

Intermediate 3
Unit 2: Reading
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Headache Away

When you have a headache, do you rush to your medicine cabinet or to the drugstore for a pain reliever? If so, you're not alone. People in the United States spend over \$2 billion a year on nonprescription pain relievers. Although effective, these pain relievers are not without problems. First of all, which should you choose? There are over 100 brands, and most come in various forms (for example, tablets or capsules) and various strengths (such as regular and extra strength). Choosing a pain reliever can be enough to make anyone's headache worse! Second, the 100-plus brands fall into three types of pain relievers — aspirin, acetaminophen, and ibuprofen — and each of these can have serious side effects. Aspirin and ibuprofen can cause stomach irritation and gastrointestinal bleeding; acetaminophen can cause liver damage in some people.

medicine cabinet = medicine chest = a small cabinet, usually with a mirror on the front, that is attached to the wall in a bathroom

drugstore = a shop where you can buy medicines, make-up, and other things such as chocolate

pharmacy = a shop or part of a shop in which medicines are prepared and sold

pain-reliever = painkiller = a sort of medicine that reduces pain

relieve (v.) = to reduce pain

prescription (n.) = a piece of paper on which a doctor writes the details of the medicine or drugs that someone needs

nonprescription medicine = over-the-counter drug = OTC drugs

over = more than

various = different

strength = how strong something is

fall into = belong to

acetaminophen /əˌsiː.təˈmɪn.ə.fen/ (American) = paracetamol /ˌpær.əˈsiː.tə.mɒl/ (British)

ibuprofen /ˌaɪ.bjuːˈprɒʊ.fen/ = a drug used to reduce pain and swelling

side effect = an unpleasant effect of a drug, medical treatment, or vaccine that happens in addition to the main intended effect

irritation = feeling of pain, annoyance

gastrointestinal = related to the digestive system of the body

intestine = (either of the two parts of) a long tube through which food travels from the stomach and out of the body while it is being digested

liver = a large organ in the body that cleans the blood and produces bile, or this organ from an animal used as meat

So, next time you have a headache, instead of rushing to the drugstore, you might want to try one of these natural headache remedies:

rush = go quickly

1. Eat something soon. Preferably, eat something high in protein, a substance necessary for growth. The "hungry headache", caused by a drop in the blood-sugar supply, can be a real problem for people not eating enough at mealtimes. Why protein? Because it rebuilds your blood-sugar supply little by little. Sugary foods cause the blood sugar to go up rapidly and then drop again just as fast.

preferably = if possible

protein /'prɒʊ.ti:n/ = one of the many substances found in food such as meat, cheese, fish, or eggs, that is necessary for the body to grow and be strong

substance = material

drop = sudden decrease

supply = an amount of something that is available for use

mealtime = the time when you eat a meal

rebuild = increase, develop, build again

rapidly = fast

2. Wash it away. "At the first sign of headache pain, get in the shower," advises Dr. Augustus S. Rose of the UCLA (University of California at Los Angeles) School of Medicine. First, take a hot shower even if the pain gets worse. This will make the blood vessels open wide. Follow it immediately with a cold shower. Stay in until you shiver. Repeat this procedure if necessary. This process works well for a migraine headache. In a migraine headache, the blood vessels of the head first contract then dilate and press against the nerves. This pressure causes pain. Cold water makes the blood vessels contract, which eases this pressure on the nerves.

school of medicine = faculty of medicine

blood vessels = the tubes inside the body that carry blood

- **artery** = one of the thick tubes that carry blood from the heart to other parts of the body
- **vein** = a tube that carries blood to the heart from the other parts of the body

- capillary = a very thin tube, especially one of the smaller tubes that carry blood around the body

shiver = tremble

procedure = method, course of action

process UK /'prəʊ.ses/ US /'prɑː.ses/ = a series of actions that you take in order to achieve a result

contract = shorten

dilate = open up, expand

ease = reduce, decrease

nerve = a group of long, thin fibers (= structures like threads) that carry information or instructions between the brain and other parts of the body

3. Think it away. Sit down or lie down and close your eyes. Imagine that it is summer and you are on the beach. An ocean breeze cools your face and your hands and arms grow warmer and warmer in the hot sun. Your hands are really soaking up the sun. They become hot to the touch. Minutes pass, and when you open your eyes, you are left with very warm hands... and no headache. Thinking warmth into your hands sends blood toward them and away from the head.

breeze = gentle wind

soak up = absorb

4. Massage it out. Get to your head through your feet. Massaging the lower part of your big toe and the area under all your toes will lessen tension in the neck. This tension can often cause a headache.

massage (v.) UK /'mæs.ɑːʒ/ US /mə'sɑːʒ/ = to rub and press someone's body with regular repeated movements, in order to relax them or to reduce stiffness or pain in the joints (= places where two bones are connected) or muscles:

Would you massage my shoulders?

massage (n.) = the activity of rubbing or pressing parts of someone's body in order to make them relax or to stop their muscles hurting

through = using

toe = any of the five separate parts at the end of the foot

lessen = reduce, decrease

tension = tightness

5. Press it away. Some headaches can be cured by a sensitive finger-pressure massage. The massage should be given on sensitive "trigger" points. There are three pairs of points: one at each temple, one under each shoulder blade, and a pair

at the back of the neck. Press each point for 15 to 30 seconds at a time. Remember to press both points in a pair at the same time, not just one side. Doing this will help the body's natural painkillers start working. If you are alone, press the thumb of one hand against the tender spot in the "V" formed by the thumb and forefinger of the other hand.

cure = treat

sensitive ≠ insensitive

trigger _(n.) = start, activation

temple = the flat area on each side of your head in front of the top of your ear

at a time = separately, in sequence

thumb = the short, thick finger on the side of your hand that makes it possible to hold and pick things up easily

forefinger = index finger

tender = delicate, sensitive

6. Brush it away. “Find a hairbrush with fairly stiff natural bristles,” says biophysicist Harry C. Ehrmantraut¹. Then use the following procedure, first on one side of your head and then on the other: Starting a little above your temple, just above your eyebrow, brush your hair in small circles. Move the brush first up and then back before moving it down and forward to complete your circle. This way the upper part of the circle goes toward the back of the head. Then brush down to the base of your skull. After you repeat this procedure on the other side of your head, brush the hair in the center of your scalp, first on the right and then on the left. Make small circles as you start at the top of your head and move down toward the base of your skull. Brushing stimulates the skin and the tissues underneath, so blood can flow more easily and more oxygen can reach the brain. Always see a doctor for continuous or recurring head pain.

stiff = not soft

biophysics = biology + physics

biophysicist = an expert in biophysics

base = the lowest part

skull = the bone that protects our brain

scalp = the skin on your head

stimulate = provoke = to cause part of the body to operate

¹ /'ɛr.mən.trəʊt/

tissue UK /'tɪʃ.u:/ /'tɪs.ju:/ US /'tɪʃ.u:/ /'tɪs.ju:/ = a group of connected cells in an animal or plant that are similar to each other, have the same purpose, and form the stated part of the animal or plant

recurring = frequent, continual, non-stop

Full Text:

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Main Ideas:

One way to get rid of a headache is taking a pain-reliever.

Americans buy more than 2 billion dollars of nonprescription pain-relievers.

There are two problems with pain-relievers:

² /'er.mən.traut/

- Choosing the appropriate pain-reliever is difficult because there are more than 100 brands in different forms and various strengths.
- Pain-relievers have side effects: Aspirin and Ibuprofen can cause stomach irritation and gastrointestinal bleeding. Acetaminophen may cause liver damage.

There are also natural home remedies for a headache:

- **Eating something soon:** sometimes a headache is because of a drop in the blood-sugar supply of our body. Eating something high in protein is better than eating sugary foods because protein increases the blood-sugar supply little by little.
- **Taking a shower:** Take a hot shower, then a cold shower (if necessary several times). This is good for a migraine headache.
- **Thinking the headache away:** Imagine lying on a beach on a breezy sunny day. The breeze cools your face and the sun heats your hands.
- **Massaging:** Massaging the toes will reduce the tension in the neck which is the cause of some headaches.
- **Pressing the sensitive trigger points:** Press the pair of points at each temple, under each shoulder blade and at the back of the neck for 15 to 30 seconds.
- **Brushing the head in circles:** Brushing the head in circles stimulates the skin of our head and the tissues under it. Therefore, blood can flow more easily and our brain will receive more oxygen.

Sample Summary:

People in the U.S. spend a lot on pain relievers for headaches, but choosing among the many options can be confusing. Aspirin, acetaminophen, and ibuprofen all have potential side effects. Instead, consider natural remedies like eating protein-rich food, taking alternating hot and cold showers, visualization techniques, foot massage, finger-pressure massage, and brushing your hair to improve blood flow. Always consult a doctor for persistent headaches.

Source:

[Intermediate 3 \(anglophone.ir\)](http://Intermediate3(anglophone.ir))