

# Myofascial Trigger Points

## Return to pain-free mobility

A myofascial trigger point is defined as “a hyperirritable spot in the skeletal muscle that is associated with a hypersensitive, palpable nodule in a taut band.” In general terms, you can simply think of myofascial trigger points as painful spots in a tight muscle. While many clinicians refer to these as “taut bands,” most people know them simply as “trigger points” or “knots.”

Trigger points may develop for several reasons. Sometimes, they form in response to unusual contractions in unconditioned muscles. An example of this is poor posture that is related to extended computer use and other ergonomically challenging tasks found within many professions. Trigger points may also form in response to normal muscle contractions and injuries that are frequently associated with sports such as:

- Running
- Cross-fit
- Tennis
- Weight lifting
- Swimming
- Triathlons

Trigger points are a common source of pain for many people, and they can cause serious discomfort with certain movements and daily activities. They can also cause restricted range of motion and decreased muscle strength. These attributes of trigger points can lead to a loss of normal function around the muscles being affected. They can also produce referred pain patterns that are similar to common overuse injuries, including:

- Tennis Elbow
- Tendinitis
- Bursitis
- Chronic Low Back Pain
- Chronic Neck Pain
- Muscle Strains

There are several other associated factors that can aggravate trigger points for many people. Primarily, poor body mechanics can create and worsen taut bands in muscles. In addition to the physical stresses that are placed on our bodies, mental stress can also magnify the painful effects of trigger points. Some underlying health issues that may intensify the pain caused by trigger points include: hypothyroidism, iron deficiency, and insufficiencies in Vitamins D & B12.

The good news is that myofascial trigger points can be treated and resolved. Our physical therapists at Novant Health will evaluate your condition and recommend a variety of treatment strategies to help to eliminate your pain and resume your normal activity. Many of Novant Health's skilled physical therapists are trained in dry needling. Dry needling is an intramuscular manual therapy technique that uses a solid filament needle to penetrate and release trigger points. This can decrease your pain and increase your range of motion and muscle strength. To determine if trigger point dry needling is right for you, [click here](#).