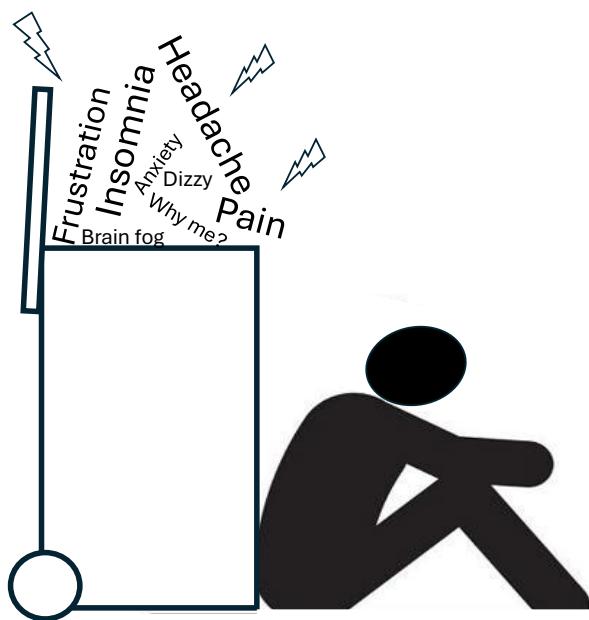


# Manage Your Migraine Holistically

## Is this for me?



## A Three Minute Read

This project is designed to create a space to support you on a journey to take back control of your migraine. It combines best medical practice combined with approaches that mobilise the body's intrinsic ability to heal itself.

The Holistic Handbook contains all the information you will need. It is summarised in “The Essentials” if you want a shorter read, and there is a comprehensive online course. An appendix offers more detailed explanations and theoretical perspectives for those wanting to go into things in more depth.

Everyone’s migraine is different, so there will be no one correct way forward. You will need to follow what feels right for you.

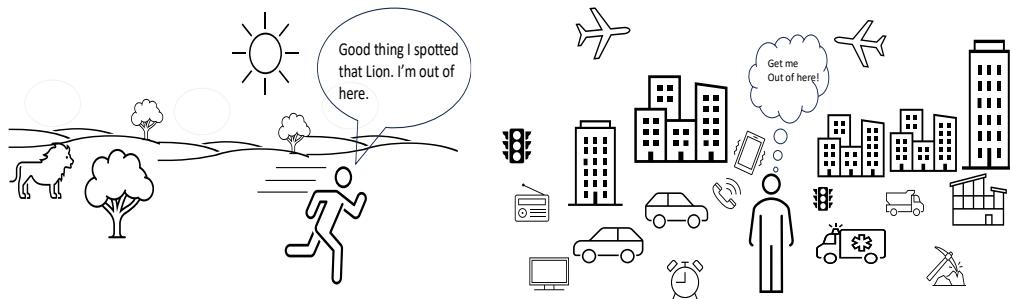
# Background

A good starting point is to look at predisposing, precipitating and perpetuating factors for migraine.

Factor	Input	Mediated by
Predisposing factor	 Family predisposition	 Genetics
Precipitating factors		<b>Specific triggers.</b> <b>Sensory overload.</b> Changes in internal and external environment.
Perpetuating Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Physical, social and psychological stressors. Unprocessed emotions. Our “stress bucket.”</li> <li>Problems with energy production</li> </ul> 	<b>Mediated by chronic inflammation.</b> <b>Low levels of fuel for the brain</b>

## Predisposing factors.

Migraine is primarily a genetic disorder. People with migraine have brains that are hypervigilant and hypersensitive. This was an advantage when our brain circuits were evolving hundreds of thousands of years ago but can be problematic in today's modern world leading to brain overload.



*A brain that was advantageous when we were evolving but not in the modern environment.*

## Precipitating factors.

Specific triggers can be implicated but of more relevance is the challenge of dealing with things that change, either in our internal or external environment. For example, hormone levels, sleep patterns, stress levels, hydration levels, changes in weather.

## Perpetuating factors.

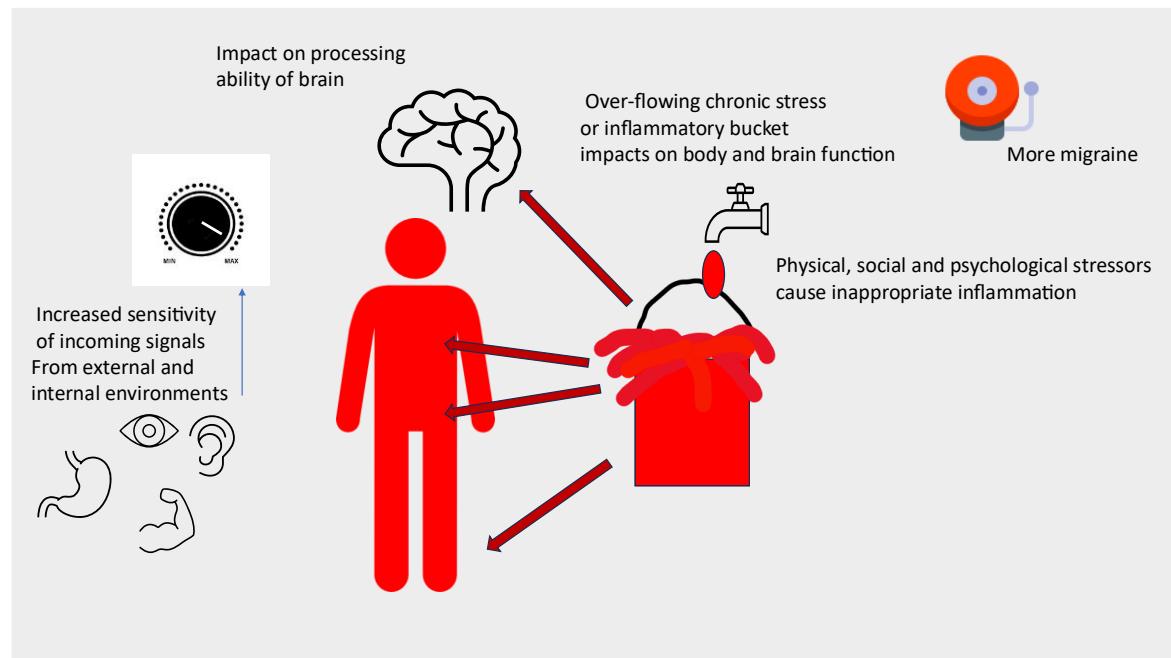
We all carry our “stress buckets” around with us. Physical, social and psychological stressors cause chronic inflammation which sensitises migraine pathways in the brain.

# Outline of the Handbook

## Part I

The first part of the handbook gets to grips with the basics exploring what migraine is and what causes it. We look at two broader concepts that are gaining increasing attention.

- Firstly, mind, brain and body are best viewed as one complex interconnected unit.
- Secondly the concept of chronic inflammation that is caused by a wide range of physical, social and psychological challenges. This sensitises the migraine threshold and exacerbates other problems associated with migraine. Chronic inflammation is held across the body, “The body keeps the score.”

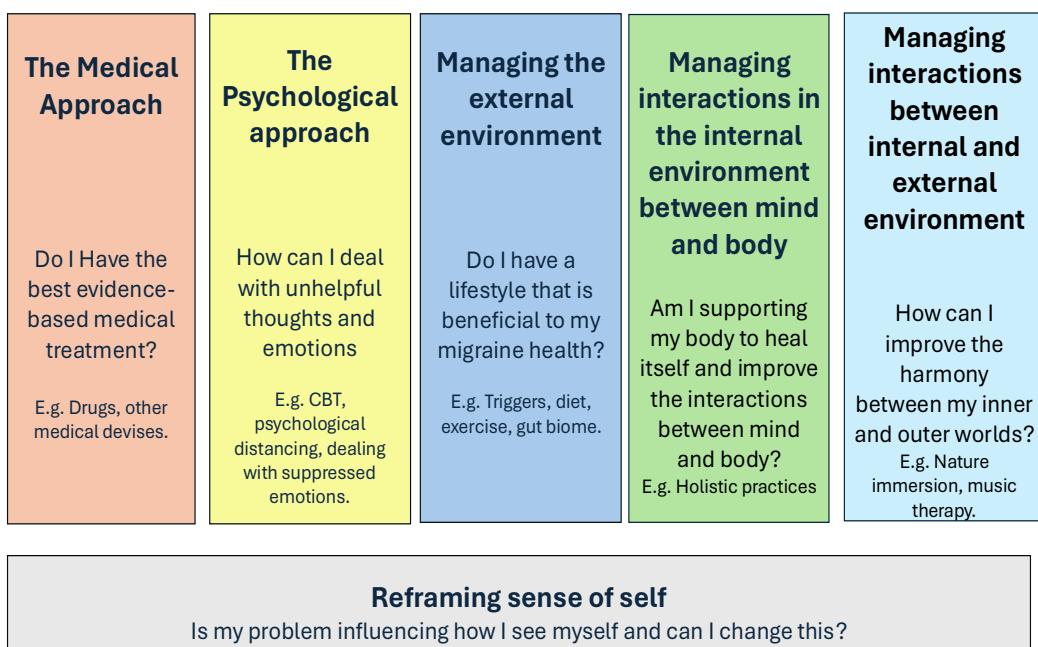


Stressors cause chronic inflammation which lowers the migraine threshold and contributes to other problems associated with migraine such as fibromyalgia and irritable bowel syndrome.

## Part II

The second section of the handbook focuses on things you can explore to take back control. This is set within a holistic approach. Holistic is taken to have two meanings, derived from its Greek root “Holos” meaning “Whole.”

- *Holistic practices* focus on harmony between mind, body and external environments.
- *A holistic approach* infers a wide range of different disciplines that include holistic practises. The figure below outlines the holistic approach this handbook takes.



### *The Holistic approach of the handbook*

There are five pillars that offer detailed approaches to managing your migraine. Some may resonate with you, others may not. For some people, migraine can take over their lives and impact upon their sense of self. The five pillars are underpinned by an exploration of this area and if it is a problem, approaches you may like to think about to help you reclaim your sense of self.

All the holistic approaches we consider can be found in mainstream medical practice and have or are developing an emerging evidence base.

## Part III

The third part of the handbook deals with other issues that are relevant to migraine. The first section deals with the wide range of medical problems that are associated with migraine and options for their management.

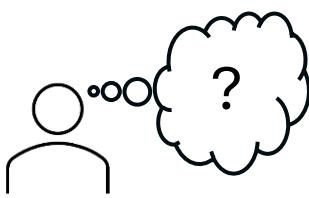
- Mental health problems, especially anxiety and depression.
- All bowel disease and in particular irritable bowel syndrome
- Fibromyalgia
- Asthma
- Epilepsy
- Restless leg syndrome
- Poor sleep
- Vertigo or dizziness
- Lax or mobile joints
- Vascular disease
- Neurodiversity and neurodivergence

#### *Other problems associated with migraine*

Other sections include migraine and Women's Health, migraine in children, migraine in the workplace and navigating the health service and how to get the best out of your General Practitioner.

#### Other useful material

Where relevant, signposting is included to further information, and occasionally in important areas, scientific papers are quoted if you want to know more.



Want to know more about triggers?

National Migraine Centre Heads Up Podcast. Series 1, episode 2.

<https://www.nationalmigrainecentre.org.uk/understanding-migraine/heads-up-podcast>

Martinelli D. Triggers of migraine: where do we stand? Curr Opin Neurol. 2022 Jun 1;35(3):360-366. doi: 10.1097/WCO.0000000000001065. PMID: 35674080.

Holistic practises that you may find helpful are included in audio format.

For example:



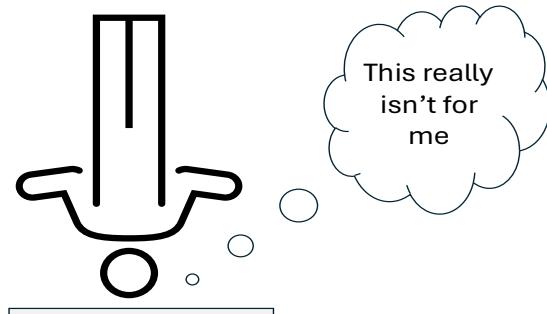
Here Georgie takes us through a visualisation to help release difficult thoughts or emotions. (8 Minutes)

<https://youtu.be/--cIQ79B8KU>

*An exercise to help reduce the impact of a thought or unhelpful emotion.*

The project has been a long time in gestation and rather taken on a life of its own, with a visual focus that may not suit everyone. Hopefully you will find something that will be helpful to you, even only if it allows you to move forward with a better understanding and a little more control over your migraine.

Take on board what feels right for you, and if its not, move on.



Below is an index of the handbook so you can get some idea of its content.

## Index of handbook

Section		Page
i).	Introduction to the handbook.	4
ii).	How to navigate the handbook.	5
	<b>Part I). Getting to grips with the basics</b>	
1.	Some important starting points.	10

2.	Understanding migraine.	22
3.	What is a holistic approach?	27
4.	Getting to grips with some basic theory.  4A. Understanding the nervous system. 4B. The concept of mind, body and brain as one unit. 4C. The inflammatory response and the problem of chronic inflammation.	31
5.	Taking the first steps on the journey.	42
	<b>Part II). Taking back control</b>	
6.	Medical management of migraine.	47
7.	Psychological approaches to managing migraine.	53
8.	Managing a favourable external environment.	59
9.	Managing a favourable internal environment. Navigating mind and body interaction.	68
10.	Managing favourable interactions between internal and external environments. Looking beyond the body.	80
11.	11. Letting go of the story. Reclaiming the self.	84
	<b>PART III). OTHER AREAS RELEVANT TO MIGRAINE</b>	
12.	Managing other conditions associated with migraine.	92
13.	Migraine and woman's health.	100
14.	Migraine and children.	103
15.	Migraine in the workplace.	105
16	Navigating the health care system in the UK and how to manage the GP consultation.	107
	<b>Appendices</b>	
A1.	How we know the world and the road to modern science.	

A2.	Insights for interacting systems from complexity theory.	
A3.	Accessing the scientific literature.	
A4.	How the nervous system works.	
A5.	The brain as a predictive organ.	
A6.	Multiscale architecture.	
A7.	How holistic practices might work.	
A8.	A background to mindfulness	
A9.	Energy flow and metaphysics.	
A10.	Further thoughts on the nature of self.	
A11.	A measure of anxiety - GAD7.	
A12.	A measure of depression - PHQ9.	
A13.	The history and current challenges of the NHS.	