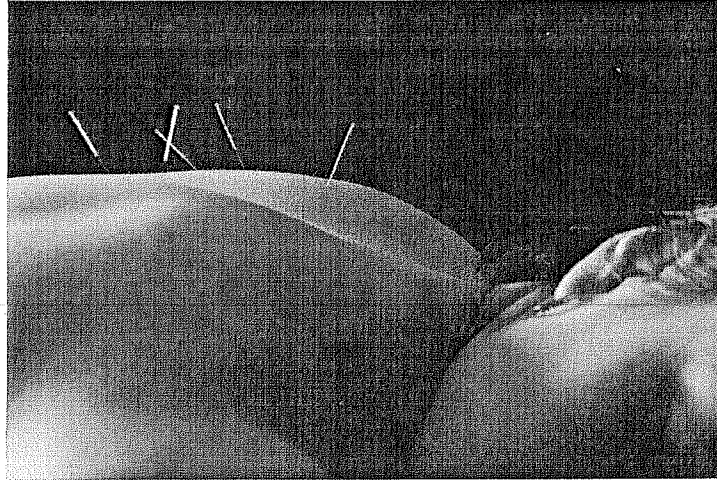


# DRY NEEDLING



## *What is Trigger Point Dry Needling?*

Trigger Point Dry Needling, also known as Intramuscular Manual Therapy, is the insertion of a filament needle directly into or over a Myofascial Trigger Point in order to release tension and decrease pain. A Trigger Point is characteristic of “Myofascial Pain Syndrome,” which is a common muscle pain disorder. Trigger Point Dry Needling has been shown to produce analgesia in 87% of sites needled. Results of Trigger Point Dry Needling include a decrease in subjective complaints, a reduction in the need for medication, and decreased stiffness.

## *What is a Myofascial Trigger Point?*

According to Travell and Simons, a Trigger Point is defined as a “...hyperirritable spot in skeletal muscle that is associated with a hypersensitive palpable nodule in a taut band. The spot is tender when pressed, and can give rise to characteristic referred pain, motor dysfunction, and autonomic phenomena...”

What this means is that a Trigger Point will present itself as a “knot” which is located along a taut band, or a hard felt line along the skeletal muscle. When compressed, pain is elicited either at the trigger point or referred to another location of the body. Electrical activity and the biochemical make-up are altered at the trigger point. The muscle becomes fatigued and is at increased risk for further injury.

## *Trigger Point Dry Needling Outlook on Trigger Points*

Trigger Point Dry Needling is a treatment that addresses dysfunction of the Neuromuscular System, specifically influencing the fascia and Trigger Points. When muscles develop Trigger Points, they neurologically remain tight, causing compression of vascular, neurological and joint/biomechanical structures; this obstructs the normal function of that tissue.

### ***How does Trigger Point Dry Needling work?***

There are a number of proposed methods for dry needling: direct needling of the trigger point, needling the skin over the trigger point, or needling the muscles associated with the spinal nerve innervations. In Trigger Point Dry Needling, rapidly inserting a needle into the muscle causes a local twitch response, which can alter the pathological mechanism of the trigger point. The local twitch response inhibits abnormal electrical noise at the nerve-muscle junction and changes the chemical milieu within the muscle. The needle is left in place for approximately 10 minutes or until the muscle relaxes and the pain diminishes.

### ***Where did Trigger Point Dry Needling originate?***

Dry needling dates back to as early as the 7th century when Sun-Ssu-Mo, a Taoist doctor, used needling on what he called Ah-Shih points, which corresponds with modern day trigger points. Dry needling reached Europe in the 17th century, but it was not until Dr. Travell and Dr. Simons, American Medical Physicians, published *The Trigger Point Manual*, and Dr. Lewit who introduced deep dry needling for trigger points, that Trigger Point Dry Needling became more popular in the United States.

### ***What is the difference between Acupuncture and Trigger Point Dry Needling?***

Traditional Acupuncture works on the understanding that there is an energy flow, the Qi, or Chi, in the body. Acupuncture professionals believe that a blockage in this energy flow can create problems. These problems could range from sinus infections to the common flu. The idea behind Acupuncture is to attempt to clear these blockages, allowing for balance in the body.

Trigger Point Dry Needling, on the other hand, deals exclusively with the neuromuscular aspect of a muscle. Trigger Point Dry Needling relieves pain by inserting filament needles directly into trigger points within the muscle. Sometimes it only requires the insertion of the needle to be within half of an inch of the Trigger Point to release it. This causes a local twitch response, which signals that the Trigger Point has been released. Trigger Point Dry Needling is a scientifically proven method used to relieve muscle pain, nerve pain and referral pain.

Trigger Point Dry Needling is not the same as Acupuncture. Acupuncture is part of traditional Chinese medicine, whereas Trigger Point Dry Needling is strictly based on Western medicine principles and scientific research.

### ***What does Trigger Point Dry Needling feel like?***

If the patient has active or latent Myofascial Trigger Points within a muscle, when the needle is inserted, it is usually accompanied by a sensation similar to that of a muscle cramp or a minor twitch. At Hoang Chiropractic Center, we usually palpate to find the Myofascial Trigger Points before needling. This can recreate the patient's pain symptoms, which is a very useful diagnostic tool to locate the source of the pain. We have found that patients can quickly learn to recognize and often welcome the local twitch of the muscle (caused by the needle); they usually associate this feeling with healing.

***What are the risks of Trigger Point Dry Needling?***

Trigger Point Dry Needling is a low risk procedure. The most common complaints after a needling session are usually muscle cramping and soreness. These sensations usually subside after 24 or 48 hours. Other minor adverse events include bleeding, bruising, and pain/aggravation at site of insertion.

***What conditions can be treated by dry needling?***

The purpose of Trigger Point Dry Needling is to treat myofascial pain. It has been suggested that Trigger Point Dry Needling may also treat the following conditions:

- ❖ Carpal Tunnel Syndrome
- ❖ Headaches
- ❖ Fibromyalgia
- ❖ Frozen Shoulder
- ❖ Golfer's/Tennis Elbow
- ❖ Hip/Knee Pain
- ❖ Low Back Pain
- ❖ Muscle Spasms
- ❖ Sciatic Pain
- ❖ Shin Splints
- ❖ Temporomandibular Disorders
- ❖ Tendinitis/Tendinosis
- ❖ Repetitive Strain Injuries