



## DRY NEEDLING

There are a number of “new” techniques that physical therapists are using today. Tricks in the bag. One of the techniques that has come into fashion is dry needling. In actuality dry needling and acupuncture has been used in some form or another for centuries in the alternative medicine arena. However, it has more recently become a treatment technique staple in the physical therapy world.

What exactly is “dry needling?” Dry needling also known as myofascial trigger point dry needling is similar to acupuncture. It uses small, thin sterile needles without medication or injections to insert into tissue to treat dysfunction of muscle and connective tissue that may be causing pain or stiffness. In the state of Arizona (not all states allow for physical therapists to perform this technique), you must take a state board approved course to become certified before you can use the technique on patients and certification paperwork should be filed with the state board. This is a simplified definition to be sure, but I hope you get the point (needling pun). It can be effective in treating muscle pain and stiffness and contribute to improving movement dysfunction. However, it is not a cure all.

Dry needling does have side effects and it is important that your physical therapist explains the technique and all indications and contraindications with you before using it upon you. It can be painful but should not be done in such an aggressive manner as to traumatize the tissue or the patient. It should be performed in conjunction with an exercise program that seeks to enhance and capitalize on the elimination/reduction of pain/stiffness and speed recovery. The program should focus on improving apparent muscle weaknesses or imbalances and secure joint mobility for normal functioning.

This technique is a part of some of the techniques we use to treat our patients to enhance their functioning and performance or return to function and sport. Want to learn more? Contact us at [www.elitelevelpt.com](http://www.elitelevelpt.com) and visit our [Performance Coach Site](#).

