

# Tension Headache

## History

- Does the client have a headache now?
- When was the onset of the present headache
- At what age did the headaches begin
- Was there a trauma to the head, neck or spine?
- Does the client have a temperature, rash or stiff neck? Meningitis...
- Does the client have sleep disturbances
- Location and quality of the pain? Does it refer anywhere?
- What relieves or aggravates the headache?

## Visual Assessment

- head forward posture
- hyperkyphosis
- hyperlordosis
- scoliosis
- pes planus

## Specific tests

- motion and static palpation of cervical and thoracic spine
- Passive relaxed atlanto-occipital
- Atlanto-axial articulationm
- Passive relaxed anterior and lateral spinous challenges
- First rib mobility
- Rib motion test
- Spurlings
- Cervical compression
- Cervical distraction

## Informed Consent

## Treatment

- Treatment begins supine a towel may be used to cover the clients eyes
- Heat to upper back
- Effleurage, stroking and fingertip kneading are used on the pectorals and posterior neck to reduce hypertonicity (upper trap, levator scap, pec major and minor)
- Petrissage on the muscles of mastication, facial muscles and scalp
- \* *Pain free joint play* is used on hypomobile cervical vertebrae
- Trigger points to:
  - Upper traps
  - Splenius Capitis
  - splenius cervicis
  - occipitalis

- frontalis
- suboccipitals
- sternocleidomastiod
- temporalis
- occipitofrontalis
- masseter
- \* *PIR to increase ROM at the neck*
- *P ROM of the neck*
- \* *Golgo tendon release at the occiput*
- \* *Long axis tractioning*
- Turn prone
- Effleurance and petrissage are used on the shoulders and upper thoracic area
- *Joint play to thoracic spine*

#### Homecare and Hydro

- Rest after trigger point work
- Hot bath or hot hydro is indicated for the affected muscles after trigger point therapy
- The client could use contrast towels applied to the neck and head for a tension headache
- Diaphragmatic breathing to reduce pain and stress levels
- Self massage consisting of muscle stripping and ischemic compressions and stretch is recommended
- Sleeping in the prone position is avoided as this stresses neck muscles