood mine. I hope that my experience will help you to get rid of your migraine just as I was able to rid mine.

II

I am not a doctor, I have not studied all possible types of migraine and did not try to apply my method to all of them. I cannot therefore claim that my method will help everybody. But it helped me, therefore I will first describe the features of the type of disease for which my method turned out to be efficient.

At first, you notice almost nothing: Somewhere deep in the skull a little sore point appears, to which you pay almost no attention. But time goes by, and the pain is slowly but gradually increasing. You are still thinking that the pain will pass; you try to massage the neck or a sore spot, turn your head left, right, up or down, trying to find a more comfortable position. Sometimes you even succeed. But after a while you find that the pain has not disappeared but only intensified. You decide to take a painkiller and wait for the result. But

after fifteen - twenty minutes, when (as you know from your experience) the pain would have to be over, you discover that there is no improvement, and the pain has become even stronger. You take the second pill or even two pills at once. After another half hour or an hour, you see that these too, do not help. You try other means, for example, warm or cold water bottle on the forehead or back of the head, but they do not help. You try to get some fresh air, for example, going for a walk in the wood. Sometimes it helps, but often it does not. Sometimes you feel that your pain will be relieved if you eat something. But after eating, you experience nausea: Your body does not seem to accept food, even though sometimes you felt you needed to eat. All the above have been going on for several hours and you are already fully exhausted, struggling with your illness, but none of your attempts to somehow alleviate the suffering have helped.

If in addition you have to perform some work involving minimal physical efforts, such as driving a car or carrying a small bag or a backpack, your pain dramatically increases. Sometimes you feel that you have found a

unique position for your head, where your pain is not so intensive; you try to keep this position, but after a while you find that that the apparent relief has disappeared like fog under the sun.

The pain increases very slowly, but continuously. You feel as if someone extremely cruel has grabbed your nerves in the skull in a ruthless iron hand, wrapped them on a bolt and slowly, slowly, slowly twists them, no end in sight to this terrible torture.

Once I read that the doctors of an American university put forward a hypothesis that migraine is caused by clamping the so-called trigeminal nerve in our skull, by the spasm of muscles around it (see footnote ¹ above). The trigeminal nerve is one of the key nerves in the nervous system of our brain. If it is really clamped by surrounding muscles, it would certainly lead to the sensations described above. When I learned about this hypothesis, I immediately realized that their assumption is absolutely correct. When you are experiencing a very slowly but steadily growing headache over many agonizing hours, it really can be the result of the clamping of the trigeminal nerve (or another im-

portant nerve in our head) by the surrounding muscles. Listen to yourself during your migraine attacks. If you also feel that some nerves in your head are "captured" and slowly "stretched", you're lucky (!), because my method helps exactly in such cases!

The doctors of the above-mentioned American university suggested treating migraine in such cases through surgery. They undercut those muscles in the head which cause the tension of the trigeminal nerve, which thus incurs the patient's suffering. This surgery is probably very expensive and not available to everybody. In addition, this method of migraine treatment seems to me too "brutal". Although during the migraine attack the headache is very strong, I would probably not allow the surgeon to cut muscles in my own brain in order to get rid of it. Who can foresee the consequences of such an operation? The muscles which will be cut probably perform some other important functions! Therefore, though I completely agree with these doctors on the reason of migraine - the clamp of the trigeminal (or maybe some other) nerve - I do not think their method of treatment is the

ideal solution. You will see that the method that I suggest is much more gentle and natural.

The further course of the migraine attack is similar to that already described: the pain continues to increase slowly and monotonically and becomes so intolerable, that you begin to think "it might be better to cut off this head!" Increasingly you feel nausea, but you try to suppress it. Your headache is so strong that you try to avoid the slightest movement of the head, not just the strongest spasms of the whole body which accompany vomiting. Finally, the nausea becomes unavoidable and you begin to vomit. During the vomiting, because of the accompanying body spasms you also feel the peak pulses of extremely severe pain. After this terrible process you get into bed and try to recover from it. Fortunately, after the bout of vomiting your headache begins to slowly subside. After long suffering you finally manage to fall asleep. Nausea does not torment you anymore. Waking up after a few hours of sleep, you discover that the headache is finally gone, and you feel pretty well, though completely exhausted after many

hours of struggle with pain. Migraine attack finally ended.

The entire process described above generally lasts from a few hours to two or three days as experienced by different people.

My migraine attacks happened like this. If your attacks have the same or a similar form, I believe that my method will help you because it helped me! The most important migraine symptoms, by which my method works, are

- (i) the feeling of a trapped and increasingly stretched nerve, slowly and steadily increasing pain,
- (ii) nausea, although it sometimes seems that the pain will ease by eating something,
- (iii) severe vomiting, after which the attack gradually comes to an end.

If you have the same symptoms, read further!