

REHABILITATION USING ACUTE DRY NEEDLING FOR INJURED ATHLETES RETURNING TO SPORT AND IMPROVING PERFORMANCE

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1. ABSTRACT

Dry needling, also known as **trigger point dry needling** and **intramuscular stimulation**,^{[1][2]} is a treatment technique used by various healthcare practitioners, including physical therapists, physicians, and chiropractors, among others. It involves the use of either solid filiform needles^[4] or hollow-core hypodermic needles for therapy of muscle pain, including pain related to myofascial pain syndrome. Dry needling is mainly used to treat myofascial trigger points, but it is also used to target connective tissue, neural ailments, and muscular ailments. The American Physical Therapy Association defines dry needling as a technique used to treat dysfunction of skeletal muscle and connective tissue, minimize pain, and improve or regulate structural or functional damage.³ Currently, dry needling is being practiced in the United States, Europe, Australia, and other parts of the world.^[1] Dry needling is most commonly used in the subacute and chronic phases of an injury; therefore, it is imperative to understand the use of dry needling in the acute phases of an injury. There are four main reasons to use dry needling during the acute phase of injury: to relieve pain, decrease edema, increase range of motion and flexibility, and increase strength and power. Dry needling can be used pregame, postgame, during half time or an intermission, or following an injury. Although further research is needed, acute dry needling can be used to bolster athletes' health and possibly improve sports performance.

2. KEYWORDS: Dry Needling, Athletes, Recovery, Returning to Sport, Improving Performance

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