Behavioral Treatment Resources for Patients

Behavioral treatment is an essential and evidence-based component of your migraine treatment. Common treatments include cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), relaxation training and biofeedback. Below are resources you can access to learn more about behavioral therapies and what might be right for you.

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
As the name suggests, this short-term and goal-oriented psychotherapy uses strategies related to the mind, body and lifestyle to help manage migraine. You will learn ways to identify and overcome negative “self-talk” to improve your coping mechanisms. You will also learn to identify behaviors that may contribute to migraine, set up a structured plan to promote healthy lifestyle habits and learn ways to decrease physical distress that comes with having an attack.

Search for a CBT-trained therapist on the Psychology Today website using filters for CBT.
https://www.psychologytoday.com/us

Search for a CBT-trained therapist on the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies website.
https://www.abct.org
Relaxation Training
When you experience stress or fear, your nervous system automatically responds. This is also known as your “fight-or-flight” response. In relaxation training, you can learn a range of skills to help control your response to pain and stress. It’s important to practice these strategies daily and proactively to help your body more easily activate a “relaxation response” when a migraine attack does strike. Therapists often provide relaxation training as a part of treatment, and you may also access training material online or through phone applications.

Biofeedback
Through biofeedback, you can learn to control certain bodily functions that were normally thought to be involuntary, such as your heartbeat. During biofeedback, you’re hooked up to sensors to see the physiologic changes that happen during stress. (for example, increased muscle tension, increased heartbeat). The goal is then to learn relaxation techniques to modify or control those changes.

Meditation Focused
- MyLife Meditation Phone Application
- Calm Phone Application
- Smiling Mind Phone Application

Diaphragnostic Breathing
- BellyBio Interactive Breathing
  Phone Application
- Breathe2Relax Phone Application

Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation
  Training Video
  https://www.youtube.com/
  watch?v=ihO02wUzgkc

Guided Imagery
- Guided Imagery Video
  https://www.youtube.com/
  watch?v=pi2UCByfiXQ
- Guided Imagery Audio Files
  http://www.dawnbuse.com/relaxation/

Additional Resources
Mindfulness for Teens (Guided meditations)
https://mindfulnessforteens.com

UCLA Mindfulness Awareness Research Center (Guided Meditations in English and Spanish)
https://www.uclahealth.org/marc/mindful-meditations

For more information on migraine and other headache disorders, visit AHS’ resources hub. If you are interested in women’s health and migraine management, be sure to sign up for our brand new presentation on A Woman’s Migraine Journey.

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