

# Services

## Intramuscular Stimulation (IMS)

### What Is It?

Intramuscular Stimulation (IMS) is a dry needling technique - meaning nothing is injected during the process - used to target dysfunctional muscles that are causing pain. IMS has been found to be an effective treatment for acute and chronic pain, muscle tightness, as well as injury rehabilitation. Our therapist, Tim Cooney is trained in the Gunn IMS system. The most important part of Gunn IMS is that it looks for problems in the nervous system that may be the root cause of the pain. Gunn IMS was developed by Dr. Chan Gunn of Vancouver. It is based on a law of science - Cannon's law of denervation supersensitivity. This law states that problems in muscles, and in fact all the tissues of the body, can be caused by problems in the nervous system. Nervous system problems make many tissues in the body very hypersensitive and dysfunctional. Gunn IMS addresses the nervous system, via the muscles, to relieve body pain.

### How Does It Work?

IMS uses thin needles (similar to acupuncture) to release taut muscle tissue and trigger points. The taut muscle tissue can apply pressure to neural structures, resulting in neuropathic pain, as well as mechanical pain from the muscle itself pulling on its attachments. By releasing the tension, pain can be alleviated from these two sources.

Unlike acupuncture, the needles are not inserted and left there for prolonged periods - instead, the needle may be inserted and stimulated, or they are advanced multiple times to break up the tension.

### What Can I Expect?

Penetration of a normal muscle is painless; however, a muscle with a tight band or trigger point will reflexively “grasp” the needle, which can result in a deep cramping sensation. With the “grasp”, three things happen:

1. There is a reflexive relaxation of the muscle
2. The microtrauma caused by the needle draws blood flow to the area, initiating the natural healing process
3. It creates an electrical potential in the muscle, helping the nerve to function normally again

Your therapist will likely ask you to don a gown, shorts or tank top so that they can appropriately expose the area that will be released.

Typically after treatment, you will be achy for the rest of the day. The ache can be managed with drinking lots of water, stretching, and heating or icing. By the next day you typically begin to notice improvements, however some exceptions occur.

The best results are seen when IMS is used in conjunction with Therapeutic Exercise. Your therapist will design a home exercise program for you - making IMS an ACTIVE process, not just a stand alone treatment.

At Peak Physical Therapy we currently have one therapist who is trained in IMS. If you are interested in trying it, book an appointment with **Tim!** Make sure you have eaten before your appointment, and let your therapist know if you are feeling unwell, as the needling can exacerbate your symptoms.

Information package download coming soon!