



## STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

PRACTICE STANDARD TITLE:

Dry Needling

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DATE REVISED:

CATEGORY: Reserved Activities

AUTHORITY: Regulated Health Professions Act

**Definition:** 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, functional dry needling and intramuscular stimulation where the needles are inserted into specific points on the body to achieve a therapeutic effect.

**Standard:** Dry needling is a reserved activity (performing a procedure on tissue below the dermis) under the Regulated Health Professions Act. Those members who wish to offer dry needling are required to apply for special authorization to perform this reserved activity.

Physiotherapists authorized to perform dry needling are expected to meet the competencies outlined in the *Dry Needling Competency Profile for Physical Therapists* produced by the College of Physical Therapists of Alberta (2007) and within the competencies (knowledge, skills and abilities) for which they have been educated and trained. Physiotherapists shall:

- Advise clients of the benefits and risks associated with the use of dry needling and obtain informed consent in accordance to the *Core Standards of Practice for Physiotherapists in Canada*.
- Ensure clients receiving dry needling have access to the physiotherapist throughout the treatment.
- Have a critical event management plan in place and ensure staff are educated on the event response processes.
- Comply with *Practice Standards for Infection Prevention and Control*. Additional requirements include:
  - Ensure that sterile single- use needles are used.
  - Dispose of needles in puncture resistant sharps containers with lids.
  - Perform needle manipulation without the practitioner’s hands coming into contact with the shaft of the needle.
  - Maintain the needle shaft in a sterile state throughout the treatment. Needle shafts contaminated by the practitioner’s hand or by another non-sterile object or surface must not be used.
  - Sterile guide tubes are for single client use only and must be disposed of immediately after treatment.
  - When withdrawing the needle, the bare fingers must not be used to press down at the insertion site when the needle is withdrawn.
- Not delegate dry needling to another person who does not have legal authority to perform the act. This includes the removal of needles.