



Pain -- Facial Pain Q:

by award-winning author / stress-relief expert **Susie Mantell**

Q: Dear Susie, I am constantly tense in my nasal area, which causes headaches. I cannot find a relaxation technique for my nose and sinuses. Deep breathing helps somewhat. What else might help?

A: A surprising number of people experience facial pain and associated headaches and sadly, these can be very difficult to diagnose, and to control. Some is the result of trigeminal neuralgia, or of migraine syndrome, TMJ or other dental issues. It's important to be assessed by a physician familiar with facial pain and tension so a neurologist is often a good place to start. In addition to the breathing practices useful for relieving stress and muscular tension, ask your physician if the following may be helpful as well.

Many years ago, I accidentally discovered extraordinary headache relief through closed eye movements. Lying down, with eyes closed, I'd experiment with s-l-o-w-l-y rocking the eyeballs from ear to ear, or visualize slowly "telescoping" the eyes in and out, or circling them, intuitively following where the eyes led for relief. Some people find these sensations unpleasant, so if that's the case for you, then it's not the way to go. For others, these eye movements can relieve facial pain, tension and headache. There is no medical basis of which I am aware but I wonder if perhaps it's comparable to stretching. As always, ask your own doctor first if it might be worth a try.

Try massage and reflexology, asking the therapist to concentrate on your facial and sinus reflex points. Guided imagery relaxation CDs like my own, *"Your Present: A Half-Hour of Peace,"* which includes some focus on the face, eyes, ears and head muscle groups may help too.

Ask your dentist to evaluate you for TMJ, examining your molars, your bite and feeling the jaw and facial muscles. Sometimes TMJ and dental infections are associated with sinus problems. If left untreated, these can become quite serious so it is wise to get evaluated promptly. You might also try plain old -fashioned facial stretches--contorting into weird expressions. (*You might want to try that one alone! lol*) Hope this is helpful. On my website, find more tips for TMJ, breathing, stretching and pain management at www.relaxintuit.com

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