

Integrative Dry Needling is a highly effective form of treatment for the care of a multitude of musculoskeletal and neuromuscular conditions. It is NOT appropriate for ALL conditions or pathologies and the use of this technique will be at the discretion of your Houston Methodist healthcare provider.

How does it work? Integrative dry needling is not acupuncture (traditional Chinese medicine), as it is based on neuro-anatomy and modern scientific study of the musculoskeletal and neuromuscular systems. A very fine filament needle is inserted through the skin and into deeper tissues that are considered trigger points within the body. Dry needling works by causing a micro-lesion within the pathological tissue thus breaking up shortened tissues, inhibiting a reflex arc from the nervous system to the tissue, normalizing the inflammatory response, and centrally mediating the pain. This mechanical and neuromuscular effect provides an environment that enhances the body's ability to heal, which ultimately reduces pain.

What conditions can be treated? Conditions include, but are not limited to: Chronic tendonopathies, sprains at joint spaces and strains along all major muscular groups ie. neck, back, shoulder, glutes/sciatica, hamstrings, calves, and plantar fascia (bottom of feet). Dry needling application is at the discretion of your healthcare provider.

Are the needles sterile?

Yes, we only use single-use sterile, disposable needles.

What should I do to prepare for treatment?

Be well hydrated but empty your bladder prior to treatment.

Wear loose fitting clothing, shorts, sports bra, etc. for easy access to your painful areas. Treatment will be completed in a private area.

Is the procedure painful? The fine filament needle is very thin, solid, and flexible, which allows for the needle to be pushed through the skin versus cutting the skin. This helps reduce any discomfort that may occur during the procedure. We strive to make the treatment virtually painless, however at times a local twitch response of the muscle may be felt. When the needle is

inserted into the pathological tissue, the local twitch response sensation is normal and is felt only momentarily. Many patients describe the twitch response as a "little electric shock", "cramp", or an "ache sensation." These sensations are perfectly normal and even a desirable response, at times.

How will I feel after Dry Needling treatment? This will vary, but many patients experience immediate relief of their symptoms and an increase in range of motion. Soreness can also be a common response from the needling but does not occur with all patients. Some may experience an immediate "achiness" or a delayed soreness the next day. The soreness, if present, will usually last 1-2 days, and use of light massage and movement will be beneficial. Mild bruising may occur at the needling sites and is more prevalent in certain parts of the body. Larger bruising may also occur, but is rare. Application of ice on the bruise will help with the soreness, and the skin discoloration may last for several days, but is not harmful.

It is uncommon but possible that the treatment may temporarily increase your symptoms. This is unusual, but if treatment exacerbates your symptoms past the 1-2 day window, inform your Houston Methodist healthcare provider to adjust your program accordingly for optimal comfort at the next scheduled treatment time. This does not mean that dry needling will not be of benefit to your specific condition/injury.

Will I continue to do exercises or receive other treatments? Yes, exercise will likely continue but is specific to the needs of each individual.

How many treatments will I need? This will depend on the specific needs of said individual. The Houston Methodist sports medicine staff may use all treatment techniques to return the patient in a timely, safe, and healthy manner.

What should/can I do after treatment, what should I avoid? This will be specific to each individual, response to treatment, nature of issue being treated. Avoiding ice application and thoroughly completing safe ROM rehab exercises are the most beneficial practices to maintain after treatment.

Not all medical or therapy professionals are trained to perform the Integrative Dry Needling treatment technique.