

## What is trigger point dry needling?

Dry needling is a treatment utilized by physical therapists, chiropractors, athletic trainers, and physicians that involves the insertion of a solid filament needle into dysfunctional tissue known as a myofascial trigger point. Trigger points are hyper-irritable spots present in muscle tissue that elicit pain with palpation and often refer pain to other areas of the body.

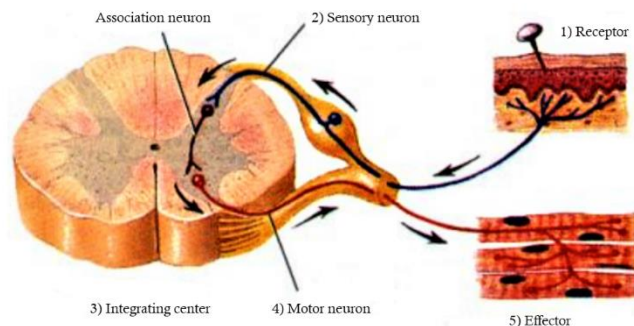


## Is trigger point dry needling the same as acupuncture?

There are many similarities between trigger point dry needling and acupuncture, but they are not the same procedure. Acupuncture originates from traditional Chinese medicine and is based on the flow of chi through the body. In contrast, trigger point dry needling is strictly based on Western medicine principles and research.

## How does trigger point dry needling work?

The exact mechanisms of trigger point dry needling are unknown. What researchers do know, though, is that inserting a needle into trigger points can cause favorable biochemical changes that assist in reducing myofascial pain. In addition, needle insertion can cause local twitch responses, which are spinal cord reflexes. These reflexes are essential to breaking the pain cycle and reducing pain.



## What type of problems can be treated with trigger point dry needling?

Trigger point dry needling can be utilized to treat a variety of musculoskeletal conditions. Such conditions include, but are not limited to: tension headaches and migraines, muscle strains, tendonitis (tennis elbow, carpal tunnel, golfer's elbow), chronic pains (fibromyalgia, chronic back pain), whiplash, and neck/back spasms.

## Is the trigger point dry needling procedure painful?

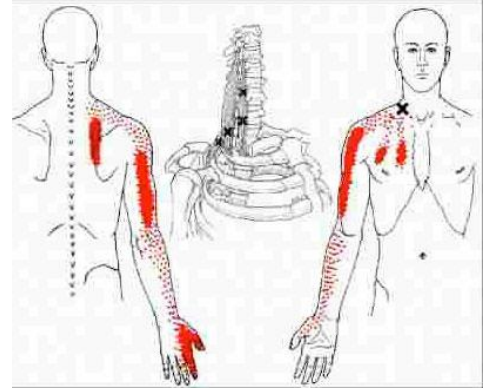
Many patients do not even feel the insertion of the needle. The local twitch response elicited by the needle can cause a very brief (less than a second) painful response. Some patients describe this as an electric shock while others feel more of a cramping sensation. Discomfort is only felt for a brief period.

## Are the needles sterile?

Yes, Clarinda Regional Health Center uses only sterile needles.

## What side effects can I expect after the treatment?

Most patients report muscle soreness after the procedure that can last 24-48 hours. Other possible side effects include bruising, and very rarely, pneumothorax if the procedure is performed over the lung field. If a pneumothorax were to occur, it will likely require a chest x-ray and no further treatment.



## What should I do after the procedure is done?

Recommendations vary depending on the amount of soreness patients experience and the individual response to treatment. If soreness is experienced, applying heat or ice over the area, gentle stretching, and modification of activities can help to alleviate discomfort.

## How long does it take for the procedure to work?

Most patients will experience some measure of change within the first treatment session, but significant resolution of symptoms may take several visits to accomplish, depending on the severity of injury.

## Why is my doctor not familiar with trigger point dry needling?

In the United States, trigger point dry needling is a relatively new procedure for treating myofascial pain. If your physician has any questions, he or she is free to call the physical therapy department at 712-542-8224.

## Once I am feeling better, how often do I need to come back to maintain my progress?

The musculoskeletal system is under constant pressure from gravity, stress, work, etc. A regular exercise regimen combined with good posture can prevent many problems. If the pain comes back, “tune-ups” are recommended to treat and prevent serious injury.

