

- No Gloves
- Poor Hygiene
- Poor Technique
- Needling through clothing

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SCAN OR NOT  
**Does Dry Needling Really Relieve Pain?**  
Having tiny needles poked into a painful muscle knot is unnerving. But can it help?

**New York Times - April 20, 2026**

**World Physiotherapy**  
SPECIALTY GROUP

“But despite their similarities, dry needling is not the same as acupuncture”

Andrea Javor



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SCAN OR NOT  
**Does Dry Needling Really Relieve Pain?**  
Having tiny needles poked into a painful muscle knot is unnerving. But can it help?

**New York Times - April 20, 2026**

A few more excerpts from the comments....

- You have to be a complete and utter klutz to puncture the lung
- Two 20-minutes sessions of dry needling gave me pain relief of a spasming muscle under my shoulder blade that 6 weeks of PT had barely addressed. I didn't find it painful at all; the tiny needle slipped in and my whole shoulder relaxed. I highly recommend it.

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SCAM OR NOT  
**Does Dry Needling Really Relieve Pain?**  
Having tiny needles poked into a painful muscle knot is unnerving. But can it help?



New York Times - April 20, 2026

- Dry needling saved me from frozen shoulder surgery
- I just started dry needling, and it's helped me a lot with my neck and shoulder pain
- Dry needling is one of the most effective therapies I have ever had. It was the only thing that helped me with a hip issue that lingered. I had so many trigger points it was insane. After a few weeks of consistent therapy, I was, amazingly, healed. This was after months of traditional physical therapy.

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SCAM OR NOT  
**Does Dry Needling Really Relieve Pain?**  
Having tiny needles poked into a painful muscle knot is unnerving. But can it help?



New York Times - April 20, 2026

A few excerpts from the comments....

- To pull one out and say it's not acupuncture because it's a little different and you want to make money off it does not mean it is not acupuncture
- If there's a scam in dry needling it's that providers with weekend courses are allowed to use acupuncture needles
- The concept of needling into trigger points has been around as long as acupuncture and is an essential part of our treatments

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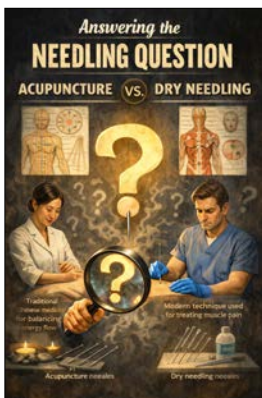
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### History

Philosophy

Clinical applications

Mechanisms

among others

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- Interdisciplinary communication would benefit both modalities
- Identified areas for future research at the intersection of acupuncture, DN, and TrP studies

Barber et al Medical Acupuncture (2023);35 (5) <https://doi.org/10.1089/acu.2023.0031>

TRIGGER POINTS AND ACUPUNCTURE POINTS FOR PAIN:  
CORRELATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

RONALD MELZACK \*, DOROTHY M. STILLWELL and ELSABETH J. FOX

Melzack et al. erroneously concluded that there is a

- 71% correlation between trigger points and acupuncture points

*Pain, (1977)3(1), 3-23*

Point	Trigger points	Acupuncture points
1	Neck and upper back	Neck and upper back
2	Neck and upper back	Neck and upper back
3	Neck and upper back	Neck and upper back
4	Neck and upper back	Neck and upper back
5	Neck and upper back	Neck and upper back
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Trigger Points And Acupuncture Points:  
Anatomic And Clinical Correlations

According to Dorsher, there is a 76% correspondence between trigger point referred pain patterns and the course of acupuncture meridians

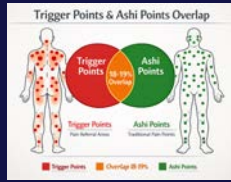


Dorsher P, Trigger points and acupuncture points: anatomic and clinical correlations. Med Acupunct. 17(3): 21-25, 2006



On the Impossibility of Trigger Point–Acupoint Equivalence:  
A Commentary on Peter Dorsher’s Analysis

- Dorsher’s analysis missed the point
- Pain with pressure is the only commonality between ashi points and TrPs
- Other acupoints exist independent of whether they hurt with pressure



Birch S. J Altern Complement Med. 2008; 14(4): 343-345

## History

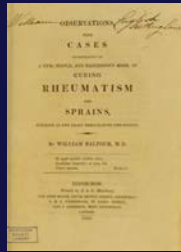
### The History of Dry Needling



## History

British physician William Balfour (1816):

- “patients as having a large number of nodular tumours and thickenings which were painful to the touch, and from which pains shot to neighbouring parts”



<https://qrco.de/bgEKcV>

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## History

German physician Strauss (1898) described

- “small, tender and apple sized nodules and painful, pencil-sized to little-finger-sized palpable bands”



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## History

German physician Müller (1912):

- “Nodules and bands require more than a cursory examination. They are likely to be overlooked because physicians tend not to search for them in a systematic and skillful manner”



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THE NEEDLE EFFECT IN THE RELIEF OF MYOFASCIAL PAIN

KAREL LEWITT

effects of dry needling in the treatment of chronic myofascial pain. 241 patients and 312 pain sites were treated by needling. When the most painful spot was touched by the needle, immediate analgesia without hypoaesthesia was observed in 86.8% of cases. Permanent relief of tenderness in the needled structure was obtained for 92 structures; relief for several months in 58; for several weeks in 63; and for several days in 32 out of 288 pain sites followed up.



Karel Lewit

PAIN, 6 (1979) 83- 90

The Needle Effect

- Highly effective, however
- No blinding
- No controls



Needling site	Effect
	Analgesia
Posterior arch of C1	95
Scars	33
Pelvic ligaments	23
Ribs	18
Spinous process of axis	16
Other spinous processes	18
Levator scapulae	16
Ichial tuberosity	13
Interdigital fohi	11
Head of fibula	10
Biceps tendon	10
Rotator insertions	7
Collateral knee ligament	6
Trapezius muscle	5
Acromioclavicular joint	4
Radial epicondyle	3
Miscellaneous	23
	271

A CONTROL, DOUBLE-BLIND COMPARISON OF MEPIVACAINE INJECTION VERSUS SALINE INJECTION FOR MYOFASCIAL PAIN

F. A. FROST B. JESSEN  
J. SIGGAARD-ANDERSEN

- A similar effect might perhaps be achieved by merely inserting the needle at the site of pain

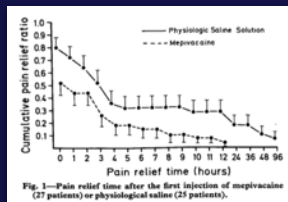


Fig. 1—Pain relief time after the first injection of mepivacaine (27 patients) or physiological saline (21 patients).

The Lancet Saturday 8 March, 1980







## Acupuncture & Physiotherapy Overlap



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The image features the World Physiotherapy Specialty Group logo in the top right corner. Three warning signs are displayed: 1) 'Dry Needling - Acupuncture with inadequate training' in red and black text on a white background. 2) 'Acupuncture, by any other code, is FRAUD.' in purple and black text on a white background. 3) 'unregulated Dry Needling is a danger to patients' in purple and black text on a white background. A fourth sign at the bottom left reads 'DRY NEEDLERS ARE NOT CLEAN NEEDLE TECHNIQUE CERTIFIED' in black text on a white background.

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## Massachusetts

### House Bill 2415 (2025)



- Two years of post-graduate, professional experience prior to the addition of trigger point acupuncture/dry needling
- 500 didactic hours and 150 clinical hours total of training in the practice of dry needling/trigger point acupuncture
- Demonstration of minimal competency through a psychometrically sound, third-party examination testing not given by the course offering training



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# acupuncture dry needling

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Narrative Review  
**Dry needling: a literature review with implications for clinical practice guidelines**

- Physical therapists should not ignore the findings of the Western or biomedical 'acupuncture' literature
- The most common term used to describe dry needling is 'acupuncture'



Dunning et al: Phys Ther Rev. 2014;19(4):252-265. doi: 10.1179/108331913X13844245102034.

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# acupuncture dry needling

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## (Electro)acupuncture Applications

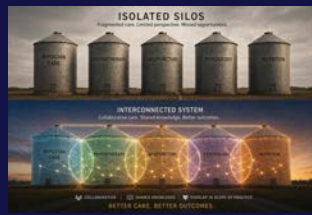


- Obesity
- Anxiety
- Alzheimer's
- Depression
- Bone metabolism
- Smoking cessation
- Fertility
- Epidural analgesia
- Gastro-intestinal issues
- Cardiac issues

## Overlap in Scope of Practice



- Modern healthcare is not a collection of isolated silos
- It is an interconnected system that depends on collaboration, shared knowledge, and, importantly, **overlap in scope of practice**



## Overlap in Scope of Practice

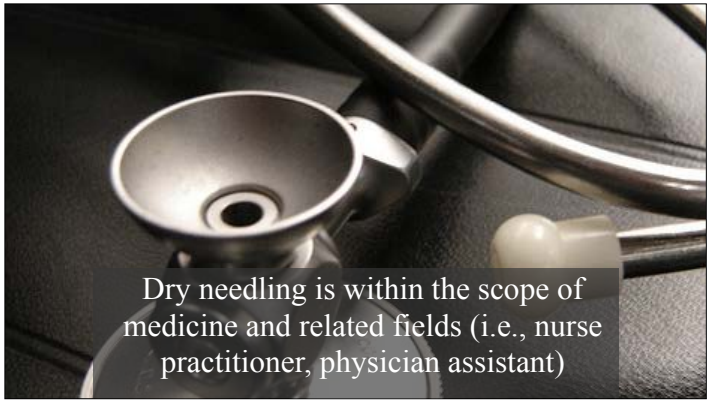


- The Federation of State Medical Boards of the United States describes it as "those health care services a physician or other health care practitioner is authorized to perform by virtue of professional license, registration, or certification"



Assessing scope of practice in health care delivery: Critical questions in assuring public access and safety, 200534.





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# indications

may be discipline-dependent

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- When an acupuncturist performs dry needling, it is acupuncture
- When a dentist performs dry needling, it is dentistry
- When a physical therapist performs dry needling, it is physical therapy
- When an occupational therapist performs dry needling it is occupational therapy
- When a chiropractor performs dry needling, it is chiropractic
- When a veterinarian performs dry needling, it is veterinary medicine

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## Dry Needling - Alberta, CA

- Dry needling is a broad term that refers to a treatment technique that uses solid filament needles to puncture the skin for therapeutic purposes
- It includes a range of approaches, such as acupuncture, trigger point dry needling, intramuscular stimulation, or similar treatments used by numerous healthcare professionals



Health Quality Council of Alberta (2014, October)

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## Dry Needling - Alberta, CA



- In Alberta, physicians, dentists, surgeons, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, chiropractors, nurses, naturopaths as well as acupuncturists are authorized to practise dry needling.....
- Dry needling (DN) includes a range of approaches that differ in their rationale for treatment, needling techniques, and training requirements



Health Quality Council of Alberta (2014, October)

## Dry Needling - Alberta, CA



- However, there is no standardization in terminology used to describe these approaches causing confusion for both practitioners and the public
- For example, dry needling can be used either to describe the practice of a healthcare professional using traditional Chinese acupuncture or to describe a healthcare professional using a trigger point approach, which is unrelated to traditional [medicine]"



Health Quality Council of Alberta (2014, October)

## Dry Needling



**Table 1: Common dry needling approaches**

Dry needling approach	Definition, focus and scope
<b>Trigger point dry needling</b>	Definition of trigger point needling?
<b>Non-vascular needling therapy</b>	Definition of non-vascular needling therapy?
<b>Local non-vascular stimulation (LNS)</b>	Definition of LNS (University of British Columbia)?
<b>Superficial dry needling</b>	A categorization of a needling technique that refers to the target depth of the needle. Unlike in the insertion of needles into the subcutaneous tissue or muscle, superficial dry needling does not refer to the depth of the needle.
<b>Deep dry needling</b>	A categorization of needling that refers to insertion of needles into the muscle and into the trigger point for a local twitch response? (Gross 2012) is an example of deep needling technique.
<b>Contemporary medical acupuncture</b>	Contemporary medical acupuncture (McRobert University)?
<b>Traditional acupuncture</b>	Acupuncture is an ancient form of Chinese medicine involving the insertion of solid filament needles into the skin at specific points on the body, to achieve a therapeutic effect?
<b>Medical acupuncture</b>	Medical acupuncture is a system of diagnosis and treatment. The diagnosis is based on a combination of Chinese theory of energy balance. The treatment involves insertion of solid filament needles and certain electrical stimulation in the body to produce therapeutic effect?
<b>Acupuncture</b>	The approach refers to the western-trained physicians for China and some parts of the western world where use combines knowledge of acupuncture with western-based anatomy, physiology, and pathophysiology?
<b>Western medical acupuncture</b>	The approach involves the insertion of fine needles, it is an adaptation of Chinese acupuncture using western knowledge of anatomy, physiology and pathology and the principles of evidence-based medicine?
<b>Medical acupuncture</b>	A medical discipline having a central role of knowledge and the integration of acupuncture from various traditions from contemporary biomedical practice?

Health Quality Council of Alberta. (2014, October)

Inspired by

- Janet Travell
- David Simons
- Richard Materson
- Karel Lewit
- Chan Gunn
- Peter Baldry
- Beat Dejung
- Robert Gerwin



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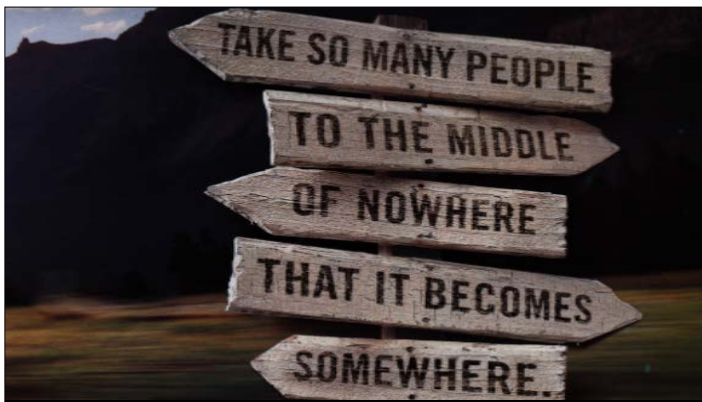
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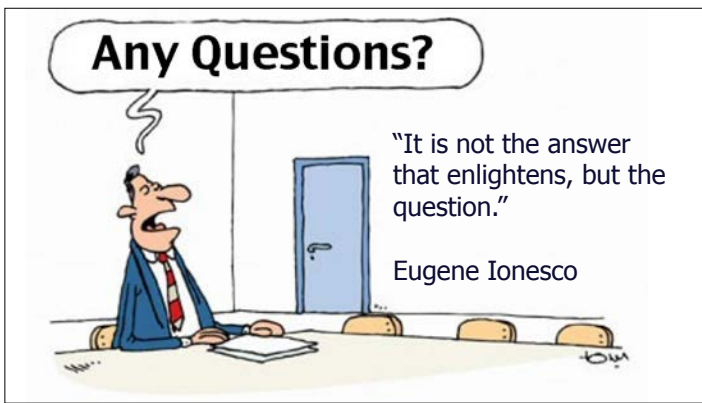
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