

What is Functional Dry Needling?

Functional dry needling (FDN) is a treatment that uses monofilament needles. FDN directly treats the neuromuscular system affecting muscle tightness, joint mobility, and symptoms of pain and irritation. Testing active trigger points with an EMG needle has shown that there is increased spontaneous electrical activity at this active trigger point, kind of line buzzing or uncontrolled electricity causing the nerve-muscle connection to trigger the muscle to be tight. This tightness can cause the joint a decrease in movement and many times will restrict the joint enough to limit normal functional activities of the whole body. Relatively new research reported that there are numerous inflammatory and pain producing chemicals at an active trigger point causing pain and dysfunction of the muscle and consequently affecting the local nerves and joints. The dry needle has been shown, when causing a twitch response in the active trigger point and muscle fiber, to decrease or completely reduce that spontaneous electrical activity and reduce or completely eliminate the irritating chemicals in that active trigger point. This release can immediately improve range of motion, decrease pain and improve function. Patients often feel a significant cramping sensation from the twitch response but then feel an immediate improvement of their symptoms

Utilizing trigger point dry needling in physical therapy practice allows the patient and the therapist a hastened return to strengthening and exercises that result in a faster return to function and improved maintenance of that dysfunction.