



## **Dry Needling**

**Dry Needling** is a highly effective form of physical therapy for the treatment of a multitude of musculoskeletal and neuromuscular conditions. It is not appropriate for all conditions or pathologies and the use of the technique will be at the discretion of your physical therapist.

### **How does it work?**

Dry needling involves inserting a tiny monofilament needle in a muscle(s) in order to release shortened bands of muscles and decrease trigger point activity. This can help resolve pain and muscle tension, and will promote healing. This is not traditional Chinese acupuncture, but is instead a medical treatment that relies on a medical diagnosis to be effective. Dry needling is a valuable and effective treatment for musculoskeletal pain. Like any treatment, there are possible complications. While complications are rare in occurrence, they are real and must be considered prior to giving consent for treatment.

### **What conditions can be treated**

Conditions include, but are not limited to: neck, back and shoulder pain, arm pain (tennis elbow, carpal tunnel, golfer's elbow), headache to include migraines and tension-type headaches, jaw pain, buttock pain and leg pain (sciatica, hamstrings strains, calf tightness/spasms).

**Are the needles sterile?** Yes, we only use sterile disposable needles.

### **Is the procedure painful?**

The fine filament needle is very thin, solid, and flexible, which allows for the needle to be pushed through the skin versus cutting the skin. This helps reduce any discomfort that may occur with the procedure. We strive to make the treatment virtually painless, however at times a local twitch response of the muscle may be felt. When the needle is inserted into the pathological tissue the local twitch response sensation is normal and is felt only momentarily. Many patients describe this twitch response as a little electric shock, cramp, or ache sensation. These sensations are perfectly normal and even a desirable response. Your PT will make every effort to make your experience comfortable and therapeutic.

### **How will I feel after the dry needling treatment?**

This will vary but many patients experience immediate relief of their symptoms and an increase in range of motion. Soreness can also be a common response from the needling but does not occur with all people. Some individuals may experience an immediate achiness or a delayed soreness the next day. The soreness, if present, will usually last 1-2 days, and use of heat and light massage and movement will be beneficial. Mild bruising may occur at the needling sites and is more prevalent in certain parts of the body. Larger bruising may also occur, but is rare. Application of ice on the bruise will help with the soreness and the skin discoloration will last several days but is not harmful.

It is uncommon, but possible, that the treatment may temporarily increase your symptoms. This is not unusual, but if this continues past the 1-2 day window, inform your PT to allow adjustment of your program to enhance your comfort the next time. This does not mean the needling will not be beneficial to your condition.

**Will I continue to do exercises or receive other treatments?**

Yes, your personalized physical therapy program will still integrate traditional physical therapy methods, including: manual therapy, therapeutic exercise, endurance training, stabilization, and posture training.

**How many treatments will I need?**

This will depend on the category you fit in, which is determined by the state of the injury and your overall health. Remember we are attempting to cause mechanical and biochemical changes without any pharmacological means. Therefore, we are looking for a cumulative response to break the pain cycle. Your PT will be able to give you more insight after your evaluation.

**What should I do to prepare for the treatment?**

- Do not eat 30 minutes before the treatment
- Be well hydrated but empty your bladder prior to treatment
- Wear loose fitting clothing, shorts, or bathing suit for easy access to your painful areas

**What should/can I do after treatment, what should I avoid?**

Our recommendations vary depending on the amount of soreness you have and on the individual response to the treatment. Recommendations may include increasing your water intake, applying heat or ice over the area, gentle stretches and modifications of activities.

**Is dry needling treatment covered by my insurance?**

This is a physical therapy treatment and is NOT acupuncture, therefore your coverage of dry needling should correspond with your physical therapy benefits. You can discuss this further with our administrative staff if you require more information.