

## Acupuncture and Dry Needling for pain relief

**A**cupuncture and Dry Needling are useful modalities to provide pain relief and assist injury rehabilitation. Some of our therapists at PhysioWorks have undergone extra training in these techniques, which we sometimes use to lessen your pain and decrease recovery time. So what is Acupuncture, and what is Dry Needling? Is there a difference? Do they really help?

### What is acupuncture?

Acupuncture originated in China over 5000 years ago. It's based on the belief that health is determined by a balanced flow of *chi*, the vital life energy present in all living organisms. According to acupuncture theory, *chi* circulates in the body along twelve major pathways, called meridians, each linked to specific internal organs and organ systems.

In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), it is said that the uninterrupted and balanced flow of energy along these meridians contributes to one's overall health. However, blockages and imbalances result in pain and illness.

By inserting very fine, sterile single-use needles at specific points along the meridians, your acupuncturist attempts to redirect and reposition the flow of energy (*chi*) for the purpose of relieving tension, stress, and pain.



### What is Dry Needling?

Dry needling is a technique for relaxing overactive muscles, which contain *trigger points*. A trigger point is a "hyper-irritable spot in a muscle". The spot is painful on compression and can give rise to characteristic referred pain and tenderness. Trigger points are commonly seen in both acute and chronic pain conditions. In simple terms, the treatment involves needling of a muscle's trigger points without injecting any substance.

The approach is based on the principles of Western medicine. It should not to be confused with the TCM technique of acupuncture. However, since the same filament needles are used in both dry needling and acupuncture, the confusion is understandable.



### Is Dry Needling Effective?

Many experts advocate the importance of clearing trigger points in both peripheral and spinal areas. Studies have shown that many patients recover more quickly, and experience less pain, than those who did not have any dry needling.

Of course, dry needling alone will not cure all your musculoskeletal ills. At PhysioWorks, we try to find the deep-down cause of your problem, and attempt to cure it from the bottom up. So we view Dry Needling as another tool in our armoury that can be used to get you pain free more quickly.

If you'd like to try dry needling with any of your future treatment sessions, please request it at the time of your appointment. It might just be the difference that gets rid of your pain!

### Joke of the Day

A gorgeous young redhead goes into the physio and said that her body hurt wherever she touched it.

Impossible!' says the physio. 'Show me.'

The redhead took her finger, pushed on her left shoulder and screamed, then she pushed her elbow and screamed even more. She pushed her knee and screamed; likewise she pushed her ankle and screamed. Everywhere she touched made her scream.

The physio said, 'You're not really a redhead, are you?'

'Well, no' she said, 'I'm actually a blonde.'

'I thought so,' the physio said. 'Your finger is broken.'