

# Dr. Colin Gage

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*"treating the cause of your problem, not just the symptoms"*

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## The Basics on Tension Headaches

Tension-type" headaches, or tension headaches, are the most common type of headache. About 30% to 80% of adults occasionally experience this kind of headache. Tension headaches are more common among women than men. These headaches are sometimes also called stress headaches, muscle contraction headaches, daily headaches, or chronic non-progressive headaches.

There is no single cause for tension headaches. This type of headache is not an inherited trait that runs in families. In most people, tension headaches are caused by irritated joints and tightened muscles in the back of the neck and scalp. Tension headaches can also be triggered by some type of physical or emotional stress. The most common sources of emotional stress include family, social relationships, friends, work and school. Physical forms of stress include heavy or repetitive lifting and poor posture.

In mild to moderate tension headaches, there is a constant, band-like pain or pressure around the head and neck that lasts from 30 minutes to all day. Tension headaches tend to be moderate or mild and are rarely severe. Unlike migraines they are not usually unilateral, throbbing or associated with light and sound sensitivity or nausea and vomiting. Other features of tension headaches may include:

- Headache upon awakening
- General muscle aches
- Difficulty falling asleep and staying asleep
- Chronic fatigue
- Irritability
- Disturbed concentration
- Mild sensitivity to light or noise
- Occasional dizziness

How do you get rid of these tension headaches? I always say that one should treat the "cause" of the problem, not just the "symptoms". Thus, as a chiropractor, I believe that it is my job to identify and correct the problems in the joints and muscles of the neck that are likely causing the headache symptoms in the first place. If your neck is the primary cause of your headaches, then it can be usually be corrected by restoring the proper functioning of cervical joints and relieving the tension in the muscles. If you want to rid yourself of these headaches over the long term, then regular stretching and exercise is mandatory. As well, maintaining good posture is key. If you have any questions in regards to tension headaches, feel free to call my office directly.