

Skating To Better Health

by Peggy Fleming

To Relieve Headaches, Be Proactive

(NAPSA)—Here's an idea you may be happy to get your head around: Doctors have more ways than ever to relieve headaches. That's just as well, considering that the National Institutes of Health estimates that 45 million Americans suffer chronic headaches.



Fleming

Headaches result when muscles and blood vessels outside your skull put pressure on your nerves, sending a "pain message"

to your brain.

Try these tips

Get A Good Night's Sleep:

Your nervous system requires sleep to function properly. A regular schedule of seven to nine hours of sleep a night will keep your body's sleep-wake cycle in order. Changes to your sleep schedule can cause cluster headaches, which occur without warning and are characterized by a sudden, sharp pain that can reach maximum intensity within minutes of onset.

Reduce Tension: Muscles in the neck, shoulder and scalp tighten and contract as a response to stress. This anxiety-induced reaction can lead to tension headaches. I use breathing exercises to reduce stress. To rid your body of tension, try this: Take slow, deep breaths to clear your mind.

See Your Doctor: Go to the emergency room for headaches that start after a head or neck injury or cause difficulties with speech. If headaches occur at least three times a month, or you experience an abrupt, severe headache, see your doctor.



To reduce headaches, maintain a regular exercise routine. It will relax your muscles.

Save Money

If the cost of treating your headaches is adding to your tension, consider this: There's a health care discount program that offers savings on prescriptions, vision care, dental care, complementary and alternative health care treatments, vitamins and supplements by mail and more than 1,500 fitness clubs nationwide. Called HealthSaver, the program is not an insurance product or service and it's offered by Affinion Group, a leader in membership, insurance and loyalty marketing businesses.

Learn More

More information is online at www.healthsaver.com and toll free at 1-800-7HEALTH (1-800-743-2584).

During her career as a figure skater, Peggy Fleming earned five U.S. titles, three world titles and a 1968 Olympic gold medal. She was the first skater invited to perform at the White House and in 1999 was honored by Sports Illustrated as one of seven "Athletes Who Changed the Game."