

Lewis Headache Center

Headache & Migraine Home Wellness Retreat



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Welcome

Welcome to your wellness journey! We are so happy you have chosen to take some time to focus on yourself and your health. During the next few days, you will discover and practice some of the most effective tools that will help you optimize your physical health and mental wellbeing.

While we strive to give all of our patients living with chronic pain a better quality of life, the goal of this is not to improve your pain in a matter of days. Instead, our hope is to teach you methods and lifestyle choices that reduce stress and inflammation within the body, calm the mind to reduce stress and triggers, and set you up for success. Countless research studies have shown that implementing mindfulness, yoga and meditation is helpful for lowering stress and improving wellness. With stress being a major contributing factor for many sufferers of headache and migraine, it is essential that we learn about, and implement methods for stress reduction to promote balance and well-being.



Addressing chronic pain is a stepwise process that varies for many people. If you have not done so already, please ensure you have set up a consultation with your healthcare provider or neurologist to receive a thorough evaluation and treatment, and ensure that this at-home retreat is appropriate for you.

Along with taking a deeper dive into learning about chronic pain and wellness, this retreat will guide you through healthy eating, meditation practices, mindfulness, yoga and reflections. To get started, we need to do a bit of preparation as well as goal setting so that you get the most out of the program. Please set aside some time to review the following steps.

In Wellness,
Your Lewis Headache Center Wellness Team

Prepare

If you are planning to retreat over the weekend, use the days leading up to the weekend to do some prep work. We have written a little list for you to help you set up for success!

Plan Your Dates

Look at your calendar and see when would be an optimal time to do your retreat. The retreat can be done in a variety of ways. One example is you could use the following schedule:

- Wednesday & Thursday - Shopping & Preparation
- Friday - Goal Setting
- Saturday & Sunday - Retreat Days
- Monday - Integrate techniques into daily life



You are welcome to do your retreat over the weekend, or if you need some extra time off from work, or would like to extend your retreat, plan accordingly. Alternatively, you could do one retreat day per week or month. Choose what works best for you! Please note, life is busy and unpredictable. Some of us have kids, pets and spouses to consider, and this might be a wonderful opportunity to include them! You are invited to join all or some of these practices over the next couple of days or select a portion of it to fit your schedule best. All of the items are optional, however you could also choose to include your family and pets!

Dietitian

If your provider has not already referred you to our Barrow dietitian, please request they do so. During a consultation you will learn the fundamentals of healthy eating and nutrition.

Download Apps



Meditation: we recommend downloading [Insight Timer](#), which is free for iOS and Android phones. Afterwards get familiar with the app by checking out some of its features.



Biofeedback: (Optional) we recommend downloading [Juva for Migraine](#), which is free and available for iOS. **Note:** *Not available for Android yet. Once downloaded, go through their set up and introductory videos in order to familiarize yourself with the app.*

Equipment

You may choose a minimalist approach using your living room floor for yoga and the couch for meditation, using rolled up towels or pillows to get yourself comfortable. Should you wish to splurge, the following items may help to optimize your practice:

- [Meditation pillow/cushion](#) (around \$30)
- [Gaiam 6mm Yoga Mat](#): Durable but affordable; around \$30,
OR
[Manduka Pro Series](#): Higher end mat for increase cushioning; around \$130)

Supplements

Please discuss which ones would be best for you with your provider or dietitian:

- Magnesium Citrate or Magnesium Glycinate (400 mg per day)
Note: Magnesium Oxide is ok, but the previous two may be easier on your GI tract.
- Riboflavin (Vitamin B2) – 400 mg per day: takes three to four months for maximum benefits
Note: may cause urine discoloration.
- Coenzyme Q10 – (100-300 mg per day) takes three months for maximum benefits
- Melatonin for at night (3 mg)
- Probiotic (preferably the refrigerated kind) to boost gut health
- Choose supplements with a USP mark to ensure good manufacturing practices regulated by the FDA.

If you are not taking any supplements, it might be wise to add one at a time to monitor its effects.



Magnesium Magic

Migraine is often associated with an overactivity or hypersensitivity of our neurons as we are exposed to chronic pain. One way to help our neurons is through getting enough magnesium. Magnesium works by lessening the hypersensitivity of our neuron. Magnesium rich foods are pumpkin seeds, halibut, leafy greens like spinach and kale, nuts, black beans, and avocados.

Grocery

During this retreat we will provide you with some guidance on meals and nutrition, however, you do not need to follow this. Taste and preference vary as well as what is in season. The main advice is to opt for fresh fruits, vegetables, and wholesome food. Look for whole grain options, legumes, and lean proteins and try to minimize processed foods. Frozen items without additives such as frozen fruits and vegetables are great choices. If you struggle with making a shopping list, discuss this with our dietitian or refer to the references mentioned in recommended reading.



Pro Tip!

Glance ahead at the program to make a shopping list based on some suggested meal ideas.

Optional

- **Essential oils and/or a diffuser**

The following oils are considered beneficial for headache, migraine and pain:

- peppermint
- lavender
- eucalyptus
- laurel leaf
- ravintsara
- bergamot
- Any citrus: grapefruit, tangerine, lemon, lime

Note: *It is best to buy high quality oils. Remember that one oil that soothes one person, may trigger a migraine for another. Go to a store and smell them to make sure they work for you, but also be mindful if you are around other migraine sufferers.*

- **Topical creams:** Stopain, Biofreeze, Tiger balm, Badger balm
- **Hydration Options:** ginger or peppermint tea for nausea, or sugar free electrolyte hydration tablet, such as Nuun, Liquid IV



Unplugging: Be Mindfully Minimal

Consider taking a break from your electronic devices unless you are using them for yoga, meditation or biofeedback practices. We cannot expect to be completely disconnected, but make a solid attempt to be “mindfully minimal” with electronic use. You may find this is easier and more fulfilling than you think.

Establish Goals

As you begin this journey, let's take a moment to reflect on your current state. This will help us determine what we would like to see change, and how we can set goals to accomplish this.

1. **How would you rate your current health and wellbeing?** _____ / 10
(0 = Poor, 5 = Moderate, 10 = Optimal)

2. **What is the quality of your sleep?** How do you usually feel when you wake up? How many hours do you sleep? Make some notes about your current sleep habits below:

GOAL: If you could improve one thing about your sleep, what would it be?

3. **How would you describe your nutrition?** Are you able to make healthy meals? Do you eat regularly? Do you take supplements? Are you getting close to 75oz of water in daily? Make some notes about your nutrition below:

GOAL: If you could improve one thing about your nutrition habits, what would it be?

4. **How would you describe your mental health?** Do you suffer from anxiety or depression? Do you have a hard time focusing? Make some notes about your mental health below:

GOAL: If you could improve one thing about your mental health, what would it be?



5. **Do you enjoy and find benefits in moving your body?** How much do you exercise now, and what do you do to exercise? What's your favorite way of moving your body?

GOAL: If you could improve one thing about your movement and exercise, what would it be?

6. **Which of the following is your most important wellness goal you would like to focus on?**

- Sleep (Consider reading a book about Sleep in the Appendix)
- Nutrition (Consult with Barrow Dietitian, cookbooks, or free blogs)
- Mental Health (Consider finding a good therapist or use apps in Appendix)
- Moving my body (Check out online resources or try physical therapy)

At the end of this Wellness Retreat, what is your main goal?

7. **Why is this goal important to you?**

8. **When you picture your life implementing this new goal, what does it look like?** Take a moment to close your eyes and visualize this, then give yourself some gratitude for initiating this journey.

Day One

Connect with and Restore your Mind, Body, and Soul

Good morning! Hopefully you feel rested and excited to start your wellness journey today. We would like for you to start your day with some water. If you'd like an extra detox add some fresh lemon juice, to aid digestion and give you a boost of vitamin C and potassium! (Cleveland Clinic, 2020).



Morning Notes

Start by writing down what you want to experience and achieve through your actions for the day. This is called intention setting.

Start by writing down what you want to experience and achieve through your actions for the day. This is called **intention setting**.

How do I feel today:

Body: _____

Mind: _____

List 3 things which you are **grateful** for:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Morning

- Prepare a **healthy breakfast**, such as oatmeal with fruit and nuts/ seeds or scrambled eggs with veggies, a slice of whole wheat bread, and sliced avocado.
- Focus on drinking more **water** today and less caffeine, but if you need some coffee or tea to get your day started do so mindfully. To improve your water intake, you can infuse water with some fruits such as berries, citrus fruits, cucumber and mint.
- Take your morning **medications** and start **supplements** (if either are applicable).
- Finally, take a moment and massage some lotion or a topical cream into your shoulders and neck.



Morning Meditation

Open the Insight Timer App and find a quiet area to get comfortable. You can be laying down or sitting up using your yoga mat and meditation cushion. You can do any meditation you'd like, but if you're new to the practice, try one of the following two recordings:

- *A Few Minutes of Mindfulness* by Melli O'Brien (7 min)
- *Meditation For Beginners: Letting Go* by David Gandelman (12 min)

Reflection: *What did you notice during your meditation practice?*

Morning Movement

If your body feels up to it, and you'd like to try some gentle stretches, we invite you to go online to the [Barrow Resource](#) page and scroll down to **Yoga for Migraine**.

- Start the video named **Yoga for Migraine: Head, Neck, Shoulder & Self Massage (20 min)**. Take a moment to write down a couple of your observations below:

SCAN ME



- If you'd like to move on to the next video, try the **10 minute Body Relaxation** video on the Barrow Resource page. Afterwards, take a moment to reflect on how this might have deepened your connection to mind, body and spirit. What came up for you during the 10 minute exercise? Describe it below:

Rest, Reading & Relaxation

This is a great time to take a deeper dive into learning about chronic pain and wellness. Grab another glass of water, or a soothing cup of tea, and take a moment to read the following two handouts: *Pain 101* (p. 28) and *Yoga for Headaches* (p. 30) located in the Appendix. Please use the space below to make any notes if you'd like:

- **Pain 101** _____

- **Yoga for Headache & Migraine** _____

Ideas for Rest & Relaxation

- Take a walk, but change the location or route that you usually take
- Call a good friend and catch up
- Enjoy a big fancy bubble bath
- Play fetch with your dog
- Listen to a Podcast

Mid-Morning Snack

Try to opt for some protein with complex carbs such as fruit like a banana with protein like nut butter, or try making some energy balls. Try getting the family involved, and make them together with the kids!

Ingredients

- ½ cup honey or agave syrup
- 1 cup oats
- ½ cup nut butter of any kind
- ¼ cup flaxseed meal
- 1 tablespoon chia seeds
- ¼ cup pumpkin seeds
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract (optional)

Instructions

1. Mix all ingredients in a bowl.
2. Cover and chill in the fridge for 30 min.
3. Form into 1 to 1½ inch balls
4. Enjoy a couple today and store the rest in the freezer.

For the rest of the morning find relax and spend time doing activities that connect you to your true self, and help fill your cup!

Lunch

Once you're ready, make a healthy meal for lunch time such as a salad (with some proteins such as chicken, hard boiled eggs, tuna, or beans) or a hearty soup. If available, choose whole grain and unprocessed food. Keep it simple and colorful! Also, leftovers are a good option for lunch. Still don't know what to make? It's easy to put together Avocado Toast.



Avocado Toast

Instructions

1. Toast a slice of whole grain bread
2. Grab a ripe avocado and using a fork mash it down over the toast
3. Add a boiled egg, or nuts and seeds on top for some protein
4. Sprinkle shredded cheese, a dash of salt & pepper or even some red pepper flakes.

Afternoon

Walking Meditation

Start your afternoon with a light walk either inside or outside. If you are inside, you simply will slowly but mindfully walk through your house. This practice could simply be a few minutes, or even up to 15-30 minutes depending on what you are able to manage today.

- During this walk, the focus will be on breathing and being in the present moment. Listen to all the sounds both near and far away. Pay attention to the colors of your surroundings, becoming hyper aware of your environment. Taking it all in, so as to save it to memory.
- Afterwards, take a moment to notice how this walk made you feel. Did you notice aspects about your surroundings you have never seen or heard before? Take a moment to write down a couple of your observations below:

When you come back from your walk, remember to drink some of your water, and maybe consider an electrolyte hydration tablet if this is appropriate.

Posture Check!

Try these 3 simple exercises to stretch your neck and improve your posture and relieve any neck tension:

- **Upper Trapezius Stretch:** While sitting upright on a chair, drop your right ear to your right shoulder. You should feel a nice stretch on top of the opposite shoulder. Hold this for 20-30 seconds. Slowly release and switch sides. Repeat as needed.
- **Chin Nods:** Lie down comfortably, and gently nod your chin down and hold it for three to five seconds. Then relax. Repeat this 10 times to strengthen your neck muscles, and stretch out the top part of your neck.
- **Heart Lifts:** While sitting, imagine lifting your heart up towards the sky. This is a small motion, so be careful not to over arch your low back. Don't pull your shoulders back as this only increases tension. Instead, let them stay soft and relaxed. See if you can keep your breathing unrestricted. Try to hold this posture until fatigue, then repeat five to 10 times throughout the rest of the day. Maybe put a reminder up in your house such as a post-it or a reminder on your smart watch.



Sets: **2-3** | Freq: **1-2 x a day** | Hold: **30 seconds**



Sets: **2** | Reps: **10** | Freq: **daily**
Hold: **3-5, working up to 10 seconds**



Freq: **10x per day** | Hold: **till fatigue**

Afternoon Snack

If you need a healthy snack you can grab an apple with some almond butter or a selection of vegetables with some hummus. Other options would be plain Greek yogurt with some fruits and nuts, hard boiled eggs, or handful nuts/seeds. Adding protein and a healthy fat to your snack will help to keep you feeling full and keep your blood sugars level.

- **Biofeedback** (optional): First, go to p. 32 in the appendix and read about [Biofeedback](#). Next, open up the Juva for Migraine App on your phone and work through “Getting Started” and “How to use Juva”. Afterwards try “Diaphragmatic Breathing” (13 min). This is a wonderful practice that will explain the art and impact of breathing. Please take any notes below:

Dinner

Try to use a recipe that follows a Mediterranean diet, including vegetables, protein, some complex carbohydrate, and healthy fat. You can enjoy a piece of fruit as a dessert.

Take a moment and consider what nutrition your body needs right now. It may be helpful to consider the following mindful statement:

I will feel better if I eat this nutritious meal for dinner tonight:

Based on that, choose a meal that suits your needs. Maybe you return to a favorite recipe, or try a new recipe from a blog post or book.



Pro Tip!

Find a recipe you like? Create a digital or printed recipe folder to save a copy of your favorite ones. You can even make little notes on the side if you made substitutions, or how much you enjoyed the recipe.

Then if you ever struggle to figure out what to make for dinner just pull out your file and find one that suits you.



Evening

Journaling is a helpful way to process and externalize our thoughts. Set aside five minutes to close your eyes, and reflect on your first day of wellness. Then work through the journal prompts below:

Evening Notes

How do you feel after today's practice? What was your favorite part of today?

What part did you struggle with? How could you improve on that?

Let's end tonight with positivity. Write down 3 amazing things that happened today:

1.

2.

3.

Bedtime

- Take bedtime medications and/or supplements (if applicable), and keep some extra water by your bedside.
- Put on your topical creams (Tiger balm, Biofreeze, or consider rubbing some essential oils into your temples)
- If you struggle to fall asleep, you may consider trying a restorative practice named **Yoga Nidra**, which is loosely translated as *Yogic Sleep*. During this form of meditation, the practitioner is guided into a state of conscious relaxation, where we shift from the external world to the internal world in order to deepen a connection to true self. It is in this state that the senses, intellect, and mind can fully let go and relax. Try any of the following on the Insight Timer app:
 - *Yoga Nidra for Physical Pain* by Jana Belugina
 - *Yoga Nidra to Reconnect & Expand Perspective* by Jana Roemer



Day Two

Healing Through Acceptance and a Positive Mindset

We hope you had a good night's sleep and woke up feeling refreshed. Today is day two of your Wellness Retreat, and we will be focusing on Tranquility and Healing.



Morning Notes

Start by setting your **intention** for the day:

How do I feel today:

Body: _____

Mind: _____

List 3 things which you are **grateful** for:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Morning

Before you get up, perform a 5-10 minute body scan on Insight Timer.

- Try “Deep Body Scan” by Ryan Washington

Drink a big glass of water, and take any morning medications/supplements.

You can either stay in bed, or unroll your yoga mat, as you slowly wake up your body with the following gentle morning stretches:

- *Double Knee to Chest:* While laying down, gently pull both knees into your chest. You can place your hands on top of your knees or shins and hug your thighs towards your belly. Hold for 10 seconds and repeat 5-10x
- *Hamstring Stretch:* Bend the right knee and place the right foot down on the bed. Straighten out your left leg and lift it up towards the ceiling, clasp behind your thigh. Relax your shoulders and neck. Hold the stretch for 20-30 seconds and repeat on the opposite side.
- *Trunk Rotations:* Bend both knees and place the feet down on the bed. You might want to spread your arms out to the side to help stabilize your body. Slowly exhale and drop your knees over to the right, then inhale back to center, and exhale drop your knees over to the left. Repeat 10-20x.
- *Seated Cat/Cow:* Slowly roll over to your side and sit on up. Allow a minute to settle into sitting upright. Then exhale and look down while rounding your back. Inhale, and lengthen your spine as you look up. Repeat this for 5-10 deep breaths.
- *Seated Trunk Rotations:* Sit up tall, and lock your hands together in front of you. Then gently twist your torso left and right using your breath as a guide. Repeat 10-20x.
- *Shoulder rolls:* Inhale your shoulders gently up towards your ears, and slowly roll them backwards, then downwards. Finish your exhale as you roll the shoulders forward again. Repeat 5-10x



Sets: 1-2 | Reps: 5-10x



Sets: 1-2 | Reps: 5-10x



Sets: 1-2 | Reps: 5-10x



Sets: 1-2 | Reps: 10x



Sets: 1-2 | Reps: 5-10x

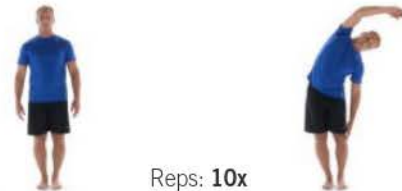


Sets: 1-2 | Reps: 5-10x

- *Diaphragmatic Breathing*: take a moment to slow down the breath. Focus on your ribs expanding as you inhale, and relaxing as you exhale. Notice how this calms your body and your mind. Repeat for 5-10 slow deep breaths.
- *Standing Sidebending*: Stand up and reach your right arm to the sky. Exhale, and gently lean over to the left, supporting your body with your left hand on your thigh. Inhale up, and return to standing. Repeat on the other side.
- *Modified Downward Dog at the Wall*: Place your hands on the wall, and step your feet back. Bend your knees, and straighten your back. Slowly straighten the knees as you hold the stretch for 20-30 seconds. Then slowly stand up. Repeat as needed.



Sets: **1-2** | Reps: **5-10x**



Reps: **10x**



Sets: **2** | Reps: **20-30 seconds**

Breakfast

It's time to nourish your body! Try making a veggie & fruit smoothie. Grab some power greens mix, and blend it together with some frozen berries and a banana. If you're feeling dehydrated add some coconut water to the mix. An alternative option for a more substantial meal: whisk up a veggie omelet on a slice of whole grain bread, or make egg muffins.

- Drink plenty of water which you can flavor with fresh lemon juice or fresh mint sprigs
- Grab your mat and meditation cushion and set yourself up for your morning meditation. Try either one of the following on the Insight Timer App:
 - *Mountain Meditation* by Andy Hobson (15 min)
 - *I am here. I am Home.* by Sarah Blondin (15 min)

Egg Muffins

Instructions

1. Preheat your oven to 350 F.
2. Cut up any vegetables you have, whisk some eggs and pour it over the vegetables in a muffin pan.
3. Bake it in the preheated oven for 20-25 minutes or until it is completely cooked.

Feel free to use the space below for any notes you might like to make after your meditation:

Spend the rest of the morning however you would like. Maybe it is playing with your kids, or talking to a friend you have not connected with in a while. Maybe you treat yourself to going out for a fancy coffee, a pedicure. If you're needing more movement, you can consider a run or a hike. The important thing is to choose something that is relaxing and rejuvenating for you, right now, in this moment. Remember that self-care can take on many forms.

Morning Snack

Try a bowl of berries on a small bowl of yogurt, or a handful of nuts and a couple of dates.



Delicious Dates

Looking for a good source of fiber, magnesium, calcium and potassium? Dates are a great little snack to help do just that! And studies have shown they help reduce inflammation and regulate hormones.

Combine them with some walnuts for a boost in antioxidants. Walnuts also contain “alpha-linolenic and linoleic acids, which may have anti-inflammatory effects that keep blood vessels healthy” (Schmerling, 2018).

Reading

What is mindfulness? And why does everybody talk about it these days? We have put together a little document to help you navigate the topic of mindfulness with practice suggestions, reading resources and a curated selection of apps. You can find the hand out about [Mindfulness](#) in your appendix, p. 33.

- Please take any notes below: _____

Lunch

Is there a recipe you've saved that you've been eager to make? Maybe today is the day to make it happen. Have fun and spend some time making something new! Don't have the time? Grab a simple bag salad at the grocery store and make it fancy by adding a boiled egg, or some chopped up lunch meat, or a fun mix of nuts & seeds. Looking for some recipes, check Eating Well.com for [Mediterranean Lunch ideas](#). Whatever you choose for your meal, take a moment and try the following Mindfulness Practice.

Mindful Eating Practice

- Take a seat, and carefully look at your food. Take in all the colors and shapes.
- Slowly take your first bite, and be careful to chew just once and let the flavors unfold in your mouth. See if you can identify all the flavors present. Then make several more chews, and taste every part of your bite.
- Notice if you prefer to eat on one side of your mouth.
- Try not to be distracted by other activities such as talking or looking at your phone.
- Instead, eat slowly and mindfully, and see if you can identify when you are getting full, and then respectfully stop.

Reflect on any observations you made during this Mindful Eating Practice:

Afternoon

Reading

This afternoon we will learn about the multidimensional aspects of Wellness. Skip over to the Appendix (p. 35) and read the hand out on [Wellness](#). Use the space below to make any notes you want to remember:

You can use the afternoon to relax and regenerate by curling up on the couch with your **book and a cup of healing ginger tea**.



The Greatness of Ginger

Ginger contains gingerol, a component which aids gastrointestinal motility as well as symptoms of nausea and stomach ache. It also has many natural components linked to anti-inflammatory benefits. Store bought ginger tea is available anywhere, or you can simply grate fresh ginger into hot water for a fresher taste. You can combine this with fresh lemon juice and a little squeeze of honey. Also, you can try ginger with turmeric tea for more anti-inflammatory benefits.

Yoga (optional): Alternatively, if you would like to move your body, we invite you to try the 20 min **Full Body Yoga** practice under our resources at the [Barrow Neurological Institute](#) website. Maybe you take your mat and practice this outside.



After you've completed your yoga practice, take a moment to write down your favorite pose from the session (It's ok if you don't know its name, just make a mental note for yourself, such as "Placing one foot on the inside of the other leg, balance on one leg, with your arms overhead"):

Why did you like this pose?

Which pose was the most challenging for you?

Why?

What is one thing you would like to practice and work on after doing this practice?

What steps can you take to implement this after the retreat?

Post Yoga Nutrition

Hydrate well after your yoga practice, and consider an electrolyte tablet if needed. Grab a small post-yoga snack such as a piece of fruit, or slices up vegetables. If you are craving a fun yet protein packed snack, drain a can of chickpeas, toss them in olive oil, and add any of your favorite spices. Roast at 400F for roughly 20 minutes until crispy.

Take the rest of the afternoon to rest and relax.



The Power of Doing Nothing

We often find we need to be busy all the time. We are often rushing from one task to the next, juggling several tasks at the same time. However, if we can take a moment to break from our hectic ways, we might find we can hear our inner voice more clearly. As a result we find we have greater access to our subconscious thoughts and processes and are able to make more intelligent choices, think with greater creativity and see things from another perspective.

Dinner

Consider roasting some vegetables in the oven, to go along with salmon broiled in the oven, and a side of sweet potatoes or a cup of brown rice/wild rice.

Sick of cooking? Consider getting take-out, but consciously choose a healthy option and practice mindful eating!

These tips from our dietitian may be helpful:

- Try to avoid fried foods.
- Always ask to put the sauce and dressing on the side.
- If possible, request for less salt or butter in your dish.
- Don't forget about vegetables.
- You can always switch to a side salad or bowl of fruits instead of high calorie options such as fries or onion rings.
- Allow yourself to enjoy your favorite foods in small portions occasionally as part of mindful eating.

Evening

Evening Notes

After your evening meal, put on some relaxing music, light a candle and make a cup of tea. Then take a moment to reflect on your day and then work through today's journal prompts.

How do your body and mind feel after today? What was your favorite part?

What part did you struggle with? What would you like to see improve as you keep practicing?

Gratitude: Write down three amazing things that happened today.

1.

2.

3.

If you are enjoying the morning and evening notes, consider developing an ongoing gratitude practice such as "5 Minute Journal" which comes in a book or phone App.

Bedtime

- Take bedtime **medication** (if applicable), and keep some extra water by your bedside.
- **Mindful moment:** Put your electronics away, get comfortable in bed and focus on your breath. Take a moment for gratitude. Mentally thanking yourself, and everything and everybody who helped to make your weekend possible. Return to the breath, counting in for 3-4 counts and exhaling for 5-6 counts if this is available to you. Repeat over and over again until you start to fall into a deep state of relaxation, then naturally drop the technique as you fall asleep.
- If you still need assistance, try one of these bedtime Meditation:
 - *Migraine Relief Meditation* by Victoria Yoga (39 min)
 - *Yoga Nidra For Sleep* by Jennifer Piercy (22 min)

Post Retreat Reflection

Congratulations, you did it! No matter how much you completed over the last two days, we hope that your two days of wellness were relaxing, nutritious, and informative. This is a retreat that you can come back to time and time again, but you can also choose to carry forward some of the practice you learned into your day to day life. Before we look at that, let's complete a post-retreat reflection.

1. **How would you rate your current health and wellbeing?** _____ / 10
(0 = Poor, 5 = Moderate, 10 = Optimal)

2. In the last couple of days, what has the quality of your **sleep** been like? How have you felt when you wake up? Which sleep rituals helped? Make some notes below:

3. How did changing your **nutrition** and eating habits make you feel? Which nutrition and hydration tips were helpful for you?

4. Did you enjoy and find benefit in **moving your body**? What was your favorite way to exercise? Which exercise tips did you find helpful?

5. What are **3 things you learned about yourself** during this retreat?

6. On a scale of 1-5, how would you rate the following after the retreat?

Scale	1 = very poor
	2 = poor
	3 = acceptable
	4 = good
	5 = very good

- a. Sleep: _____
- b. Nutrition: _____
- c. Mental Health: _____
- d. Exercise: _____

Things That Will Help

Write down a little list of the things you found helpful over the course of this retreat. It can be as simple as “Drink another glass of water”, “Spend 10-20 minutes a day doing meditation”, “Eating regular healthy meals”, or “Connecting with a friend.”

Once you’ve written this list, make a copy of it to hang up on your mirror, fridge or to put down on your desk. When you’re having a hard day, remember the things that will help and try to implement them. Your list may evolve over time, so routinely update it by adding or subtracting from your list.

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Living Mindfulness

Let's carry over the best aspects of your healing journey to your day to day life. If a sleep ritual helped, use that. If your body responds well to yoga practice, unroll your mat and try a few postures or even sign up for a class later this week. If your mind feels clearer and more relaxed after practicing meditation or biofeedback, schedule a set time when you would like to include this in your daily routine. All these practices are as vital as brushing your teeth and taking your meds. So start to make them a priority!

Habit building is something that is done best when the habit is small, attainable and implemented daily. A great resource for further reading is Atomic Habits by James Clear. He described how enormous the impact is of a small change implemented over time.

Take a moment, and pencil in some small changes you can implement into your weekly routine on the following page. It does not have to be much, just enough to practice the things that truly make you feel better. See the example below:



Day of the Week	AM	PM
Monday	"Meditate 10 minutes after waking up, eat a balanced breakfast and have some ginger tea mid morning"	"Take a short walk, spend some time practicing mindfulness during the walk"

A Week of Wellness

Day of the Week	AM	PM
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday		

More Wellness Day Ideas

Are you looking for other ways to expand your sense of wellness and take care of yourself? Here are some other fun ways to expand on the prior practice. You can either add this on to your retreat days, or schedule some time a week or two later to fully live your new wellness goals.

Spa day!

Go to your local store to grab a few fun things to make a full **DIY Spa Day** at home. Here are some ideas of things to add to your basket:

- Green smoothie or herbal tea
- Treat yourself to some fun new body wash or bath bomb for a soothing warm shower or bubble bath
- Essential oils to massage into your temples

Channel Your Creativity

- Go to your local craft store and buy whatever materials look fun. You can **paint, draw, learn to knit or arrange flowers**.
- Put on your favorite music and do some free **dance** in the comfort of your home.
- If you are an **instrument** lover, maybe run your fingers over the keys again, or pick up your guitar. Connect to an old part of yourself you might have forgotten.
- Grab a **journal** and set a timer for 5-10 minutes, and start writing. Don't stop writing until the timer is done. It doesn't matter what you write, just keep moving your pen!
- **Bake!** Pull out your mixing bowls and measuring cups, and bake a beloved family recipe or try a new one. Be mindful of healthy choices that benefit your new lifestyle, and then share your treats with family and friends.



Thank you for participating in this wellness retreat!

We are eager to optimize all of our resources, and would look forward to hearing about your experience and any feedback you might have for us. Please scan the QR code to fill out a short anonymous survey.

Appendix

1. Pain 101
2. Yoga for Headache & Migraine
3. Biofeedback
4. Mindfulness
5. Wellness

Appendix 1

Pain 101

Chronic pain is common, so much so that the CDC released data in 2019 that reports that 20% of our population lives with chronic pain. That's a lot of people! But what really is pain? The International Association for the Study of Pain defines pain as “an unpleasant sensory or emotional experience”. Pain is multi layered, and it is often described as **biopsychosocial**. This means that in order to treat pain, we have to address the biology (the physical body), the psychology (how we process pain), and the social factors that influence our pain & health experience. Let's take a deeper dive into some different aspects of pain. After all, by understanding pain better, we are more equipped to change it.

The Purpose of Pain

Believe it or not, pain is actually a good thing. We need pain for survival. It warns us about any danger, such as burning oneself if too close to fire, or getting an infection from a wound. Pain is a form of communication in our body purely for survival. We also learn from our pain response, to avoid these harmful stimuli in the future. For headache specifically, it can give us warning signs about any head or neck dysfunction or strains we need to address. However, in some cases our pain signals even get skewed.

“At the most basic level, pain signals being sent by the nerves in various parts of your head to your brain are the cause of headache symptoms. In some instances, like intracranial hypotension, these signals are your body's way of letting you know about a problem. In other cases, the signals are a kind of false alarm. In these cases, you feel just as much pain, but it is the nerves themselves that are having a problem—sensing pain when no pain-causing stimuli are present” (Barrow, 2021).

Acute vs Chronic Pain

Pain that happens as a result of a trauma or event often produces acute pain. This pain is sudden and can be severe, but not always. It usually involves the stages of healing and will resolve with appropriate treatment and time. Pain that persists for longer than the healing time frame is often called chronic pain. This usually occurs after six months. It no longer functions as a warning signal but in fact initiates a change in detection of pain and its experience. Associated with chronic pain is a change in health and function, as well as our ability to sense pain and how we relate to it.

Our Brain on Chronic Pain

When we have pain that lasts for longer than the usual duration, we start to actuate new pathways in our brain. According to pain psychologist, Rachel Zoffness, this is similar to learning a new skill or language, and when we practice this over and over again, the brain pathway gets bigger and stronger. We end up practicing pain and this makes us more sensitive to picking up pain. When this happens, it lowers our threshold for sensory stimulus, and our pain dial is then turned way up.

How we can Change the Cycle of Pain

We are capable of breaking the chronic pain cycle, and it involves a multidisciplinary approach, working with your doctors, your therapists, social worker, dietitian etc. All disciplines offer a unique part of the puzzle to address your biopsychosocial pain. Make sure you work with all of your health care providers to adequately evaluate and treat your pain, so that you can optimize your health and quality of life.

Author and pain psychologist, Rachel Zoffness, MS, PhD, has written a comprehensive book, *The Pain Management Workbook*, that discusses all of the above in greater detail, and utilized Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Mindfulness to address pain.

In Practice:

Important actions you can start today to begin making changes to how your mind and body respond to pain:

- Learn and be mindful of how your body is triggered and impacted by pain. This will help to develop both a preventative and in-the-moment response plan with your doctor and team.
- Thought examination, catching and then challenging ANTs (Automatic Negative Thoughts), and thought-reframing are skills utilized in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy that can vastly assist in addressing how your mind responds to pain.
- Reducing cortisol, tapping into your parasympathetic nervous system, and implementing distress tolerance skills. An example of this would be deep breathing.
- Add enjoyable, relaxing habits/activities into your daily routine, for example, journaling.
- Build and maintain a healthy relationship with movement, for example walk a mile, 3x per week.
- Implement self-compassion and healthy self-talk, such as being kind to yourself if you took your rescue meds too late.
- Foster meaningful connections and community, such as spending time with family or calling a close friend.

Appendix 2

Lewis Headache Center

Yoga for Headache & Migraine



Why is yoga important in managing my headache or migraine?

Stress is a common and well known trigger for migraine. And let's face it! Life is busy these days. We often find ourselves rushing from one thing to the next, day in and day out. It's hard to avoid or prevent it, so it would be helpful instead if we learn how to change and control our reactions to how we deal with stress. Practicing yoga is one way to better manage our daily stressors, and by doing so, we are more equipped to calm our brain and body when experiencing headache and migraine.

How do we do this?

Yoga's ability to help manage the stress of our modern life has been extensively researched. Helpful techniques we can implement to manage our stress include yoga, meditation, breathing exercises, biofeedback, mindfulness based stress reduction, and regular cardiovascular exercise.

Let's try some yoga techniques below.

Breathing Exercises:

Breath Awareness

Take a moment, and count the length of your inhale and exhale. Initially, don't change the number, just observe.

Extending the Breath

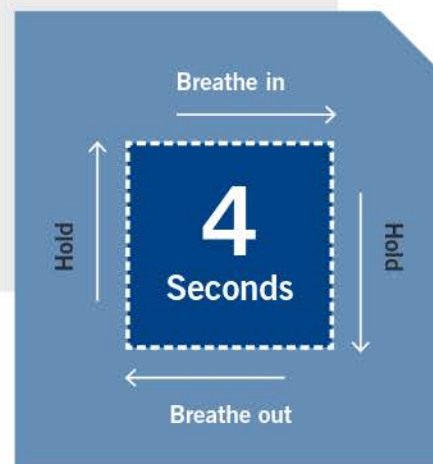
Slowly change your breathing to inhale for three counts, and exhale for three counts. Then progress to inhale for four counts, exhale for four counts. Notice any changes in your body and mind.

Then progress to the next exercise:

Box Breathing

Grab a timer, and take a comfortable seat. Find your breath, then inhale four counts, hold four counts, exhale four counts, hold four counts. Repeat this simple technique for three to five minutes. Take a moment and reflect on how your mind and body feels.

Our breath is a direct connection to our parasympathetic nervous system, which helps to calm our body and mind from stress.



Yoga

Modified Sun Salutations

A classical sun salutation is a wonderful way to stretch the body, however it might not be appropriate for you if you cannot tolerate lowering your head below your heart. Try the following modified sequence as an alternative:

1. Place a chair with the backrest facing towards you a couple feet in front of you. Stand up tall, with your feet hip distance apart, and exhale while you bring your hands together in front of you.
2. **Inhale:** Reach your arms up overhead.
3. **Exhale:** Reach and hold on to the back of the chair, and let your spine straighten and extend as you bend over from the hips. This is a modified version of Downward Dog pose.
4. **Inhale:** Step your left leg forward into a lunge position. *Optional:* Reach your arms up overhead.
5. **Exhale:** Step your left foot back to return to Downward Dog.
6. **Inhale:** Lean forward to straighten your body into a plank.
7. **Exhale:** Lower your heels and return to Downward dog.
8. **Inhale:** Step your right leg forward into a lunge position. *Optional:* Reach your arms up overhead.
9. **Exhale:** Step your right foot back to return to Downward dog.
10. **Inhale:** Stand up tall and reach your arms up overhead.
11. **Exhale:** Bring your hands together in front of your heart.



Repeat the sequence two to three times, then pause and notice the effects.

How do I find a yoga class?

Although it is best to go to classes in person to get live feedback and corrections from a certified instructor, the pandemic or even your headache may prevent you from going. Here are some ideas to try yoga at home:

- **Barrow Yoga Videos**



- **Miles for Migraine:** free yoga & mindfulness classes, meditations, and art therapy



- **Apps:** There are a lot of Apps available for yoga, meditation and breathwork. Below you can find a few we find helpful:

- Juva for Migraine
- Insight Timer
- Headspace

- **In person:** Once you feel confident to go to an in-person class, it is good to check out your local yoga studio or recreation center for their current class schedule. Start out slow with beginner classes and gradually work on progressing to more advanced classes.

Tip: Try out different classes to find the teacher and class style that suits you the best.

Appendix 3

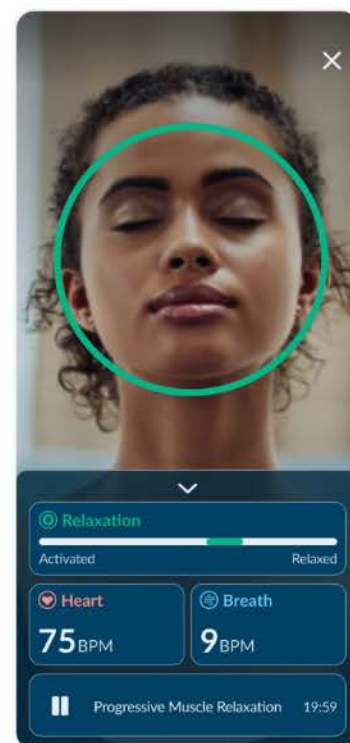
Biofeedback

Biofeedback works by using an external device to teach you how to regulate normal bodily systems such as your breathing rate and heart rate. Although these processes run in the background in our day to day activities, we are consciously able to influence them. By doing so we can consciously tap into regulating our own nervous system. This has been heavily researched and promoted by institutions such as the American Migraine Foundation and the National Headache Foundation. It has been recommended that in order to see benefit from Biofeedback you need to practice biofeedback for 20 minutes a day, at least five days a week for two to three months. This is quite a commitment, however it would be without side-effects from medications, and help other comorbidities associated with headache and migraine, namely anxiety, stress and depression to name a few.



Recently a Biofeedback app, Juva for Migraine, was developed by clinical psychologist and headache specialist, Dawn Buse.

It utilizes the sophisticated camera on the iPhone to pick up your heart rate and respiration rate in real-time. They combined this with breathing exercises, and guided relaxation.



When we have been living in chronic pain, we have hardened the fight or flight pathway in our neurological system, thereby heightening our perception of pain. In this sympathetic nervous system of fight or flight, we are training to reinforce pain pathways, amplifying our pain perception. When we practice biofeedback, we are tapping into our parasympathetic nervous system, and with regular practice we are able to reverse our neurological framework to process pain in the rest and repair state.

Appendix 4

Mindfulness

What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness can be described as a state of non-judgmental awareness, particularly focused on the present moment. Three important components of mindfulness include intentionality, attention and acceptance. Mindfulness expert Jon Kabat-Zinn once said “Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way; on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally. The concept of mindfulness has a long history, and is linked to many cultures and religions throughout the world. It is an approach and practice that is extensively researched for its numerous benefits to the human mind and body. The benefits of mindfulness aren’t exclusive, and can be especially helpful in managing symptoms of headache or migraine disorders.

Why?

Mindfulness practice can:

- Decrease symptoms of anxiety, stress, and chronic pain
- Improve cognition, concentration, and emotion regulation
- Assist with sleep and quality of sleep
- Increase tolerance of distressing situations;
- Increase relaxation and increase one’s ability to cope with difficult situations (Baer, 2003).



Several studies have found, when practiced regularly, mindfulness may assist in the reduction of headache and migraine disorder related symptoms. One 2018 meta-analysis found that mindfulness meditation practice significantly reduced pain intensity and headache frequency for the research participants (Gu, Q., et al., 2018). Another recent study published in JAMA concluded that participants of an eight week Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction program saw overall improvement in their disability, quality of life, self-efficacy, pain catastrophizing, and depression (Wells et al., 2020).

How?

Mindfulness helps to change our responses to internal and external stimuli, ultimately shifting how we respond to things like pain or stress. Mindfulness can be implemented into one’s daily life in many ways. It may be through informal mindfulness exercises that include slowing down, and focusing on one-thing-in-the-moment. It can also be implemented through more formal practices like meditation or yoga. One informal mindfulness exercise to try during any part of your daily routine that can assist in bringing your awareness to the present moment, is doing only one thing fully. For example, while doing one task (i.e., washing the dishes, eating your lunch, driving to work, taking a walk), only do the one task, eliminating all other distractions, focusing on that one task.

- Observe your experience, without judging or evaluating it.
- Describe in your mind what you are doing or seeing.
- What do you see, hear, touch? Do you feel something? Give words to your feelings. Keep them free of judgments or evaluations.
- How do you feel as you conclude your task? What are the physical or mental differences you feel now, than before your mindful task?



Examples of Mindfulness

- Mindful walking
- Meditation or prayer
- Yoga or other intentional movement
- Journaling
- Mindful breathing
- Gratitude practice

Taking small steps, engaging in different mindfulness activities or practices, and building these into your routine can be a powerful and essential component of reducing stress, tension, and other symptoms of headache or migraine disorder. It may also be most effective when implemented alongside additional headache treatments, including medication and evidenced-based therapeutic modalities such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy or Biofeedback.

Take a look at the additional resources below to expand your mindfulness practice!

Apps

- Insight Timer
- Stop Breathe Think
- Juva for Migraine
- Healthy Minds
- Calm
- Ten Percent Happier
- Headspace
- Mindfulness Daily
- Brain.FM
- Breathwrk

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Appendix 5

Wellness

What is Wellness?

We often think of wellness as our physical and mental well-being. However, recent models have adopted a multidimensional definition of wellness, including: physical, emotional, financial, occupational, social, environmental, intellectual, and spiritual wellness. The Global Wellness Institute has defined wellness as “the active pursuit of activities, choices and lifestyles that lead to a state of holistic health” (Global Wellness Institute, 2021).

8 Dimensions of Wellness



Why is it important?

Addressing all aspects of wellness will help you to live a fuller life and help you to navigate through challenging times, such as, dealing with chronic pain. At Barrow Neurological Institute, we not only aim to address your pain, as well as provide you with the tools to help you thrive in your everyday life. This means focusing on all aspects of our wellness. Let’s discuss the 8 Dimensions of Wellness and how we can address them to improve every aspect of our lives.

Physical wellness encompasses your body, how you fuel it and how you move it. When we optimize our physical body’s function, we are more equipped to deal with the stresses of everyday life. It is important to understand the best way in which we can nourish, move and rest our body.

- Drink water - aim for at least 75 oz.
- Eat a balanced diet (Make a consultation with our dietitian).
- Exercise 20-30 min a day doing something you love.
- Set up good sleep habits such as going to sleep at regular times, keeping up with sleep hygiene, avoiding screen time in the evening, or implementing meditation or journaling before sleeping.
- Talk to your doctor when health concerns arise.

Emotional wellness is defined by the National Institutes of Health as “the ability to successfully handle life’s stresses and adapt to change and difficult times” (NIH, 2021). They strongly encourage a wellness toolkit that encourages brightening your outlook on life, stress reduction strategies, developing mindfulness, and strategies for coping with loss, as well as strengthening our social connections.

- Try keeping a gratitude journal (try *The 5 Minute Journal*).
- Develop healthy cognitive behavior strategies that harness a positive mindset.
- Implement tools for stress management.

Financial wellness is defined as “the dynamic relationship of one’s financial and economic resources as they are applied to or impact the state of physical, mental and social well-being” (Frazier, 2022). Ways to improve your financial wellness are:

- Creating and sticking to a budget.
- Pay off your credit card, or set small goals to become debt free.
- Saving for an emergency fund.
- Maximize your healthcare costs by understanding and knowing your benefits.

Occupational wellness is more than just having a job, our occupational wellness helps us to find a profession that adds meaning and purpose to our lives. It is important for us to find a vocation that is fulfilling, where we develop good relations with co-workers, and that fosters growth both personally and professionally.

- Find what makes you feel alive, and go do that!
- Set and check in on your professional goals.
- Get an ergonomic evaluation to check your work posture.
- Honor your work-life balance - take your vacation!
- Develop deeper connections with your co-workers.

Social wellness became all that more important and challenging during a global pandemic. We thrive on our connections with others. According to the National Institutes of Health, “positive social habits can help you build support systems and stay healthier mentally and physically” (NIH, 2021).

- Try volunteering, joining groups such as choir, theater, gardening, or even support groups.
- Find a workout buddy, or try exercising with the family.

Environmental wellness “is a process that involves learning about and contributing to the health of the planet” (Western University, 2022). This process enhances our respect for our surroundings and each other. We cannot always choose our environment, but we can always try to optimize our surroundings to the best of our capability. This could provide a greater sense of comfort and reduce overall anxiety.

- Living Green: Conserving water, recycling, reducing waste.
- Eating Green: eating local foods, using reusable shopping bags.
- Working Green: Go paperless, volunteering at an environmental organization.

Intellectual wellness is about developing your mind by harnessing creative activities. Try:

- Engaging in thought provoking literature and debates.
- Picking up new skills such as a hobby or language.
- Play around with cognitive puzzles.

Spiritual wellness revolves around our connection to something greater than ourselves, and helps us deepen our values and morals, and live a life with more meaning and purpose. We can expand our spiritual wellness through prayer or meditation, or even just by adopting a positive outlook on life.

- Research different churches and places of worship.
- Incorporate prayer or gratitude before meals.
- Join a small group at your place of worship.

Resources

Websites

- Lewis Headache Center resources - BarrowNeuro.org/Centers-Programs/Migraine-and-Headache-Disorders/Resources
- American Migraine Foundation - AmericanMigraineFoundation.org
- The Coalition for Headache and Migraine Patients - HeadacheMigraine.org
- Miles for Migraine - MilesForMigraine.org
- Migraine at Work - MigraineAtWork.org
- Migraine Again - MigraineAgain.com
- U.S. Pain Foundation - USPainFoundation.org
- UCLA Mindful Awareness Research Center - UCLAHealth.org/Marc/Default.cfm
- Patient Advocate Foundation - PatientAdvocate.org
- American Headache Society - AmericanHeadacheSociety.org
- National Headache Foundation - Headaches.org/Resources

Apps

- Migraine Buddy - Tracking
- Juva for Migraine - Biofeedback
- Insight Timer - Meditation
- Calm - Meditation
- Headspace - Meditation
- Curable - Psychology
- UCLA's Mindful App

Video

- Lewis Headache Center Yoga videos [Yoga for Migraine: Full Body Flow](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JmKdHhKdHhK)
- 100 days of Vitamin Sea - VitaminSeaFilm.com

Podcasts

Headache and Migraine Specific

- Heads Up - Podcast for the National Headache Foundation
- Move Against Migraine - Podcast by the American Migraine Foundation

On Life and Mindfulness

- Things That Will Help with Buffy Barfoot
- On Purpose with Jay Shetty
- 10 Percent Happier

Other

- Ologies: “Dolorology” with Rachel Zoffness
- The One You Feed

Books

Migraine

- *The Women’s Guide to Managing Migraine* by Susan Hutchinson

Migraine & Diet

- *The Migraine Relief Plan* by Stephanie Weaver
- *The Migraine Relief Diet* by Tara Spencer
- *The Dizzy Cook* by Alicia Wolf
- *Mindfulness & Meditation*
- *Full Catastrophe Living* by Jon Kabat-Zin
- *The Power of Now* by Eckhart Tolle
- *The Untethered Soul* by Michael Singer
- *Think Like A Monk* by Jay Shetty
- *Mindfulness Meditation for Pain Relief* by Jon Kabat-Zinn
- *The Miracle of Mindfulness* by Thich Nhat Hanh

Pain Psychology

- *The Pain Management Workbook* by Rachel Zoffness
- *The Way Out: A revolutionary Scientifically Proven Approach to Healing Chronic Pain* by Alan Gordon
- *You Are Not Your Pain: Using Mindfulness to Relieve Pain, Reduce Stress, and Restore Well-Being---An Eight-Week Program* by Vidyamala Burch
- *Mind Over Mood, Second Edition* by Dennis Greenberger, Christine A. Padesky, Aaron T. Beck

Sleep

- *Why We Sleep: Unlocking the Power of Sleep and Dreams* by Matthew Walker
- *Sleep Smarter: 21 Essential Strategies to Sleep Your Way to a Better Body, Better Health, and Bigger Success* by Shawn Stevenson
- *Breath: The New Science of a Lost Art* by James Nestor

Courses

- Migraine Masterclass: get a free code from your Barrow provider. MigraineMasterClass.com
- Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction Course - MindfulLeader.org
- Mindfulness Made Easy - MindfulnessExercises.com/Free-Online-Mindfulness-Courses/Mindfulness-Made-Easy
- Headache School - Medicine.Utah.edu/Neurology/Headache-School

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