



# 2024 INTERVIEW SUMMARY SHEET

## SPEAKER

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## TOPIC

Best Exercise Options for People With Migraine

## TITLE & ORGANIZATION

Associate Professor of Psychology,  
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## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Physical activity can help us regulate our moods, especially when chronic pain and migraine make it difficult for people to get through the day. This is known as behavioral activation.
- Exercise releases endorphins, which can improve mood and help manage the depression and anxiety that often are comorbid with migraine.
- Four things make it more likely for people to stick to an exercise routine: biofeedback, demonstrations by others of how to exercise or use equipment, practice or rehearsal with corrective feedback, and graded tasks.
- Self-efficacy is a person's perception of their ability to accomplish a task. Self-efficacy helps get our brain addicted to doing things and maintaining that activity.
- For people with chronic migraine, establishing an exercise schedule may not work since migraine is unpredictable. Instead, build in alternative exercise activities that can be done when experiencing pain from migraine.
- People with migraine do not need to live in fear of their world, their environment, and their body. They may just have to be more thoughtful about how their bodies are responding.
- Unusual changes in activities, such as going from active to sedentary behavior or vice versa, may precipitate migraine attacks.
- Because little is known about the interaction between specific physical activity or inactivity and migraine, people should do the activity that makes them happy.
- It's OK to exercise during a migraine attack if it feels comfortable, but gentle movement may be more appropriate when pain is severe.

## TREATMENTS CITED

Aerobic activity	Strength training
Behavioral activation	Stress management
Biofeedback	Yoga (seated or standing)

## QUOTES

*"So, stress management is one of the most effective lifestyle changes people can make when they're looking to manage migraine. And it's not because you caused your migraine because of your stress. It's not because you caused your migraine because you're bad at managing stress. It's because stress is a very foundational hormonal change in our bodies."*

*"There's an importance of increasing nourishing movement in our daily lives, as well as setting aside time for some kind of aerobic activity or some kind of strength training, both for the health benefits it confers independently on our bodies as well as for potential migraine reduction."*

*"There are two complementary goals, which are to exercise so you feel good and so that you get either some strength training or some cardio going. But then there is another goal, which is reduce sedentary behavior — move; move every hour, move in some way. And for that goal, it's actually better to have smaller bouts of activity."*

## PRACTICAL STEPS

- Use biofeedback to determine the intensity and duration of your movement.
- Talk to your primary care physician before starting a significant increase in your physical activity.
- Be open to all types of movement: Aerobic exercise, such as running, swimming, and brisk walks can be beneficial for migraine.
- Consider strength training as part of an exercise routine.
- Include neck and trapezius muscle stretches into your routine, as many people with migraine have tightness and poor flexibility in these areas.
- Embrace sporadic exercise, which can still be beneficial to your health. Don't feel discouraged if you can't exercise every day.