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## GOOD POSTURE CAN DIMINISH HEADACHES

Headaches can result from a variety of diseases or injuries. Though conventional medical teaching emphasizes the source of the headache as being inside the skull, headaches can be a result of jaw or neck injury or disease.

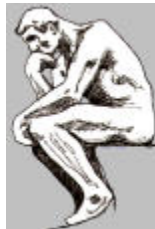
If you sit up straight, you will notice there is much space between the top row and bottom row of teeth. The rows of teeth should touch only briefly when vigorously chewing. Chronic clenching and grinding of the teeth can be a reason for chronic headaches, jaw pain and teeth problems.

Next, slouch and let your head go forward of the torso, and notice how the space between your teeth decreases. The forward head posture with teeth close together encourages tension in the chewing muscles, which instigates a headache.

As you are sitting reading this, consider these questions: Are your feet resting squarely on the floor? Is your lower back supported against the back of the chair? Are your shoulders relaxed? Is your head resting squarely over your torso?

A no answer to any of these questions suggests poor posture which could cause increased tension in the neck and shoulder muscles -- resulting in a headache.

Visualize the posture of the famous statue the Thinker by Auguste Rodin, with his head so far forward he needs his hand under his chin to hold his head up.



Visualize the posture of Mythical Greek God Atlas holding the world on his shoulder. His head is so far forward that he can carry the world on his shoulders. These are metaphoric examples of postures leading to headache.



A head held forward of the torso is analogous to carrying a bag of groceries at arm length away from the body instead of close to the chest. Carrying heavy groceries away from the body will cause the arms to ache and strain. Carrying the head forward of the torso will generally cause headaches. However, the head balanced vertically over the torso can effectively carry a great deal of stress.

Recognize that posture is related to body language. An erect posture can create an image of authority, control or being aloof. Forward head posture conveys pain, depression and submissiveness. Individuals who have long-standing postural dysfunction and headaches who correct their posture will present a new body image to others.

Changing well-established habitually poor posture is analogous to learning to write with the opposite hand. It requires practice and perseverance.

Poor posture is not the only cause of headaches, but it can be an important factor.

Improving the physical fitness of the shoulders and neck, and correcting posture, can diminish or eliminate headaches associated with poor posture.