

Some people experience headaches following a massage. Here are some possible reasons for the headache and ways to prevent headaches in the future.

1. Altered Bloodflow -

Tense muscles constrict blood vessels. Once the muscles relax during a massage, the blood vessels dilate and a higher volume of blood can flow to your brain, and possibly trigger a headache.

2. Release of "Toxins" to the Bloodstream-

Tight muscles restrict movement of lymph. Lymph drainage from our tissues back to our blood vessels occurs from the pumping action of muscle contraction/relaxation. If muscle fibers are tight and restricted, lymph fluid stagnates in the muscles and toxins build up in the tissues ("toxins" means metabolic wastes like lactic acid, dead bacteria and viruses, chemicals we ingest, etc.).

Massage encourages lymph drainage by relaxing the muscles and physically moving lymph via pressure applied to the tissues. Thus, massage can release the accumulated waste products back to your blood, and may cause headache.

Immediate Prevention: Drink water to flush these toxins out of your bloodstream (AT LEAST 1 liter) after a massage.

Long Term Prevention: Regular stretching between sessions. Stretching encourages lymph circulation by mechanically pumping lymph through the muscles and preventing prolonged muscle tightness. Also, avoid eating foods that contain lots of additives and preservatives.

3. Drop in Blood Sugar –

A drop in blood sugar can trigger a headache, so try eating a light healthy snack an hour or so before a massage. Also, drink a small glass of juice (**NOT SODA!!!!**) after the massage to avoid a major dip in blood sugar levels.

4. Dehydration –

Hydrate **BEFORE** your session. Make sure to hydrate yourself during the day leading up to your massage. Massage moves fluids through your tissues and into the bloodstream for processing. If the body was already dehydrated before you receive massage, a headache can still occur even if you drink gallons of water after a massage.