



AMERICAN ACADEMY OF MEDICAL ACUPUNCTURE®

2512 Artesia Boulevard, Suite 200
Redondo Beach, California 90278
310.379.8261 VOICE • 310.379.8283 FAX

American Academy of Medical Acupuncture Position Statement on Dry Needling

The American Academy of Medical Acupuncture, the premier North American organization of physician acupuncturists (MDs and DOs), is committed to safeguarding public health and safety by advocating for proper training of all persons who practice acupuncture. It is imperative that legal authorities and medical bodies maintain strict standards of education and training before any health care professional inserts a needle into a patient.

Dry needling, like acupuncture, is an invasive procedure in which a thin, solid needle is inserted into a muscle to stimulate and break up muscular knots and bands. The technique frequently involves needling close to sensitive structures like blood vessels, nerves, and organs such as the lungs. Adverse effects include bruising, hematoma, infection, nerve and vascular injuries, and pneumothorax. Practitioners must be competent to recognize and manage all possible adverse effects of dry needling treatments. An ill-trained practitioner could cause substantial medical injury or even death.

Dry needling has traditionally been performed by physician acupuncturists and licensed acupuncturists. These practitioners have advanced training in this technique and the management of potential adverse effects. In recent years some states have allowed physical therapists, occupational therapists, and athletic trainers to incorporate dry needling into their practices. It is the responsibility of the training institutions, professional organizations, certifying bodies, licensing authorities, and malpractice insurance providers to oversee these practitioners to ensure that they receive proper instruction in dry needling and perform the technique safely.