



HEALTH & WELLNESS NEWSLETTER

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EXPLORING DRY NEEDLING: WHAT IT IS AND HOW IT HELPS

Sarah (not her real name) was really struggling with fibromyalgia, a chronic condition that causes widespread pain. Completing even simple daily tasks was incredibly difficult for her, and she felt nothing was working.

But then a friend suggested she try dry needling. Sarah was hesitant at first; she'd never heard of the treatment before, and the name sounded intimidating. But then her friend explained it's a similar technique to acupuncture, just rooted in principles of Western rather than Chinese medicine. Encouraged, Sarah decided to give it a shot and scheduled an appointment with the team at Ellis Physical Therapy. To her surprise, she noticed a marked decrease in her pain the next day, and the results only improved as she worked through her sessions.

Dry needling was a lifesaver for Sarah, but it can help with more than fibromyalgia. In fact, it's an effective, drug-free pain management tool for a wide variety of musculoskeletal conditions. Today, we want to explore all things dry needling: what it is, how it works, and why you might benefit. And if you'd like to try dry needling, schedule an appointment with us today!

How Does Dry Needling Work?

As Sarah's friend explained, dry needling is very similar to acupuncture. Both involve inserting long, thin needles into key positions in the body. The difference is in how those locations are determined. Acupuncture pulls from Eastern philosophy, but dry needling focuses on loosening trigger points.

All the muscles in your body are wrapped by a tough, flexible tissue called myofascia. Healthy myofascia moves with you. But if something causes your myofascia to tighten or knot up, it can lead to pain—and not just pain at the sight of the restriction, either. Because your myofascia is essentially a giant web, a restriction in one location can cause discomfort elsewhere.

Trigger points are small knots that form in the myofascia. They can be tender to the touch, or they can cause referred pain. Dry needling uses needles to work out the trigger points, promote blood flow to the injured area, and relieve restriction in your myofascia.

And if you're wondering why it's called dry needling, the answer's simple! Some medical practitioners offer wet needling, which involves inserting pain relievers or anti-inflammatories into the trigger points. Dry needling, however, is entirely drug-free. The needle itself is the treatment.

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WHAT CONDITIONS CAN BENEFIT FROM DRY NEEDLING?

- **Joint Pain:** Struggling with pain in your neck, back, knees, hips, or elsewhere? Dry needling sessions can reduce your pain so you can move more efficiently, allowing you to complete prescribed exercises and get active.
- **Osteoarthritis:** Dry needling can also help reduce osteoarthritis pain and immobility because the needle insertion improves blood circulation in the joints, which allows the muscles to relax.
- **Soft Tissue Injuries:** We often use dry needling to manage various soft tissue injuries—that is, injuries that affect your muscles, tendons, or ligaments. These injuries can develop after a sudden trauma, but many of them are overuse injuries—injuries that develop due to repeated movements and awkward postures.
- **Chronic Pain:** As Sarah learned, dry needling is an effective treatment for chronic pain conditions such as fibromyalgia or myofascial pain syndrome.
- **Headaches:** Dry needling is an effective treatment for headaches that stem from muscle restriction.

What Else Should I Know About Dry Needling?

Dry needling is a straightforward procedure, and you don't need to do anything to prepare beforehand. Most sessions last about 30 minutes.

We strive to make the process as comfortable as possible. However, some people experience slight discomfort during insertion, especially if the injured area is tender or painful to the touch. The good news is that many people experience an immediate reduction in pain, although it may take a day or two before they experience the full effects.

Finally, we typically incorporate dry needling into a comprehensive treatment program that includes interventions such as therapeutic exercise or manual therapy, helping to ensure we address your pain at its source rather than merely masking the symptoms.

The best way to learn about dry needling is to experience it yourself! If you think you might benefit, schedule an appointment with Ellis Physical Therapy today to see if it's the right choice for you.

HEALTHY RECIPE

Summer Smoothie



- 1 ½ cups frozen mango
- 1 cup frozen sweet pineapple
- 1 cup frozen strawberries
- 2 cups orange juice
- 1 cup vanilla yogurt

Pour the orange juice into a blender. Add fruit and blend until fully puréed. Since it's frozen, you may need to stop blending and stir up the fruit a bit. Add yogurt and blend again until completely combined. Pour into a tall glass and enjoy!

<https://www.aberdeenskitchen.com/2015/07/tropical-summer-fruit-smoothie/>

Sources: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35703748/> • <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9917679/> • <https://www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/19/16/9904>

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SUMMER FUN FACTS

Do you miss the days when it was “OK” to be in the sun all day? Although there are good reasons to protect yourself from too much exposure to the sun, there are also health benefits to getting out in the sun! At Ellis Physical Therapy, we believe that part of staying healthy is staying informed. Too often, we hear that the solution to any health problem is medication, but the reality is there are a lot of benefits to getting out in the fresh air and enjoying the health benefits of sunlight!

Some fun facts about sunlight:

- **Bone health:** One of the best-known benefits of sunlight is its ability to boost the body’s vitamin D levels. For most white people, a half-hour in the summer sun produces enough sun to avoid bone-related disorders (i.e., rickets and osteoporosis). For darker-skinned people, the exposure time needs anywhere from 30 minutes to three hours to get sufficient vitamin D. This is a significant reason why darker-skinned people have a higher risk of vitamin D deficiency.
- **Mental health:** Decreased sun exposure has also been associated with a drop in your serotonin levels, which can lead to significant depression. Sunlight cues special areas in the retina of your eyes that trigger serotonin release.
- **Cancer prevention:** Although excess sunlight can contribute to skin cancers, a moderate amount of the sun has preventive benefits for the following cancers:
 - Colon cancer
 - Pancreatic cancer
 - Hodgkin’s lymphoma
 - Prostate cancer
 - Ovarian cancer
- **Skin health:** Adequate sun exposure may help treat several skin conditions, including:
 - Psoriasis
 - Jaundice
 - Eczema
 - Acne



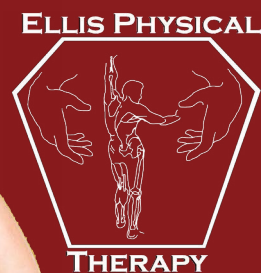
- **Other health conditions:** Research studies have revealed preliminary links between sunlight as a potential treatment for several different disorders like:
 - Rheumatoid arthritis (RA)
 - Systemic lupus erythematosus
 - Inflammatory bowel disease
 - Thyroiditis

There is no way to recommend an exact amount of exposure due to your skin type and how direct the sun’s rays are. However, generally speaking, the time of day most likely to cause problems is between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. One of the most important benefits of summertime is that longer days mean more time to spend with your loved ones or get outside to exercise. Summertime is great to get outside and take in the summer sun!

Sources: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2290997/> • <https://www.healthline.com/health/depression/benefits-sunlight#sun-safety>

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