

**AOASM 2026**

**TrP/ Dry needling with LTR  
for Athletes**

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Integrative Medicine Group  
Integrative Regenerative Medicine

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**Financial Disclosures**

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Neither I, Masahiro Takakura, nor any family members, have any relevant financial relationships to be discussed, directly or indirectly, referred to or illustrated with or without recognition within the presentation.

Appreciation Disclosures

- Appreciation: Dr Christina Wong for this opportunity
- Appreciation: Mentor, Rick Griffin, MS, ATc, AT-L
- Appreciation: Dr Angela Cavanna
- Appreciation: Dr Stephanie and Randy Aldret

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**Appreciation**

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## Special Thanks to Dr Christina Wong

“Any other questions before you present? It will be mainly primary care sports med docs who all use ultrasound and work on HS, D1-D3 colleges, professional athletes, and Olympians. So, any information you give about the research or current literature about indications efficacy, why, how to, or contraindications, etc we are all ears. You also don't have to include all that, I was just saying.”  
4/27/26

So, started revising this presentation

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Why Local Twitch Response? Low level evidence

### The importance of the local twitch response during needling interventions in spinal pain associated with myofascial trigger points: a systematic review and meta-analysis

Chen Fernández-de-Las-Rivas <sup>1,2</sup>, Gustavo Pérez-Mercuro <sup>3,4</sup>, Jorge Sánchez-Solano <sup>5</sup>, Guisé F Gómez-Chiquero <sup>1,2</sup>, Joshua A Cleland <sup>7</sup>, José L Ariza-Buza <sup>1,2</sup>, Mónica Herrería-Solano <sup>1,2</sup>

Affiliations + expand  
PMID: 34884769 DOI: 10.1177/096452942110563412

Abstract

**Discussion:** Low-level evidence suggests an immediate effect of obtaining LTRs during needling interventions on pain intensity, with no significant effects on related disability or pressure pain sensitivity in spinal pain disorders associated with muscle TPs.

Some pain disorders associated with TPs, however, reduced pain intensity, pain-related disability, and pressure pain thresholds. The risk of bias (RoB) was assessed using the Cochrane risk of bias tool (ROB2) from methodological quality was assessed with the PEDro score, and quality of evidence was evaluated using the GRADE approach.

**Results:** Six trials were included. The application of a needling intervention during LTRs was associated with a significant reduction in pain intensity immediately after treatment (mean difference (MD): -2.23 points, 95% confidence interval (CI): -3.77 to -0.69, standardized MD (SMD): -1.58, 95% CI: -2.21 to -0.95,  $p = 0.02$ ) when compared to the same needling intervention without elicitation of LTRs. No effect of short-term follow-up (MD: -0.20 points, 95% CI: -0.66 to 0.26,  $p = 0.75$ ) was observed. No significant differences based on indication or non-indication of LTRs were found in related disability (MD: -0.05, 95% CI: -0.41 to 0.30,  $p = 0.77$ ) or pressure pain thresholds (MD: 23.38 MPa, 95% CI: -13.68 to 62.92,  $p = 0.22$ ).

**Conclusion:** Low-level evidence suggests an immediate effect of obtaining LTRs during needling interventions on pain intensity, with no significant effects on related disability or pressure pain sensitivity in spinal pain disorders associated with muscle TPs.

Registration number: CRF Registry-TRIP (PMID: 37005105) / CRF / ACR22/036

**Keywords:** dry needling; local twitch response; meta-analysis; spinal pain; trigger point.

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Frequency of Treatment? 1. 3 days apart is too soon. 2. Not mentioning needle size

Randomized Controlled Trial | > J Back Musculoskelet Rehabil. 2019;32(5):717-724. doi: 10.3233/BMR-181286.

### The effect of dry needling on the active trigger point of upper trapezius muscle: Eliciting local twitch response on long-term outcomes

Iman Kamali-Hakim <sup>1</sup>, Ismail Ebrahimi-Takamjani <sup>1</sup>, Javad Sarrafzadeh <sup>1</sup>, Kamran Ezzati <sup>2</sup>, Elzanol Bagheri <sup>3</sup>

Affiliations + expand  
PMID: 30636729 DOI: 10.3233/BMR-181286

**Conclusion:** DN without eliciting LTR has superiority over the DN along with eliciting LTR while the treatment aimed to receive long-term effects.

damage after eliciting LTR can increase the risk of tissue fibrosis in some cases.

**Methods:** Twenty-six participants suffering from chronic non-specific neck pain with an active trigger point (TrP) in their upper trapezius muscles were recruited via the convenience sampling method. Participants were randomly assigned in DN with LTR (control group) and without eliciting LTR or "de qi" (experimental group). Then, they received 3 sessions of dry needling, 3 days apart. We evaluated pain, pain pressure threshold, active cervical lateral flexion range of motion, and Neck Disability Index before the intervention and 4 weeks after the treatment.

**Results:** After the treatment, significant higher changes were seen in the experimental group compared to the control group ( $p < 0.05$ ) regarding pain, pain pressure threshold, and active cervical lateral flexion. However, there was no significant difference between groups according to

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## Acupuncture Ashi Needling: History

- 候気
- Manipulation of skin/ tissue to bring Qi
- Can move skin/ tissue superficial and deep or medial and lateral

候気 (こうき)  
得気が起こらないとき、起こるように行う手法・刺鍼法である。  
催気も同様の方法である。刺鍼の際、気が得られなければ補瀉することが出来ないため、その前段階として行う方法である。「鍼灸大成」には「刺鍼した経絡に指をのせ、経絡に沿わせて皮膚を上下左右に摩擦し、気血を往来させて経脈の上下を整えれば、

鍼下には自然に気が至る」とある。「素問・宝命全形篇」には、「経気已至、慎守勿失 (経気が至ったら、それを失わないように慎重に守れ)」とある。「靈樞・九鍼十二原」には「知机之道者、不可掛以髮 (機を知る者は、髪を掛けない) 」とある

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## Acupuncture Ashi/ Trigger Point Needling Wh

The historical source of “Trigger Points”:  
classical Ashi points

Shan JIANG<sup>1</sup>#, Jing-sheng ZHAO A #

# Show more

[https://doi.org/10.1016/S1003-4257\(17\)30003-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1003-4257(17)30003-X)

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### Abstract

Our research began with a consideration of the etymological origins of the terms Ashi and the Ashi point. We used both original source texts and textual criticism to trace the original meaning of the phrases, “take the tender spot as the point” and “use the Ashi method.” Linguistic theory informed our discussion of three similar terms and our analysis of them. We show that Ashi points are in theory similar to regular acupuncture points in terms of their definition and function. Furthermore, we can use the concept of “qi-pathway (Qi Jie)” to expand our understanding of the clinical use of Ashi points. Ultimately, the main purpose of our research was to clarify that the classical Ashi point and modern, western concept of the trigger point are in fact quite similar. The two concepts have been described in different languages primarily due to cultural differences.

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## Trigger Point Needling: Mechanism, twitch responses by US

*Arch Phys Med Rehabil*. 2011 Oct;92(10):1576-1580.e1. doi: 10.1016/j.apmr.2011.05.005. Epub 2011 Aug 12.

### Detecting local twitch responses of myofascial trigger points in the lower-back muscles using ultrasonography.

Rhee DW<sup>1</sup>, Shin JG, Kim YK, Jung JH, Kim YU, Lee SC.

# Author information

### Abstract

**OBJECTIVE:** To evaluate the role of ultrasonography for detecting local twitch responses (LTRs) of myofascial trigger points (MTrPs) in deeply located lower-back muscles.

**RESULTS:** In upper-trapezius muscles, all LTRs were detected by means of both ultrasonographic and visual inspection. In the lower-back muscles, many LTRs were detected only on ultrasonography during the trigger point injection. For deep muscles, ultrasound helped identify LTRs that were not detected by using visual assessment. Pain was alleviated more significantly in the group with LTRs during trigger point injections compared with the group without LTRs.

**PARTICIPANTS:** Patients (n=41; mean age, 51.8 ± 11.8y) with MTrPs in the upper-trapezius muscles and

**CONCLUSIONS:** These findings suggest that ultrasonography was useful for detecting LTRs of MTrPs, especially for LTRs in the deep muscles. Ultrasound guidance may improve the therapeutic efficacy of trigger point injection for treating MTrPs in the deep muscles.

**MAIN OUTCOME MEASURES:** LTR detection rate according to the depth of MTrPs, subjective pain intensity using a visual analog scale before and immediately after the trigger point injection.

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### LTR: other ways

- Manual therapy
  - Neuro-Myo-Fascia stretch
- ROM: adhesive capsulitis



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#### Clinical Research Report of the Intricate Application of Dry Needling in Eliciting Trigger Points Local Twitch Response (TP-LTR) in the Upper Trapezius (UT) Region

Masahiro Takakura<sup>1</sup>, Jessica Norton<sup>2</sup>, Sharon Blaney<sup>3</sup> and Nicholas A Kerna<sup>4,5\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Seattle Nature Cure Clinic, Seattle, WA, United States

<sup>2</sup>Integrative Medicine Group, Seattle, WA, United States

<sup>3</sup>Baylor University, Kenmore, WA, United States

<sup>4</sup>SMMC Medical Research, Thailand

Effect to neuro-myofascial dynamics of trigger points (TPs) is achieved by using multiple needles with manipulation. No past studies have investigated LTRs using multiple needles with manipulation. This multiple needling with manipulation technique can create the neuro-myofascial dynamic, inducing LTRs.

Contact: medpublab+drikerna@gmail.com.

Received: January 04, 2021; Published: February 28, 2022

DOI: 10.31080/ecor.2022.13.00920

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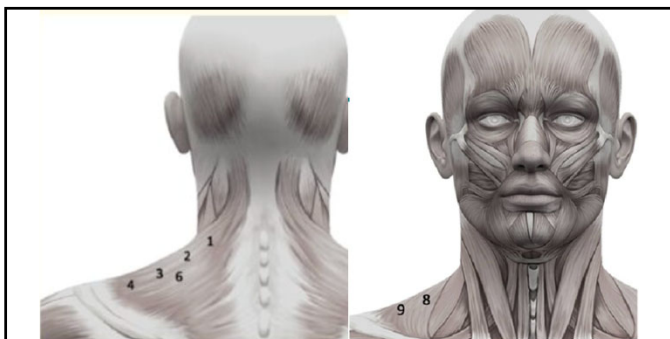
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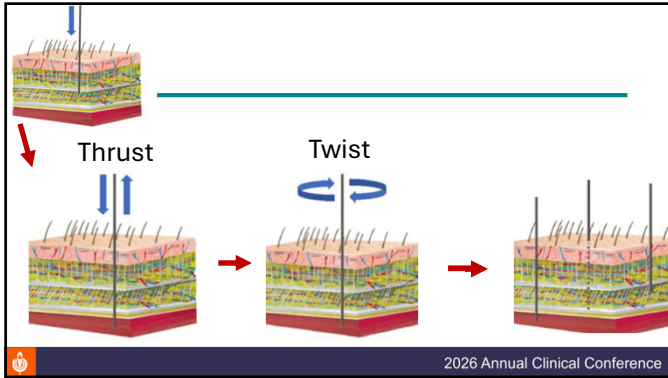
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**Results**

- The average number of needles used was 3.15 for the right side and 2.73 for the left side.
- The average number of LTRs was 4.43 for the right side and 3.23 for the left side.
- The average thrusts were 18 for the right side and 12.9 for the left side.
- The average number of 90-degree twists was 0.5 for the right side and 0.8 for the left side.
- The average number of 180-degree twists was 18.4 for the right side and 12.85 for the left side.
- The average stress level (on a scale of 0-10, with 10 as the highest) was 6.225.
- Most subjects reported having less than 8 hours of sleep per night, which typically provokes or exacerbates inflammation and, thus, slightly skewing this study's interpretation of results. Sleep deprivation or lack of adequate sleep adversely affects the immune response and inflammation [22,23].
- Needles of 0.12-mm diameter were used for 6 subjects, and 0.16-mm diameter needles were used for 14 subjects.
- One subject experienced no relief from the treatment.
- The average duration of relief was 5.475 days, and the average duration of soreness was 16.2 hours.
- After the treatment, some participants experienced no soreness, and 1 subject experienced soreness for 48 hours (Table 1).
- Three needles were most commonly used bilaterally, and 1 subject had 7 needles inserted on the right side (Table 1).
- The most common location of an LTR was 2 on the right and 3 on the left—followed by 3 on the right and 2 on the left.
- There were several LTRs in the 5<sup>th</sup> position, also on the right side (Table 2).
- Most of the subjects had a total of 1-4 LTRs, and one subject had 20 LTRs on the right side (Table 3).
- Most subjects had 3 LTRs, while others had 2, 4, and 5 LTRs (Table 4).

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**Conclusion**

- Specific results of this study depicted a 3-D neuro-myofascial dynamics matrix using multiple needles, multiple thrusts and twists, and multiple LTR locations. These results demonstrated that overall and on average, multiple needling with larger gauge needles (based on participants' tolerances) was more effective in reducing UT tension and associated symptoms (and longer-lasting relief) than the more conventional and utilized one-needle protocol.

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## Needle selection

	Patients	Technique
Smaller diameter (44G)	Qi deficiency patient	Difficult to have twitch response
Larger diameter (38G, 36G)	Qi excess patient	Easier to have twitch response

- Smaller diameter for qi deficiency patient/ active athlete = less soreness, difficult to create twitch response
- Larger diameter for qi excess patient/ non active athlete = more soreness, easier to create twitch response



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## Needle selection

- Pre activity: Serine Dark Green, J type, No.02, (0.12x30mm). If athletes can take more stimulation, I would use bigger gauge needle. Otherwise I use smallest needle to stimulate.
- Recovery: Either Serine Dark Green (0.12x30) or Red, J type, No.1, (0.16x30 or 0.16x40mm)
- Acupuncture ashi/ trigger points for superficial or middle layer tissue: this depends on how tissues are. I use Serine No.02, No.1, or DBC Spring Ten, DB1, (0.16x30)
- Acupuncture ashi/ trigger point for deeper tissue: I use Hwato Singles (0.25x75mm) or Tai Chi (0.25x125mm)



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## Needle selection

- During movement: Serine, Pyonex, orange, 0.3mm
- Over night care: I use Serine, Pyonex, Orange, 0.3mm or yellow or Okibari
- Auricular: I use Serin D-type, No.1 (0.16x15mm)
- Acute swelling or chronic blood stagnation (blood letting techniques)
  
- 30G injection needle is about 0.31mm
- 27G injection needle is about 0.4mm
- 25G injection needle is about 0.5mm
  
- Supplier: LhasaOMS <https://www.lhasaoms.com/>



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## Needle Rotation/ Needle thrusting

Clin. J. Pain. 2014 Mar;30(3):214-23. doi: 10.1097/AJP.0b013e3182934b8d.

**Paraspinal stimulation combined with trigger point needling and needle rotation for the treatment of myofascial pain: a randomized sham-controlled clinical trial.**

Couto C<sup>1</sup>, de Souza LC, Torres JL, Fregoni F, Caumo W.

### Author information

#### Abstract

**BACKGROUND:** There are different types and parameters of dry needling (DN) that can affect its efficacy in the treatment of pain that have not been assessed properly.

**OBJECTIVE:** To test the hypothesis that either multiple deep intramuscular stimulation therapy multiple deep intramuscular stimulation therapy (MDIMST) or TrP lidocaine injection (LTP-I) is more effective than a

**CONCLUSIONS:** This study highlighted the greater efficacy of MDIMST over the placebo-sham and LTP-I and indicated that both active treatments are more effective than placebo-sham for MPS associated with limitations in active and routine activities.

3 groups as follows: placebo-sham, LTP-I, or MDIMST. The treatments were provided twice weekly over 4 weeks using standardized MDIMST and LTP-I protocols.

**RESULTS:** There was a significant interaction (time vs. group) for the main outcomes. Compared with the sham-treated group, MDIMST and LTP-I administration improved pain scores based on a visual analog scale.

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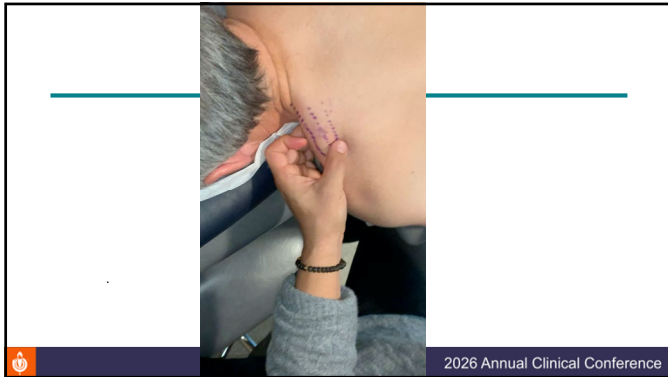
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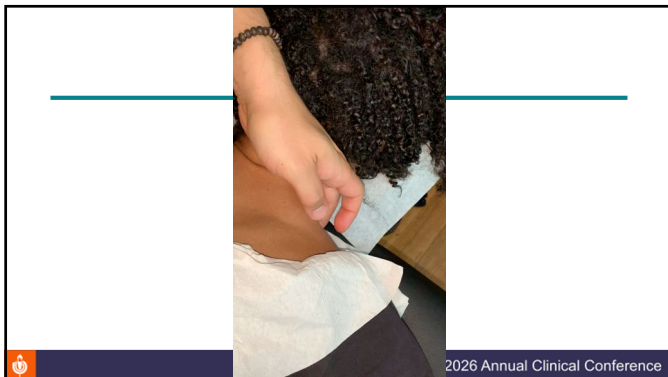
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## Avoid post soreness

- Compression at the site of needle
- Less LTR
- Smaller needle like 0.12mm
- ESWT (If athletes prefer not to get needle=> Shockwave)
- Elastic or Rigid taping :
  - Apply tape in the direction of ease of Manua Tissue Direction Test
- Use of Japanese patch
- Hydration
- Use of anti-inflammatory

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Ann Rehabil Med. 2017 Aug;41(4):582-588. doi: 10.5535/arm.2017.41.4.582. Epub 2017 Aug 31.

### Extracorporeal Shock Wave Therapy Versus Trigger Point Injection in the Treatment of Myofascial Pain Syndrome in the Quadratus Lumborum.

Hong J<sup>1</sup>, Park JS<sup>1</sup>, Jeon DG<sup>1</sup>, Yoon WH<sup>1</sup>, Park JH<sup>1</sup>.

#### Author Information

#### Abstract

**OBJECTIVE:** To compare the effectiveness of extracorporeal shock wave therapy (ESWT) and trigger point injection (TPI) for the treatment of myofascial pain syndrome in the quadratus lumborum.

**METHODS:** In a retrospective study at our institute, 30 patients with myofascial pain syndrome in the quadratus lumborum were assigned to ESWT or TPI groups. We assessed ESWT and TPI treatment according to their effects on pain relief and disability improvement. The outcome measures for the pain assessment were a visual analogue scale score and pain pressure

**CONCLUSION:** Compared to TPI, ESWT showed superior results for pain relief. Thus, we consider ESWT as an effective treatment for myofascial pain syndrome in the quadratus lumborum.

be more effective than TPI for pain relief. There were no statistically significant differences between the groups with respect to disability.

**CONCLUSION:** Compared to TPI, ESWT showed superior results for pain relief. Thus, we consider ESWT as an effective treatment for myofascial pain syndrome in the quadratus lumborum.

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Study	Comparison	Intervention	Control	Outcome	Significance	Notes	Additional
[15]	ESWT vs. TPI	ESWT	TPI	Pain pressure, VAS score	ESWT superior	ESWT showed superior results for pain relief.	
[16]	ESWT vs. TPI	ESWT	TPI	Pain pressure, VAS score	ESWT superior	ESWT showed superior results for pain relief.	
[17]	ESWT vs. TPI	ESWT	TPI	Pain pressure, VAS score	ESWT superior	ESWT showed superior results for pain relief.	
[18]	ESWT vs. TPI	ESWT	TPI	Pain pressure, VAS score	ESWT superior	ESWT showed superior results for pain relief.	
[19]	ESWT vs. TPI	ESWT	TPI	Pain pressure, VAS score	ESWT superior	ESWT showed superior results for pain relief.	

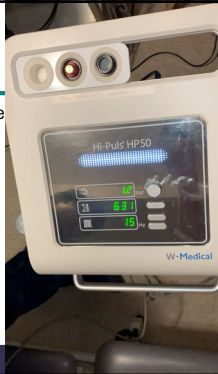
- Checked TrP needling studies on neck and Upper trap
- 18 articles viewed, 3 mention LTR
- TrP group respond well also ESWT group

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### Shockwave (Radial pressure)

- At the end of this session, you will be able to:



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### Manual Tissue Direction Test

ICRONICON | EC ORTHOPAEDICS Review Article

**A Novel and Noninvasive Procedure in Diagnosing and Treating Sports-Related Musculoskeletal Injuries: The Safety and Efficacy of Manual Tissue Direction Test (MTDT)**

Shahida Fidaqara, Zahra Memon, "Umera Nageem" and Nicholas A. Horne\*

University of Derby, UK and EC Research, Birmingham, UK  
 \*Singapore Medical Group, USA  
 \*Physiotherapy Department, Malaysia, USA  
 \*Faculty of Medicine, University of Derby, Arts and Technology, Phoenix, 2007  
 1, 133, Leazes Road, Derby, DE1 1BA, UK. Email: s.fidaqara@derby.ac.uk

Received 20th July 2021; Published 20th July 2021  
 DOI: 10.1080/17445019.2021.2024977




Figure 6. Illustration of MTDT in an anterior view.

The mechanism is explained as a novel, non-invasive procedure to allow diagnosis of different tissue types after pain resolution in the physiological position of joint (Figure 6). In general, when there is pain, compensating the affected area in multiple directions with varying pressure may identify pain. These may be corrected by pressure, direction, and length of time movement is tolerated until the alleviating of tissue is one way to mobilize tissue, which can increase inflammatory tissue resolution and overall joint range and movement (Figure 6) (Shahida Fidaqara et al., 2021).

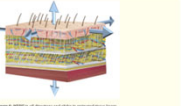


Figure 6. MTDT in all positions and planes in anterior view.

Shahida Fidaqara, Zahra Memon, "Umera Nageem" and Nicholas A. Horne. A Novel and Noninvasive Procedure in Diagnosing and Treating Sports-Related Musculoskeletal Injuries: The Safety and Efficacy of Manual Tissue Direction Test (MTDT). *EC Orthopaedics* 12(1) (2021) 24-30.

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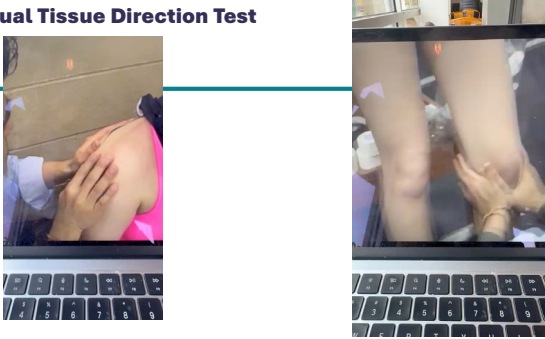
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### Manual Tissue Direction Test



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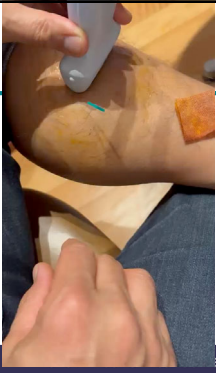
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### Demonstration

- TrP needling with Ultrasound
- TrP needling with manipulation (Thrust and Twist)
- LTR
- Small amount hydro injection of lidocaine/ DSW
  - If hydro-dissect fascia=> can affect nerve => affect LTR
- Post injection TrP needling manipulation => less LTR
- Manual Tissue Direction Test => assist the direction of tape application
- Application of Elastic taping => minimize post LTR soreness



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### Goal for breakout session: 90 min

- Practice 0.12mm needles
- Practice to get LTR with Thrust and Twist
- No needle stick
- Everyone practice Needle with LTR at Gastroc/ Soleus first
- Then Vast Lat, Glut med, UT, deltoid/ bicep, Teres, infraspinatus
- Ultrasound guided: QL, Psoas, ES
- N=1 study: Have 1 LTR on one side and have Multiple LTR on the other side
- N=1 study: Have one side Elastic taping with Manual Tissue Direction Test and the other side not.



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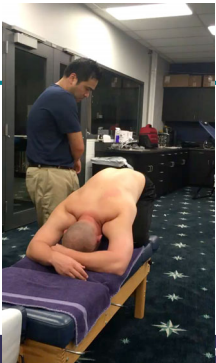

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### Needling Demonstration on athletes

- Can be supine, prone, sitting, standing, etc
- Can also have movement (ROM)

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## Take home message

- Needle selection for athletes: Nerve in fascia: Athletes: smaller for competition, Non-Athletes: practitioner preference
- Multiple needles: 3-D effect to neuro myofascial system
- Needle manipulation (Thrust and Twist): Trigger point in 3-D effect (2D vs 3D)
- Local twitch response: Neuro myofascial internal release (needling or injection therapy)
  - Release: how much? Local twitch response => Athletes: 2-5 LTR, Non-Athletes: LTR up to tolerance (1-10)
- Myofascial balance to avoid post soreness: Manual Tissue Direction Test
- Possible receptors in fascia: Injection therapy, lidocaine or D5W



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## Questions and Answer

### Contact details

- [www.seattlencc.com](http://www.seattlencc.com)
- [www.integrativemedicinegroup.org](http://www.integrativemedicinegroup.org)



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