

PHYSICAL WELLNESS

Physical wellness in the face of migraine-related pain and other physical symptoms may feel difficult to achieve. But focusing on the core tenets of physical wellness is possible, even when managing migraine.



You can think of these areas as the **SEEDS** to success in managing your physical wellness.

SLEEP

Up to ½ of migraine patients have poor sleep quality or a sleep disorder like insomnia, restless leg syndrome, or sleep apnea. Sleep deprivation is one factor that may trigger a migraine attack.



To achieve improved sleep quality:

- Go to bed and wake up at the same time daily.
- Establish a relaxing bedtime routine.
- Turn off electronic devices 30 minutes before bedtime.
- Use your bed only for sleep and sex.
- Reduce your fluid intake before bedtime.
- Avoid known sleep disrupters, including alcohol, caffeine, and tobacco.

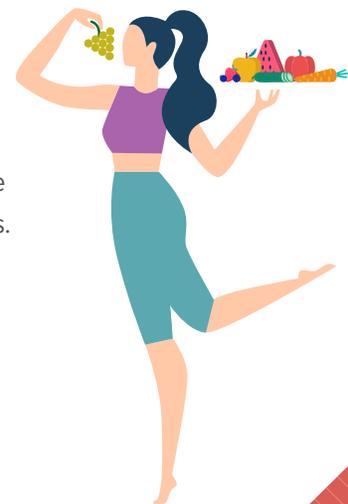
If sleep problems persist, talk to your physician. You can also consult a behavioral sleep medicine specialist trained to help people address insomnia and other sleep disorders. **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia (CBTi)** is an evidence-based method of improving symptoms of insomnia. Find a provider [here](#).

EAT

While some people find eliminating certain foods is helpful to manage attacks, there is no correct “migraine diet” that will work for every person with migraine. Rigid diets and one-size-fits-all elimination diets do not show much evidence in reducing headaches.

Eating habits that may help:

- Eat regularly. Do not skip meals.
- Talk to your doctor if you want to consider addressing migraine attacks with dietary supplements, vitamins, herbs, or nutraceuticals.
- Carry a snack and water with you when you leave the house. Ask your doctor if they are willing to provide a note to share with your employer or school if you face restrictions on carrying these items.



PHYSICAL WELLNESS (CONT.)

EXERCISE

Engaging in physical activity can be complicated for individuals with migraine, but research suggests that the benefits outweigh the risks.

Regular, moderate-intensity physical activity may reduce frequency and severity of headaches and improve quality of life. There is no data to suggest that regular exercise makes migraine worse. The best exercise is an activity that you enjoy and can tolerate. But it is important to keep moving!



To avoid migraine attacks during or after exercise:

- Practice good hydration.
- Eat a snack 30–60 minutes prior to exercise to prevent dips in blood sugar.
- Engage in a five-minute warm-up prior to any moderate or intense physical activity.
- Try low-impact activities such as swimming or water aerobics.

For patients with chronic illness, **activity pacing** can help prevent “overdoing it,” which may lead to a migraine attack. Interspersing periods of activity (e.g., cleaning, shopping, physical activity, even socializing) with periods of rest can help the body recover before moving on to the next endeavor.

DRINK

Your drink choice may also affect your migraine attacks. Drinks that are sugary, caffeinated, or alcoholic may provoke attacks or worsen symptoms.

It may be helpful to:

- Drink water throughout the day and avoid sugary drinks such as juice or soda.
- Keep caffeine use minimal, or consider avoiding it completely. Make changes slowly if you plan to reduce caffeine consumption.
- Consume alcohol in moderation.

Alcohol may trigger a migraine attack soon after consuming alcohol (within 30 minutes to 3 hours) or a delayed hangover-induced headache (typically the morning after drinking). Most people with migraine disease do not need to avoid alcohol completely, but should pay attention to which types of drinks might trigger an attack.

STRESS

Remember to do your best to manage **stress**. Both routine, day-to-day stressors as well as acute and uncontrollable stressors

can affect migraine. We all have stress, but learning ways to cope with it can be helpful in limiting migraine attacks. For more, **see our section** on migraine and emotional wellness.



Using a Headache Diary

It is often helpful to track your migraine attacks, along with migraine triggers. You can use **SWHR's Headache Diary** to help monitor all the important variables.

