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**Headaches? Look at the alternatives before you pop another pill**



It has been revealed that more than one million people in Britain may be suffering from constant, crippling headaches because they are taking too many painkillers, experts say. The pills people take to relieve headaches and migraines may be making things much worse, according to the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (Nice) in guidance to the health service for England and Wales.

As many as one in 50 people suffer continual headaches because of "medication overuse", Nice reports. The problem begins with taking the odd painkiller for tension headaches or migraines, which usually works. But some people take the pills more and more often, until they are on tablets for more than half the days in a month. Nice says that if this goes on for more than three months the medication ends up causing the problem it is intended to cure.

So what alternatives are there to continually popping pills? British Osteopathic Association Member James Clapham comments, “tension-type and neck related headaches are the most common form of headache. If you suffer from tension-type headache, then regular gentle exercise will almost certainly help - such as yoga, pilates, swimming, walking. Some people find it hard to relax and probably don't realise how tense they are. If someone suffers from headaches it may also be neck related due to stiffness or restrictions of the neck. Osteopaths look to find the cause of tensions or stiffness and seek to relieve it by helping the body achieve more mobility and flexibility.

“Other lifestyle factors such as poor posture at a desk or tiredness can lead to tension-type or neck related headaches. Osteopaths look to relieve this tension and give advice on posture and exercises to do to help prevent the tension or stiffness from building up. For example we would recommend taking regular breaks from sitting at a computer desk for long periods of time or prolonged driving. Any persistent or sudden severe headache should always be checked by a GP first.”

For further information about the BOA or to find a BOA member near you please visit www.osteopathy.org

**About the British Osteopathic Association**

The British Osteopathic Association (BOA) is the professional association for osteopaths in the UK, acting as an independent representative body whilst promoting osteopathy to the general public and government. The BOA is committed to supporting, protecting and caring for its members and promoting opportunities for individual and professional development in osteopathic practice. There are nearly 4,000 osteopaths on the UK register who carried out over seven million treatments last year, and many of these are members of the British Osteopathic Association