

YOUR GUIDE TO **DRY NEEDLING**




**Lexington
Clinic**
Physical Therapy

WHAT IS DRY NEEDLING?

Dry needling is a valuable treatment **adjunct** for musculoskeletal conditions that may decrease pain, decrease muscle tightness/spasms, and/or improve muscle performance. Dry needling involves placing a fine, flexible, small sterile needle into the tissue with the intent to improve symptoms. This is not acupuncture.

As with any treatment, there are possible complications. While these complications are rare in occurrence, it is recommended that you read through the possible risks prior to giving consent to treatment.

RISKS OF THE PROCEDURE

The most serious risk associated with dry needling is accidental puncture of a lung (pneumothorax). The symptoms of a pneumothorax are pain and shortness of breath that can last for several days to weeks. This rare complication is unlikely to occur. If this were to occur, it would require an immediate visit to your physician or an emergency department. Hospitalization and further treatment may be needed.

Bruising is a common occurrence and should not be a concern unless you are taking a blood thinner. As the needles are very small and do not have a cutting edge, significant tissue trauma from dry needling is unlikely.

Dry needling can cause a temporary increase in pain for a few days followed by an expected improvement in the overall pain condition. Any time a needle is used for a procedure, there is a risk of infection; however, sterile needles and techniques are used and infections are extremely rare.

A needle may be inadvertently placed in an artery, vein, or nerve. If an artery or vein is punctured, a hematoma (bruise) may form. If a nerve is touched, it may cause pain or paresthesia (numbness and tingling) that is usually brief but may last for a few days.

FAQs

DOES DRY NEEDLING HURT?

You may feel a quick prick or twitch when the needle is inserted or hits a trigger point. Soreness afterward is common but typically mild and short-lived.

WHAT SHOULD I DO AFTER A DRY NEEDLING SESSION?

- Stay hydrated
- Use heat and/or gentle stretching if sore
- Avoid intense workouts for 24 hours
- Ask your provider about use of NSAIDS (Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drug) such as Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin, Naproxen (Aleve), Aspirin or Celecoxib (Celebrex).
- Follow any aftercare instructions from your provider

HOW MANY SESSIONS WILL I NEED?

This depends on the condition, its severity, and your response to treatment. Some people feel relief after 1–2 sessions; others may need several over a few weeks.

COST OF PROCEDURE

Unfortunately, commercial or federal insurance companies do not reimburse for dry needling services currently. Therefore, if you would like dry needling you must complete a physical therapy evaluation through your insurance or self pay (\$220 for initial visit).

If you elect to do dry needling ONLY after the initial visit, the cost is \$35/session. If you decide to participate in a formal physical therapy evaluation and treatment, the treating therapist will discuss cost.