

Dry Needling (DN) FAQ's

What is dry needling?

Dry needling (DN) is a skilled technique performed by a physical therapist in which a filiform/monofilament (solid) needle is inserted into the skin to stimulate muscles, fascia, and connective tissue to assist in management of pain, scarring, neuromusculoskeletal dysfunction, and movement dysfunction. Electrical stimulation may be added to the DN treatment if it is deemed appropriate as it can enhance the effects of DN.

How is dry needling different from acupuncture?

DN uses needles inserted into anatomical tissue (skin, muscle, tendon, ligament, bone) to create a localized and/or systemic mechanical and biochemical change to the body's tissues. Dry needling is based on western/allopathic medicine. Acupuncture is based on traditional Chinese medicine and uses meridians to assist with balancing the chi/qui/energy of the body.

What is it used for?

DN is used for four primary purposes:

- 1) pain management
- 2) scar remodeling/management
- 3) muscle activation
- 4) muscle deactivation (think decrease spasms).

DN can be used to assist in management of chronic and acute conditions. Adding electrical stimulation to DN when deemed appropriate can enhance the effects of DN and aid in a more rapid recovery from injury or activity.

What are the benefits?

DN can:

- 1) help reduce pain both locally and systemically
- 2) assist in edema/swelling management
- 3) reduce muscle spasms
- 4) decrease the healing time of sprains and strains
- 5) improve blood flow and oxygen circulation within the body

What are the side effects?

The side effects of DN can vary from person to person and on location of the needle placement. Side effects can include localized pain, bleeding, bruising, fainting, localized skin reaction (redness, raised area), fatigue, and very rarely pneumothorax (collapsed lung).

Does it hurt?

Some people have pain upon needle insertion. Some people report an aching or cramping sensation for the length of time the needle is inserted, but this is not common. Each person and each situation is different. If a needle produces continuous pain or discomfort, it can be easily removed.

How often can I have it done?

Every three days is ideal to obtain the maximal effects of DN.

Is there anything I can't or shouldn't do after a DN session?

Vigorous exercise is not advised after DN. Walking and gentle movement is beneficial.