

ARTHRITIS & SPORTS

Orthopaedics • Physical Therapy • Wellness

Dry Needling Consent Form

What is dry needling?

Dry needling is a technique used in physical therapy to treat trigger points in muscles. Trigger points are irritable, painful areas of muscle—they feel like “knots” or “nodules” in the muscle and are small, taut bands of muscle tissue. Dry needling involves placing a small, sterile needle into the muscle at the site of the trigger point. This causes the muscle to contract and relax, which improves the flexibility of the muscle and can decrease symptoms including tightness, decreased motion, and pain.

Although dry needling involves the use of needles similar to acupuncture, dry needling is *not* acupuncture. While acupuncture has its roots in Eastern Medicine principles and is traditionally used to improve the flow of a person’s energy (qi, or chi), dry needling is used to address musculoskeletal problems and focuses solely on reducing trigger points. Only trigger points that are biomechanically linked to your treatment problem are targeted.

What are the risks of dry needling?

While these complications of dry needling are rare, we recommend that you read through the possible risks prior to giving consent to treatment.

All needling procedures have a risk of infection. To reduce this risk, our physical therapists always use new, sterile, disposable needles and thorough hand cleansing procedures when performing dry needling treatment.

Dry needling may cause a minor-to-moderate increase in muscle soreness for a few days. However, improvement in pain can be expected to occur within the first 24 hours after treatment. If a needle touches a nerve, vein, or artery and produces pain, bruising, numbness, and/or tingling, it can be expected to resolve in a few days. Bruising is a common occurrence and should not be a concern unless you are taking a blood thinner.

The most serious risk associated with dry needling is accidental puncture of a lung when needling the chest area, though this is an extremely rare complication when in skilled hands. If this were to occur, you would experience shortness of breath for several days to weeks. You would likely require a chest X-ray but no further treatment.

- Does your insurance cover Dry Needling? *If not, the SELF PAY rate is \$100*** YES / NO
- Do you have any known disease or infection (hepatitis, HIV/AIDS)? YES / NO
- Do you have a pacemaker? YES / NO
- Are you taking a blood thinner or immunosuppressant medication? YES / NO
- Could you possibly be pregnant? YES / NO

I have read or have had this form read to me and I understand the risks involved with dry needling therapy. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and express any concerns, which have been answered to my satisfaction.

NAME (Printed) _____ **DATE OF BIRTH** _____

NAME (Signed) _____ **DATE** _____

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How should I prepare for dry needling?

Be sure to wear clothing that easily exposes the part of your body that will be treated. Comfortable, loose-fitting clothing is usually best. For women who are receiving dry needling treatment in the neck and shoulder area, please wear a bra with straps that can be easily moved.

Eat and drink as you normally would before your dry needling appointment.

How will I feel after a session of dry needling?

- You may feel some soreness immediately after treatment in the areas of the body that were treated. This does not always occur but should be expected and is considered normal. Sometimes, soreness may not develop until a few hours after treatment or even the following day. This soreness varies from person to person and is also dependent on the area of the body that was treated. Typically, this soreness feels like you had an intense workout at the gym and usually lasts 24-48 hours. At your next follow-up appointment, please be sure to tell your physical therapist how long this soreness lasted.
- Bruising from the treatment is possible but not concerning. Certain areas are more likely to bruise than others. These areas include: shoulders, chest, face, and portions of the arms and legs. Large bruising rarely occurs but is possible. Use ice to help decrease the bruising. If you are concerned about bruising that develops, please contact the physical therapist who provided your dry needling treatment.
- You are likely to feel different after dry needling, both physically and sometimes even emotionally. You may feel tired or fatigued, energized, emotional, giggly or “out of it” after treatment. These responses are normal and usually last up to an hour or two after treatment. If these symptoms last longer than one day, please contact your providing physical therapist as a precaution.
- There are times when treatment may actually exacerbate your symptoms of stiffness or pain. This is normal, and it may indicate you need to follow up sooner with your physical therapist to continue treatment. If this continues longer than 24-48 hours, please tell your physical therapist so they can adjust your treatment plan if needed. Experiencing this type of reaction does not mean that dry needling cannot help your condition.

What should I do after my treatment?

We highly recommend increasing your water intake for 24 hours after treatment to reduce or avoid soreness. We also recommend soaking in a hot bath or hot tub to help relieve soreness associated with the treatment you received. If you have prescription medications, continue to take them as prescribed.

After dry needling treatment, you may do the following based on your comfort level. Please note that if it hurts or exacerbates the symptoms, then discontinuing the activity is probably best.

- Work out and/or stretch
- Participate in normal physical activity
- Massage the area
- Use heat or ice as preferred for post treatment soreness

What should I avoid after treatment?

- Unfamiliar physical activities or sports
- Doing more than you normally do
- Excessive alcohol intake

If you have any questions regarding your symptoms or after-care following a dry needling session, please call us. If you think that you are experiencing a medical emergency, please go to the emergency room. **To learn more about dry needling at Arthritis & Sports, visit our FAQ @ arthritisandsports.com/dry-needling**