



americanmigrainefoundation.org/resource-library/biofeedback-and-relaxation-training/

headaches.org/resources/biofeedback-training-techniques/

blogs.va.gov/VAntage/65445/biofeedback-useful-headaches-other-conditions/



Additional information on complementary headache management can be found at:

mirecc.va.gov/VISN16/complementary-and-alternative-approaches-to-treating-headaches.asp

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 SC MIRECC Website: mirecc.va.gov/vsn16/

Authors:

Joshua D. Hamer, PhD
 Paul Sloan, PhD
 Archana Purushotham, MD



BIOFEEDBACK FOR TREATING HEADACHES



Veteran Brochure

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HEADACHES

Many Veterans experience headaches. The two most common types of primary headaches are:



Migraine

- Neurological condition
- Moderate-to-severe pain level
- Pulsating/throbbing pain quality
- Nausea and vomiting
- Sensitivity to both light and sound

Tension-Type Headache

- Most common headache condition
- Mild-to-moderate pain level
- Tightening/pressing pain quality

IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO SHARE WITH YOUR CLINICIAN:

Think of answers to these questions so that your clinician may better understand your personal experience with headaches.



- In your culture, do headaches have another name?
- Why do you believe you have headaches?
- How do headaches affect the rest of your body?
- Do you think that the headaches will get better soon?
- What worries you most about your headaches?
- What problems have your headaches caused?
- What matters to you most for the treatment of your headaches?

ABOUT BIOFEEDBACK

- Biofeedback gives you skills to control how your body responds to stress.
- Biofeedback is effective for treating migraine and tension-type headaches.
- Biofeedback helps you learn how small changes in response to stress (like rate of breathing) change how the body feels stress.
- The goal of biofeedback is for you to learn to make bodily changes without needing the biofeedback equipment.

THE BIOFEEDBACK THERAPY PROCESS

- Biofeedback uses sensors that are placed on the body to detect small electrical signals from the muscles or skin.
- The sensors take the signals to a computer that either shows these signals to you as images or allows you to hear the signals.
- Seeing and hearing these signals helps you understand how much stress your body is carrying.
- The next step is learning how to make small changes in your bodily responses to decrease the impact of stress on your headaches.



BIOFEEDBACK TRAINING

- Breath retraining focuses on learning belly breathing (diaphragmatic breathing).
- Heart-rate variability training focuses on matching heart rate with breathing patterns.
- Galvanic skin response (GSR) measures the amount of sweat on the skin.
- Surface electromyography (sEMG) helps you reduce muscle tension.
- Thermal biofeedback helps you relax blood vessels to raise your skin temperature.

BIOFEEDBACK IMPACTS HEADACHES

- Shallow breathing increases anxiety, muscle tension, and makes headaches worse.
- Biofeedback improves the body's relaxation response to decrease anxiety, tension, and headache symptoms.

BIOFEEDBACK TREATMENT PLANS

- Each person learns biofeedback skills at their own pace.
- At least 4 sessions are needed to benefit from biofeedback.
- Most Veterans require 12 sessions or more.