



## Some of my clients get dry needling for their pain, but does this help?

**It may for soft tissue pain but may not for joints.**

First of all what is it? According to [WebMed](#) dry needling is safe, minimally discomforting and often an effective technique for patients with certain musculoskeletal presentations. Dry needling is a treatment performed by skilled, trained physical therapists, certified in the procedure. A thin monofilament needle penetrates the skin and treats underlying muscular trigger points for the management of neuromusculoskeletal pain and movement impairments. When dry needling is applied to a dysfunctional muscle or trigger point (which has been debated if they exist ie trigger points), it can decrease banding or tightness, increase blood flow, and reduce local and referred pain says some physical therapists. Dry needling treats muscle tissue, and its goal is to reduce pain, inactivate trigger points and restore function. **It rarely is a standalone procedure. I would highly advise against that.** It is part of an overall physical therapy program procedure. It is important to know that some insurance companies may not reimburse for the. Dry needling can be used for a wide variety of musculoskeletal issues, such as shoulder, neck, heel, hip and back pain. While research indicates dry needling is a safe and effective approach for treating and managing muscle and tendon pain more research is needed. A 2020 review suggests a positive effect of trigger point dry needling on pain and related disability in patellofemoral pain, but not knee osteoarthritis or post-surgery knee pain. Which suggest that for knee joint pain (arthritis) it may not be helpful ([review](#)). I did not see a study on joint pain and dry needling so I am more comfortable suggesting it for muscle and tendon pain and not for joint pain. For more details of the research on dry needling see this [website](#).

### Dry Needling and Acupuncture:

Dry needling is not the same as acupuncture. It uses similar tools, but that's where the similarities end. Dry needling is performed by different practitioners with different training. Acupuncture is based on Eastern medicine, while dry needling is rooted in Western medicine and evaluation of pain patterns, posture, movement impairments, function and orthopedic tests.

### **CAUTION: CAN BE PAINFUL**

According to some Runners Dry needling can be painful, and the location of the injury affect the amount of pain experienced, but it usually manifests in two ways: As the needle is inserted through the skin into the muscle, there may be a slight contraction or twitch within the muscle, that creates pain.