



2026 INTERVIEW SUMMARY SHEET

SPEAKER

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TITLE & ORGANIZATION

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TOPIC

How to Be Active When Exercise Triggers Your Migraine

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Many "exercise-induced" migraine attacks are actually triggered by secondary factors like overheating, dehydration, or drops in blood sugar during the workout.
- For those who are highly sensitive, finding a duration of movement that does not trigger an attack (even if only 3–5 minutes) is the necessary starting point for building tolerance.
- The brain is plastic and can be retrained to be less reactive to physical exertion through consistent, low-intensity exposure.
- Clinical evidence suggests that 30 minutes of moderate aerobic exercise three times per week contributes to a significant reduction in migraine burden.
- Internal dialogue, such as acknowledging one is "sore but safe," helps reduce the fear-avoidance cycle that often prevents chronic pain patients from moving.

KEY TREATMENTS

- Chair yoga
- Electrolyte-containing fluids
- Exercise
- Pain reprocessing therapy (PRT)
- Pilates
- Tai chi
- Walking
- Yoga

NOTABLE QUOTES

"Exercising with migraine is a marathon, not a sprint. It takes patience, it takes experimentation, and building the intensity and the length of time ... takes a long time."

"You are not a failure if you can't get out and do a 30-minute workout. You are just a human trying to do the best that you can while living with migraine."

PRACTICAL STEPS

- Identify a baseline: Determine the maximum amount of time you can walk or move without triggering an attack and start there.
- Pre-exercise checklist: Before starting activity, hydrate, have a small snack, and bring appropriate gear to manage triggers.
- Always cool down: Never stop high-intensity movement abruptly; follow it with at least 5–10 minutes of very slow walking to let the heart rate and blood pressure stabilize.
- Learn from experience: If an attack occurs after exercise, don't view it as a failure; record the conditions (weather, intensity, food intake) and adjust the approach for the next session.
- Explore low-impact alternatives: If upright exercise is difficult due to vertigo or pain, try seated options like chair yoga, tai chi, or bed-based stretching.