

The first step in gaining control over the body's internal physiology is to gauge the body's current level of over-reaction. Finger temperature is a reliable indicator of how much stress the body is carrying. The average finger temperature is 85 degrees F. A finger temperature below 85 degrees F signifies that the body is holding a great deal of tension. Migraineurs typically have a finger temperature in the 70's, which reflects an over-extended nervous system.

- Warm the finger temperature to 96 degrees F.
- Breathe slowly, deeply, from the abdomen.
- Focus the mind on one scene or image.
- Listen to an audio tape to relax both body and mind.
- Practice this twice a day, for 10 minutes.



For many, biofeedback can be self-taught with the use of an audio cassette. If you are interested in this safe effective way to prevent many future migraine attacks, ask your doctor to assist you in getting started.

“Everything revolves around my migraines.”

Migraine Transformation

For many migraineurs, attacks of migraine occur infrequently and are responsive to medication. However, for a significant number of others, their headache patterns have changed over time. Well-defined attacks of migraine are interspersed with other less severe but more frequent headaches. Eventually, a person may begin to feel headache prone; when headaches are not present, they seem to be lurking just around the corner.

Finally, the different patterns of headaches merge into what has been described as a mixed headache pattern, where frequent low-grade headaches intermingle with bouts of severe migraines. This pattern, in turn, can evolve into another disabling headache pattern called a chronic daily headache, also identified as migraine transformation. Exactly why migraine transforms in some migraineurs is still a mystery.

“Nobody really understands.”

Even though transformation may be part of the natural evolution of migraines, certain catalysts also seem to play a role. **Facilitation or kindling** describes the impact of repeated attacks of migraine without adequate treatment. These uncontrolled attacks may actually prime the pump and lower the threshold for future migraines. In other words, uncontrolled migraine may pave the way for more migraine attacks in the future. Physicians in the Headache Network for Primary Care are committed to controlling acute migraine attacks.

Another important catalyst is trauma to the head or neck. Even minor trauma can cause microscopic disruption of information pathways to the nervous system and change intermittent migraines into chronic headaches. If a head or neck trauma seems to have worsened or initiated your migraines, discuss this association with your physician. There are treatments beyond medications, like physical therapy, that may be of benefit to you.

The third catalyst of migraine transformation is medications. Ironically, most of the medications that relieve an acute migraine attack may change an episodic migraine pattern into a daily headache when taken frequently over a period of time. If a person stops the medication suddenly, a severe headache called a “rebound headache” may erupt. Discuss all the medications that you are taking, especially over-the-counter medications, herbal products, and vitamins with your doctor.