The background features a gradient from light green at the top to dark green at the bottom, overlaid with intricate, black, organic, and somewhat chaotic line patterns that resemble tangled fibers or neural pathways.

# Myofascial Exercises

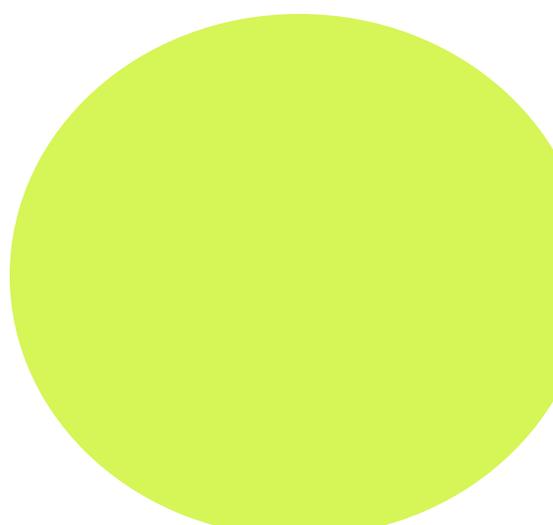
Headaches & Migraines

Dr. Alex Jimenez D.C.

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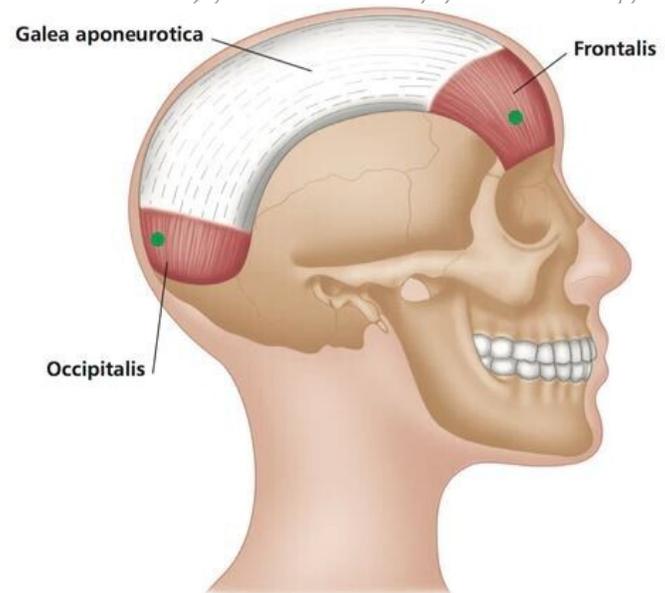


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## What Is The Occipitofrontalis Muscle?

Have you been experiencing unexplainable headaches that seem to affect your daily life? Do you feel muscle tension in your head or neck? Or do certain areas in your upper body seem tender to the touch? Many individuals suffer from headaches, and it could be due to myofascial trigger pain associated with the occipitofrontalis muscle. The occipitofrontalis muscle surprisingly plays an important part in the facial muscles. The occipitofrontalis muscle is the only muscle that can raise eyebrows, convey emotions, and provide non-verbal communication as part of its functionality to the head. The occipitofrontalis muscle has two different sections in the head that play different roles. Studies reveal that the occipital and frontal bellies have other actions but work together despite being connected to the galea aponeurotica. However, like all muscles in different body sections, various factors can affect the muscles to become tender and form multiple symptoms associated with pain.



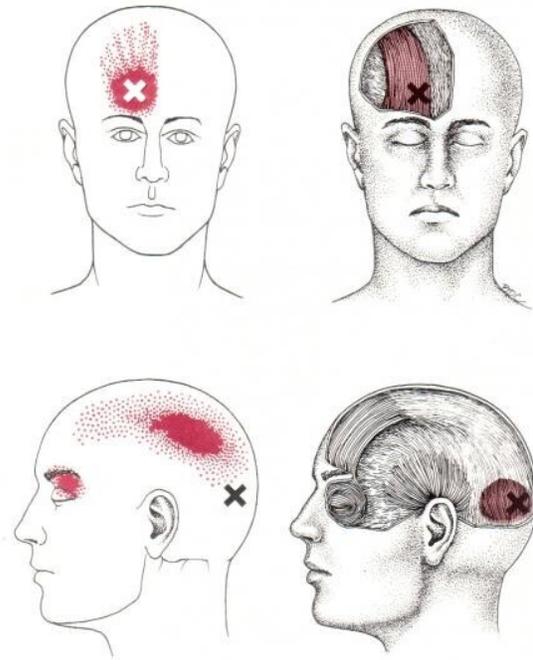
When various factors begin to affect the occipitofrontalis muscle, it could potentially be at risk of developing myofascial trigger pain associated with headaches in the muscle. Studies reveal that myofascial trigger pain is a musculoskeletal disorder associated with muscle pain and tenderness that can be identified as latent or active. When the occipitofrontalis is affected by myofascial pain, it could potentially lead to tension-type headaches as a symptom.

## Neck Stretch 1

Hello and welcome to this video in which I'm going to share some myofascial exercises that can help with headaches and migraines. There are many different types of headaches that people can suffer from. Very typically, they can be tension headaches, cluster headaches, new daily persistent headaches, or migraines, which are in themselves a form of headache. The symptoms you can suffer from and the causes can vary widely. However, for many people, the main cause of their symptoms is tension in the body's soft tissues, which includes the muscles and the fascia (the main connective tissue that wraps around and through everything else.) And if your fascia becomes tight, that can create symptoms of imbalance, tension, and headaches, typically around the neck, upper back, shoulders, and chest. These exercises that we're going to do help to start to release some of the restrictions in the area and help alleviate some of your symptoms. The first exercise we're going to do is the neck stretch. So make sure that your arms are hanging by your sides nice and heavy, and keep your shoulders heavy and relaxed. You can do this exercise in a seated or standing position, whichever's more comfortable for you.

So when you start this exercise, it can be a good idea to look in a mirror first because then you can check that your shoulders are relaxed and level. Many people start to tip their shoulders up as they go into the stretch, which obviously will reduce the effectiveness of the stretch. Keeping your shoulders nice and relaxed means that your body can start to release and let go of restrictions more easily. So when you go into the stretch, you only go as far as it feels comfortable. As soon as you begin to feel any limitations in the tissues, then you wait at that point. Forcing a stretch will only cause resistance in your body, and with these stretches, you are encouraging the fascia to start to release and let go. Fascia is a very slow-releasing tissue, so you can be in one stretch for a couple of minutes, allowing the fascia to release and let go. As the tissue releases more, you can deepen the stretch. And if you want to create a deeper stretch again, then place your hand on top of your head so I'm not pulling; I'm just allowing the weight of my arm to create a deeper stretch into my neck.

So you may feel this stretch more in your neck or your head, or some of you might feel it more in your shoulder or your arm or somewhere else in your body. So wherever you're feeling it, that's fine; that's right for you. And allow time to feel that stretch and release spreading through your body. So as long as you're here for at least a couple of minutes, the fascia will start to release and let go. And then we're going to come out of the stretch, and you can give your shoulders a little roll and maybe turn your head from side to side to allow the effects of the stretch to assimilate into your body. And then we're going to do the same stretch on the other side. So again, tip your head over to the side, so your ear travels towards your shoulder. Only go as far as it is comfortable and notice the difference between the two sides. You may see that one side of the neck is tighter than the other side, and it may not be the side on which you have more pain or issues because your body can often compensate where there's one-sided pain.

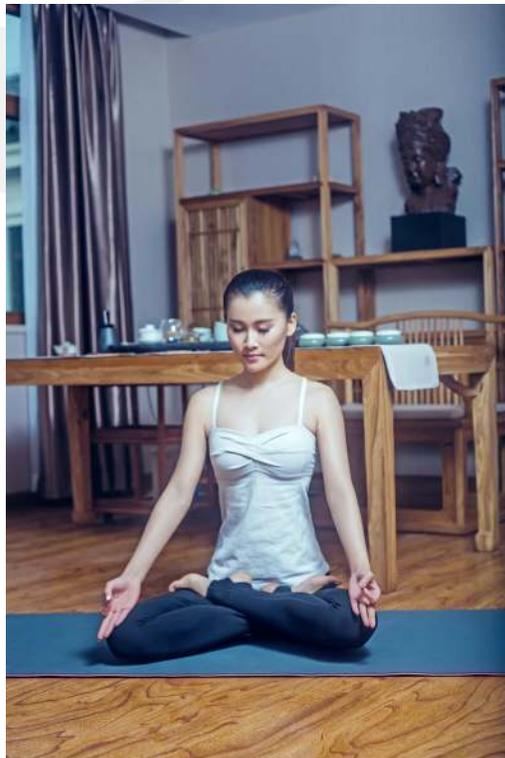


So by keeping your shoulders and arms nice, relaxed, and heavy, and allow time for the fascia to release and let go. And as you start to feel more release, you can deepen the stretch by tipping your head more over to the side. So this exercise releases the muscles and the tissues in the side of your neck, shoulder, and upper back; all of these can contribute to the tension you feel in your head. So again, as long as you're in the stretch for at least a couple of minutes, the tissues will start to release and let go. And so we're going to come out of the stretch again, give your shoulders a little roll, turn your head from side to side. And the great thing with fascial exercises is that you only do each exercise once. It's one long progressive stretch instead of a series of shorter muscle stretches.

## Neck Stretch 2

The next stretch we're going to do is also for the neck. And for this one, we're going to tip our head down so that our nose is pointing down towards the floor and then turn our head so that our nose is pointing towards your armpit. So just let your head hang heavy here. And again, make sure that your arms and shoulders are nice and relaxed, allowing the weight of your head to create a nice stretch into the back of your neck. So the back of the neck can get very tense. And it's one of the major areas contributing to headaches and migraines. And particularly if you have developed headaches due to an injury, so perhaps a whiplash injury or something similar where your neck has been affected, these stretches can help release some tissue tension and help with headache symptoms. So as you're here, if you'd like to deepen the stretch, you can bring your hand up and place it on your head. So the hand is placed on the top of the head, and the arm's weight creates a deeper stretch into the back of the neck. And if I'm stretching with my head turned to the left, I'm going to feel the stretch into the right side of the back of my neck and my shoulder. So you're creating a stretch into the opposite side. You may feel symptoms or release elsewhere while doing this stretch, which is also fine. Everybody is different. And so where you feel releases are fine for you. So we'll come out of this stretch, bringing your head back to center again, rolling your shoulders, and just turning your head from side to side. And then we're going to do the same stretch on the other side. So again, drop your head down. So your nose is pointing towards the floor.

Turn your head so your nose is pointing towards your other armpit, and let your head hang heavy, keeping your arms and shoulders nice and heavy too, and just allowing the weight of your head to create the stretch. So with fascial stretches, never force the stretch, and never take the stretch into pain. You only go as far as you are comfortable for your body on that day. And you may find from day to day that your body changes. And some days, you find stretches easy, and other days it may be a bit more difficult. But that's all okay because your body will change. And if you do fascial exercises regularly, you'll find that your body will start to respond progressively by releasing more of the tension. Again, ensure that you stay in each stretch for a couple of minutes to allow the fascia to release and let go. And if you want to deepen this stretch, you can bring your hand up and place it on your head and allow the weight of your arm to create a deeper stretch going down into the back of your neck. And noticing how things feel, where you feel releases, how your head feels, and then we're going to come out of the stretch, bring our head back to center, do little shoulder rolls, and turn our head from side to side.



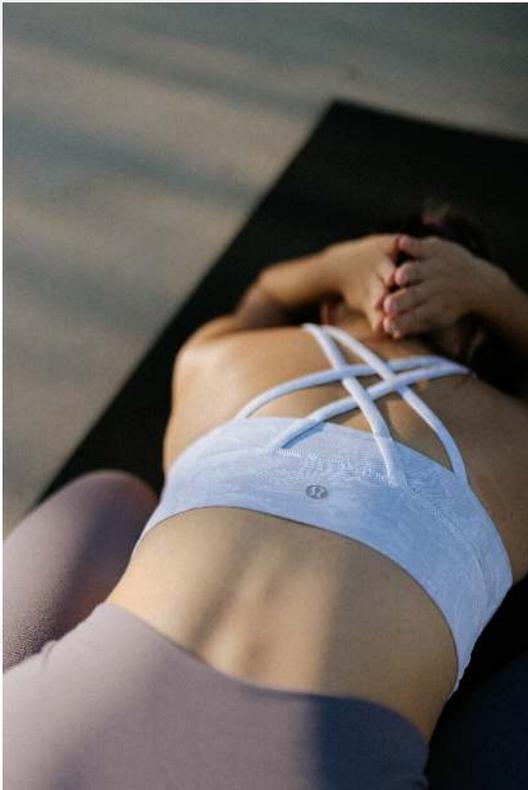
## Balls On Side Of The Neck

In this exercise, we will use a myofascial ball like this to work on the side of our neck. So myofascial balls are very helpful because they are inflatable, about 10 centimeters in diameter, and can give a nice diffuse pressure to the soft tissues. And this can help to encourage the fascia to release and let go. So for this exercise, I'm going to place the ball on the side of my neck so that the ball is just below my ear, and I'm going to lie on my side on the floor. In this exercise, it is a good idea to use either a yoga block or a small pillow to put under the top of your head so that it feels comfortable. And it's also a good idea to pull your bottom arm forwards so that your shoulder is out of the way. This means that there is pressure on the ball on the side of my neck, and I'm just going to allow my body to relax around the ball, waiting for a sense of the tissues softening and letting go.

If you find lying on the floor uncomfortably, you can do this on your bed. The main thing with fascial exercises is always to make sure that you feel comfortable so that your body can actually relax onto the ball. So we're going to be here for a couple of minutes, which allows time for the fascia to start to release and let go. And notice any sensations that you may feel. The muscles in this area are on the side of the neck, and also in this area are some nerves that go down into your arm. Sometimes, some people feel sensations in their arms, which is absolutely fine. Or you may notice sensations coming up into your head or around your shoulders. So whatever you're feeling is fine; allow time for your body to release and let go. So again, use a yoga block or a small pillow to support the top of your head and bring your bottom arm forward so that your shoulder is out of the way. And then we're going to come out of this exercise and do the same on the other side.

And this means that you can feel some pressure from the ball on the side of your neck. So as with all fascial exercises, you only need to do the exercise once on each side, but stay here for a couple of minutes to allow time for the tissues to start to release and let go. And just noticing what you feel here. So by working here on the sides of your neck, you're helping to create more movement in this area. Sometimes when you have headaches or migraines, everything becomes very tense around your neck and shoulders. And a lot of people say that they find it quite difficult to turn their head or to move their head, and certain movements can trigger headaches or make them feel worse. Many muscles and tissues around the side of your neck help you to turn and tilt your head. So by helping to loosen these, you're creating a better range of movement, which will feel more comfortable but also can help alleviate some of your symptoms and allow yourself to relax around the ball, waiting for a sense of things starting to soften and let go. And so once we've been here for at least a few minutes, we can come out of this exercise.

## Balls On Back Of The Neck



In this exercise, we will use two myofascial balls together and place them under the back of the neck. To make this easy, then it is a good idea to place the balls into a bag or a sock so that they stay together when you put pressure on them. I'm going to lie on my back with the two balls under my neck again; I have a small yoga block here that I am using as a pillow for the top of my head. So lying on your back, you can place the two balls under your neck with one ball on either side of the spine in your neck. Having the balls on the back of your neck means it is comfortable. You're not putting pressure on the spine, but you are putting pressure on the soft tissues, the muscles, and the fascia in the back of your neck. So at home, you can do this on the floor like I'm doing, or on your bed, whichever is more comfortable for you. You can have your knees bent or let your legs straighten out. So the area in the back of your neck is important because the muscles and tissues travel up your back connecting your pelvis and to your head.

And here, in the back of your neck, many tissues connect to the base of your skull. So the tension that you feel in headaches or the pain you can get can be from stress in the tissues at the back of your neck. This is a lovely relaxing exercise to do. Not only can it help to alleviate pain and other symptoms, but it also helps to relax your nervous system. And the more relaxed your nervous system is, the less pain and tension you will feel. This exercise is a good one to do at the end of the day, particularly if you've got a headache in the evening. And doing this can help to loosen the tissues, and that can help to alleviate your headache, particularly before you go to bed. And again, as long as you're here for at least a couple of minutes, it will allow time for the tissues to start to release, relax, and let go. So in this video, I've shown you a few myofascial exercises that can help with headaches and migraines. We have many other short videos on our YouTube channel, which all focus on different areas of the body and pain conditions. So why not visit our YouTube channel and look at some of our videos?

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