

INTELLECTUAL WELLNESS

Intellectual wellness refers to your active participation in mentally-stimulating activities and seeking out new cultural and community experiences. Intellectual wellness can help you to live a full and exciting life, and allow you to feel better connected to your community and support network.



For people with migraine, having migraine-friendly activities and goals may help you to feel as though you are less limited by your disease.

Mindful Attention

Focusing intentionally on activities that promote intellectual wellness can serve as a distraction from certain symptoms and low-intensity pain.

The **capacity theory** suggests that each of us has only a certain amount of energy we can expend on processing internal and external stimuli. Pain or migraine symptoms are one set of stimuli, but an activity like playing chess or crafting requires your attention in a way that may prevent you from spending all of your attention focusing on your pain.

Researchers have shown that playing a challenging memory game not only distracted participants from giving conscious attention to their body's pain messages, but may have also released natural painkillers that blocked incoming pain signals from being processed.

The bottom line: The more you are able to focus on rewarding activities, the more difficult it is to focus on low- or moderate-intensity symptoms.

Try this: Make a list of activities you can engage in during low, moderate, and high levels of symptom intensity. The next time you feel pain, pick an activity on your list to see whether you can use mindful attention to temporarily reduce symptom intensity. This may be particularly helpful to try while you are waiting for acute medications, like triptans, to take effect.

Do migraine attacks cause cognitive impairment?

You may experience brain fog or difficulty thinking during a migraine attack. Try to engage in simple, non-stressful activities if you are experiencing mild cognitive impairment to avoid making symptoms worse. If you experience serious cognitive impairment, talk to your doctor immediately.

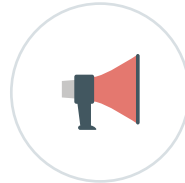
INTELLECTUAL WELLNESS (CONT.)

Do you want to be a migraine patient advocate? Speaking out about your diagnosis and how communities can better support people with migraine can be empowering and help you learn a variety of new skills.

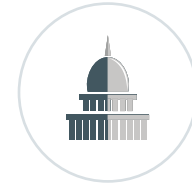
WHAT IS MIGRAINE ADVOCACY?



Promoting policies to improve the quality of life for people with migraine in your local schools, workplaces, and government.



Sharing your story with your community and loved ones, so they better understand the experiences of individuals with migraine.



Pushing for policy change at a national level to improve big-picture issues such as funding for research, paid leave, and health care training.

“I advocate because it is important to utilize my voice in a way where it will shine a light on everyone who lives with this disabling neurological disease. So many of us live in the dark, trying our best to navigate through life with an unpredictable and life-stealing illness. It is important that the world sees the true impact migraine has on the millions of people living with it, not only in this country but across the globe.”

Jaime Sanders, The Migraine Diva
[Practical Pain Management](#)

See more from migraine patient advocate **Jaime Sanders** at her website, themigrainediva.com.

Get involved

There are a variety of ways you can be a migraine patient advocate.



Keep it simple: Advocate from home by sharing your experiences on social media or even starting a blog. Check out [Move Against Migraine](#) to connect with others and share your story.



Go bigger: Participate in a community race or fundraiser to raise money for migraine research, such as with the organization [Miles for Migraine](#).



Or go bigger still: Check out [Headache on the Hill](#), an annual advocacy event in Washington, DC, organized by the Alliance for Headache Disorders Advocacy.

To find other migraine advocacy groups, try [CHAMP](#), the Coalition for Headache And Migraine Patients, which coordinates advocacy efforts across organizations. Take a look at their event schedule and don't forget to sign up for their newsletter. You can also look into the [National Headache Foundation](#) and [American Migraine Foundation](#).