

# JAN

Job Accommodation Network

Practical Solutions • Workplace Success

## Accommodation and Compliance Series

# Accommodation and Compliance Series: Migraine Headaches

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**ODEP**  
Office of Disability  
Employment Policy

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Employment Policy, U.S. Department of Labor

## Preface

The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) is funded by a grant from the Office of Disability Employment Policy, U.S. Department of Labor. JAN makes documents available with the understanding that the information be used solely for educational purposes. The information is not intended to be legal or medical advice. If legal or medical advice is needed, appropriate legal or medical services should be contacted.

JAN does not endorse or recommend any products or services mentioned in this publication. Although every effort is made to update resources, JAN encourages contacting product manufacturers/vendors and service providers directly to ensure that they meet the intended purposes. This guarantees that the most up-to-date information is obtained.

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## JAN'S Accommodation and Compliance Series

### Introduction

JAN's Accommodation and Compliance Series is designed to help employers determine effective accommodations and comply with Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Each publication in the series addresses a specific medical condition and provides information about the condition, ADA information, accommodation ideas, and resources for additional information.

The Accommodation and Compliance Series is a starting point in the accommodation process and may not address every situation. Accommodations should be made on a case by case basis, considering each employee's individual limitations and accommodation needs. Employers are encouraged to contact JAN to discuss specific situations in more detail.

For information on assistive technology and other accommodation ideas, visit JAN's Searchable Online Accommodation Resource (SOAR) at <https://AskJAN.org/soar>.

### Information about Migraines

Migraines are recurring primary headaches that can cause severe throbbing or pulsing pain, and often come with additional symptoms such as nausea, light and noise sensitivity, weakness, and fatigue. The two most frequently discussed types of migraines in the literature are migraine with aura and migraine without aura. Migraines have no known cause, but are influenced by genetics, stress, diet, environment, medications, and more.

- Migraine with aura — less common; are accompanied by additional neurological symptoms usually related to visual disturbances
- Migraine without aura — the most common; 70-90% of those who experience migraines will not have an aura

The four phases of migraines.

- **Prodrome.** This phase starts up to 24 hours before the migraine. Early signs and symptoms include food cravings, unexplained mood changes, uncontrollable yawning, fluid retention, and increased urination.
- **Aura.** If auras are present, they might include flashing or bright lights or zig-zag lines. Muscle weakness or a feeling of being touched or grabbed may occur. An aura can happen just before or during a migraine.
- **Headache.** A migraine usually starts gradually and then becomes more severe. It typically causes throbbing or pulsing pain, often on one side of the head. But sometimes a migraine can occur without a headache. Other migraine symptoms may include

- Increased sensitivity to light, noise, and odors
- Nausea and vomiting
- Worsened pain when moving, coughing, or sneezing
- **Postdrome** (following the headache). Symptoms may include exhaustion, weakness, and confusion after a migraine. This can last up to a day.

References:

- [U.S. National Library of Medicine, MedlinePlus](#)
- [The Migraine Trust](#)

## **Migraines and the Americans with Disabilities Act**

The ADA does not contain a definitive list of medical conditions that constitute disabilities. Instead, the ADA defines a person with a disability as someone who (1) has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more "major life activities," (2) has a record of such an impairment, or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment. For more information about how to determine whether a person has a disability under the ADA, see [How to Determine Whether a Person Has a Disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act \(ADAAA\)](#).

## **Accommodating Employees with Migraines**

People with migraines may develop some of the limitations discussed below, but seldom develop all of them. Also, the degree of limitation will vary among individuals. Be aware that not all people with migraines will need accommodations to perform their jobs and many others may only need a few accommodations. The following is only a sample of the possibilities available. Numerous other accommodation solutions may exist.

### **Questions to Consider:**

1. What limitations is the employee experiencing?
2. How do these limitations affect the employee and the employee's job performance?
3. What specific job tasks are problematic as a result of these limitations?
4. What accommodations are available to reduce or eliminate these problems? Are all possible resources being used to determine possible accommodations?

5. Once accommodations are in place, would it be useful to meet with the employee to evaluate the effectiveness of the accommodations and to determine whether additional accommodations are needed?
6. Do supervisory personnel and employees need training?

### **Accommodation Ideas:**

### **Limitations**

#### Headache

- Products
  - Air Cleaners & Purifiers
  - Alternative Lighting
  - Anti-Glare Filters for Fluorescent Lights
  - Cubicle Doors, Shields, and Shades
  - Environmental Sound Machines / Tinnitus Maskers / White Noise Machines
  - Fluorescent Light Tube Covers
  - Full Spectrum or Natural Lighting Products
  - LED Light Filters
  - LED Lighting
  - Lighting Gel Filters
  - Modified Lighting
  - Non-Fluorescent Lighting
  - Noise Abatement
  - Noise Canceling Earbuds
  - Noise Canceling Headsets
  - Masks – General/Chemical/Allergen
  - Personal Air Cleaner (Neckworn)
  - Personal Visors
  - Sound Absorption and Sound Proof Panels
  - Task Lighting
- Strategies
  - Flexible Schedule

- Job Restructuring
- Marginal Functions
- Modified Break Schedule
- Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely

#### Noise Sensitivity

- Alerting Devices
- Communicate Another Way
- Communication Access Technologies
- Fans
- Hearing Protection
- Noise Abatement
- Noise Canceling Earbuds
- Noise Canceling Headsets
- Real-time and Off-line Captioning Services
- Sound Absorption and Sound Proof Panels
- Worksite Redesign / Modified Workspace

#### Pain

- Accessories for Scooters
- Adjustable Workstations for Industrial Settings
- Adjustable Workstations for Office Settings
- Aide/Assistant/Attendant
- All-Terrain Scooters
- Alternative Input Devices
- Alternative Keyboards
- Alternative Mice
- Anti-fatigue Matting
- Anti-vibration Gloves
- Anti-vibration Seats
- Anti-vibration Tool Wraps
- Automated Filing Systems

- Automatic Door Openers
- Cake Decorating and Baking Equipment
- Carts
- Chairs with Head Support
- Compact Material Handling
- Electronic Organizers
- Environmental Sound Machines / Tinnitus Maskers / White Noise Machines
- Ergonomic and Adjustable Office Chairs
- Ergonomic and Pneumatic Tools
- Ergonomic Assessments
- Ergonomic Equipment
- Examination and Procedures Chair
- Fans
- Flexible Schedule
- Forearm Support
- Gooseneck and Other Telephone Holders
- Hair Scissors
- Head Support for Wheelchairs
- Headsets
- Light Switch Extension Handles
- Low Task Chair
- Mechanic's Seats and Creepers
- Modified Break Schedule
- Pickups, Semis, and Heavy Equipment
- Pipettes
- Professional Organizers
- Scooters
- Scribe/Notetaker
- Service Animal
- Speech Recognition Software

- Spring-Loaded Carts
- Stand-lean Stools
- Stools for Cutting Hair
- Strobe Lights
- Supine Workstations
- Talking Bar Code Scanner/Reader
- Talking Money Identifier
- Telescoping Cameras
- Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
- Van Conversion
- Wearable Anti-fatigue Matting
- Wheelchair Accessible Scales
- Wheelchair Carts/Trailers
- Wheelchair Mounts
- Wheelchairs
- Worksite Redesign / Modified Workspace
- Workstation Space Heaters
- Writing Aids

#### Photosensitivity

- Alternative Lighting
- Anti-Glare Filters for Fluorescent Lights
- Cubicle Doors, Shields, and Shades
- Fluorescent Light Tube Covers
- Full Spectrum or Natural Lighting Products
- LED Light Filters
- Light Filtering Glasses
- Lighting Gel Filters
- Sun/UV Protective Clothing
- Vehicle Window Tinting and Shades

#### Stress Intolerance

- Products
  - Apps for Anxiety and Stress
  - Environmental Sound Machines / Tinnitus Maskers / White Noise Machines
- Services
  - Behavior Modification Techniques
  - Counseling/Therapy
- Strategies
  - Flexible Schedule
  - Job Restructuring
  - Marginal Functions
  - Modified Break Schedule
  - Supervisory Methods
  - Support Animal
  - Support Person

## **Work-Related Functions**

### Light

- Alternative Lighting
- Anti-Glare Filters for Fluorescent Lights
- Flexible Schedule
- Fluorescent Light Tube Covers
- Full Spectrum or Natural Lighting Products
- LED Light Filters
- Lighting Gel Filters
- Modified Lighting
- Non-Fluorescent Lighting
- Personal Visors
- Simulated Skylights and Windows
- Sun/UV Protective Clothing
- Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely

- Transparent Window Shades
- UV Protection Shelters
- Vehicle Window Tinting and Shades

#### Noise

- Cubicle Doors, Shields, and Shades
- Environmental Sound Machines / Tinnitus Maskers / White Noise Machines
- Fans
- Flexible Schedule
- Folding Wall Partitions and Room Dividers
- Noise Abatement
- Noise Canceling Headsets
- Strobe Lights
- Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely

#### Stress

- Apps for Anxiety and Stress
- Behavior Modification Techniques
- Counseling/Therapy
- Flexible Schedule
- Job Restructuring
- Marginal Functions
- Modified Break Schedule
- On-site Mentoring
- Service Animal
- Simulated Skylights and Windows
- Supervisory Methods
- Support Animal
- Support Person
- Task Rotation
- Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
- Uninterrupted Work Time

## Situations and Solutions:

The following situations and solutions are real-life examples of accommodations that were made by JAN customers. Because accommodations are made on a case-by-case basis, these examples may not be effective for every workplace but give you an idea about the types of accommodations that are possible.

**An employee who works in a cubicle setting was experiencing migraine headaches that were triggered by the noise level; she was located in a high traffic area by the copy machine.**

The employer accommodated this employee by moving her to an area with less traffic and providing an environmental sound machine.

**An accountant had a migraine headache about twice a week, which prevented him from coming to work.**

As an accommodation, the employer allowed this employee to work from home when he had a migraine headache. If his migraine was too severe to work from home, the employee was allowed to use comp time.

**A computer programmer experienced migraines that were triggered by the noise level in his cubicle and the overhead fluorescent lighting.**

As an accommodation, his employer provided him with a noise canceling headset, disabled the fluorescent light above his cubicle, and provided natural task lighting.

**A journalist had difficulty recovering from shingles.**

She was experiencing chronic migraines and depression from six weeks of shingles, which manifested around her right eye. Her employer granted her extended leave to work on her recovery.

**A police officer experienced migraines that were triggered by fragrances.**

The employer allowed the employee to work a modified schedule and assigned them to low volume areas where it would be less likely that the individual would come into contact with people wearing fragrances.

**An assembly line worker's migraines were triggered by various fragrances.**

The employees around him often wore overwhelming perfumes that caused him to have a migraine. As an accommodation, the employer asked other employees to voluntarily refrain from wearing fragrances. The employee was also moved to a part of the assembly line where the fragrances were not as strong.

**A human resource representative had migraines several times a month, which prevented her from working.**

As an accommodation, the employer provided unpaid flexible leave after all of her paid leave was exhausted.

## Products

There are numerous products that can be used to accommodate people with limitations. JAN's Searchable Online Accommodation Resource at <https://AskJAN.org/soar> is designed to let users explore various accommodation options. Many product vendor lists are accessible through this system; however, JAN provides these lists and many more that are not available on the Web site upon request. Contact JAN directly if you have specific accommodation situations, are looking for products, need vendor information, or are seeking a referral.

## Resources

### **Job Accommodation Network**

West Virginia University  
PO Box 6080  
Morgantown, WV 26506-6080  
Toll Free: (800) 526-7234  
TTY: (304) 293-7186  
Fax: (304) 293-5407  
[jan@askjan.org](mailto:jan@askjan.org)  
<https://askjan.org>

The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) is a free consulting service that provides information about job accommodations, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the employability of people with disabilities.

### **Office of Disability Employment Policy**

200 Constitution Avenue,  
NW, Room S-1303  
Washington, DC 20210  
Toll Free: (866) 633-7365  
[odep@dol.gov](mailto:odep@dol.gov)  
<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep>

The Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) is an agency within the U.S. Department of Labor. ODEP provides national leadership to increase employment opportunities for adults and youth with disabilities while striving to eliminate barriers to employment.

### **American Academy of Neurology**

201 Chicago Avenue  
Minneapolis, MN 55415  
Toll Free: (800) 879-1960  
Direct: (612) 928-6000  
Fax: (612) 454-2746  
[memberservices@aan.com](mailto:memberservices@aan.com)  
<http://www.aan.com/>

The American Academy of Neurology (AAN) provides valuable resources for medical specialists worldwide who are committed to improving the care of patients with neurological diseases.

**American Chronic Pain Association**

P.O. Box 850  
Rocklin, CA 95677-0850  
Toll Free: (800) 533-3231  
Fax: (916) 632-3208  
[ACPA@theacpa.org](mailto:ACPA@theacpa.org)  
<http://www.theacpa.org>

The purpose of the American Chronic Pain Association is to facilitate peer support and education for individuals with chronic pain and their families so that these individuals may live more fully in spite of their pain.

**American Council for Headache Education**

19 Mantua Road  
Mt. Royal, NJ 08061  
Direct: (856) 423-0258  
Fax: (856) 423-0082  
[achehq@talley.com](mailto:achehq@talley.com)  
<http://www.achenet.org/>

To advancing the treatment and management of headache and to raising the public awareness of headache as a valid, biologically based illness.

**American Headache Society**

19 Mantua Rd.  
Mount Royal, NJ 08061  
Toll Free: (856) 423-0043  
Fax: (856) 423-0082  
[achehq@talley.com](mailto:achehq@talley.com)  
<http://www.americanheadachesociety.org/>

Our mission is to help those affected by Migraine and other Headache Disorders find and use our voices to empower patients, family members, friends, and care partners. Through education, support, advocacy, and research we will bring hope and banish the feelings of hopelessness that too often accompany these disorders. We will work to dispel myths and misconceptions, thereby working to eliminate the stigma we face all too often and replace it with compassion and understanding.

**American Hearing Research Foundation**

8 South Michigan Avenue, Suite #814

Chicago, IL 60603-4539

Direct: (312) 726-9670

Fax: (312) 726-9695

[lkoch@american-hearing.org](mailto:lkoch@american-hearing.org)

<http://www.american-hearing.org>

To promote, conduct, and furnish financial assistance for medical research into the causes, prevention, and cure of deafness, impaired hearing, and balance disorders; encourage the collaboration of clinical and laboratory research; encourage and improve teaching in the medical aspect of hearing problems; and disseminate the latest and most reliable scientific knowledge to physicians, hearing professionals, and the public.

**American Occupational Therapy Association**

6116 Executive Boulevard, Suite 200

North Bethesda, MD 20852-4929

Direct: (301) 652-6611

[members@aota.org](mailto:members@aota.org)

<https://www.aota.org/>

The American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) is the national professional association established in 1917 to represent the interests and concerns of occupational therapy practitioners and students of occupational therapy and to improve the quality of occupational therapy services.

**American Physical Therapy Association**

<http://www.moveforwardpt.com/Default.aspx>

MoveForwardPT.com is the official consumer information website of the American Physical Therapy Association.

### **Excedrin Headache Resource Center**

Novartis Consumer Health, Inc.

200 Kimball Drive

Parsippany, NJ 07054

Toll Free: (800) 468-7746

[NovartisOTC.us@novartis.com](mailto:NovartisOTC.us@novartis.com)

<https://www.excedrin.com/latest-news-and-headache-resources.shtml>

The resources provided here can help you in the prevention of headache pain, treating headache pain with and without medication, and in finding clinics and associations that address the needs of headache sufferers.

### **Mayo Clinic**

13400 E. Shea Blvd.

Scottsdale, AZ 85259

Direct: (480) 301-8000

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/>

The Mayo Clinic's mission to inspire hope and contribute to health and well-being by providing the best care to every patient through integrated clinical practice, education and research.

### **MedlinePlus**

8600 Rockville Pike

Bethesda, MD 20894

[custserv@nlm.nih.gov](mailto:custserv@nlm.nih.gov)

<https://medlineplus.gov>

MedlinePlus is the National Institutes of Health's Web site for patients and their families and friends. Produced by the National Library of Medicine, the world's largest medical library, it brings you information about diseases, conditions, and wellness issues in language you can understand. MedlinePlus offers reliable, up-to-date health information, anytime, anywhere, for free.

**Migraine Association of Ireland**

Unit 14, Block 5,  
Port Tunnel Business Park,  
Clonshaugh, Dublin 17.  
[info@migraine.ie](mailto:info@migraine.ie)  
<http://www.migraine.ie/>

Providing information, support and reassurance to migraine sufferers and those with other headache disorders.

**Migraine Relief Center**

810 Waugh Dr  
Ste 200  
Houston, TX 77019  
Toll Free: (866) 582-8863  
<http://www.themigrainereliefcenter.com/>

The Migraine Relief Center provides revolutionary treatment for its patients. We believe that every patient deserves to have relief from migraine pain. Obtain lasting results. Eliminate your need for costly medications. Get your life back.

**National Center for Biotechnology Information**

8600 Rockville Pike  
Bethesda, MD 20894  
[pubmedcentral@ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](mailto:pubmedcentral@ncbi.nlm.nih.gov)  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/>

The National Center for Biotechnology Information advances science and health by providing access to biomedical and genomic information.

### **National Fibromyalgia & Chronic Pain Association**

3857 Birch St. Suite 312  
Newport Beach, CA 92660

[nfa@fmaware.org](mailto:nfa@fmaware.org)

<https://www.fmaware.org/>

The National Fibromyalgia & Chronic Pain Association (NFMCPA) is a 501(c)3 not for profit organization. We support people with chronic pain illnesses and their families and friends by contributing to caring, professional, and community relationships. Through continuing education, networking with support groups and advocates, and affiliation with professional organizations, the members of the NFMCPA have a place to be informed, get involved, and recognize achievements.

### **National Headache Foundation**

820 N. Orleans

Suite 217

Chicago, IL 60610

Direct: (312) 274-2650

[info@headaches.org](mailto:info@headaches.org)

<http://www.headaches.org/>

Over the past 45 years, our mission at the National Headache Foundation has been to further awareness of headache and migraine as legitimate neurobiological diseases. Much has changed during this time, and with aid from advanced technology and clinical innovation, there are more treatment options than ever before. However, we understand that these diseases are still largely misunderstood and that finding the right treatment options for you requires nuanced and adaptable insight.

### **National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke**

P.O. Box 5801

Bethesda, MD 20824

Toll Free: (800) 352-9424

Direct: (301) 496-5751

<http://www.ninds.nih.gov>

The NINDS, an agency of the U.S. Federal Government and a component of the National Institutes of Health and the U.S. Public Health Service, is a lead agency for the congressionally designated Decade of the Brain, and the leading supporter of biomedical research on disorders of the brain and nervous system.

### **Remedy's Health Communités**

<http://www.healthcommunities.com>

Remedy Health Media is America's fastest growing health information and technology company. We are a leading provider of clinical resources and wellness tools that help millions of patients and caregivers live healthier, more fulfilled lives.

Our mission is to empower patients and caregivers with the information and applications needed to efficiently navigate the healthcare landscape and as a result, to permit better health outcomes through use of our products and services.

### **World Health Organization**

525 Twenty-third Street  
N.W.

Washington, DC 20037

Direct: (202) 974-3000

Fax: (202) 974-3663

<http://www.who.int/en/>

We are the directing and coordinating authority on international health within the United Nations' system.

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