

## Trigger Point Treatments

A trigger point is essentially a muscle knot. A muscle knot is a focal area of muscle tissue that becomes restricted due to overuse, trauma, or inactivity resulting in pain, inflammation, muscle tension, and corresponding diminished blood flow to the muscle.

Trigger point treatments such as Active Release Therapy utilize specific stretches on many different muscles of the body, but generally includes a gentle application of pressure or sustained low-load stretch to the affected muscle and connective tissue while in a neutral position or put through an active range-of-motion. Progress is gauged by the level of increased motion or function of the muscle along with the decrease of pain felt by the patient.

Dry needling, another type of trigger point therapy, utilizes an acupuncture filiform needle that is inserted directly through the skin and into the muscle knot. The insertion of the needle into the muscle results in a local twitch response like a subtle muscle cramp. The various chemicals that modulate pain within the trigger point are immediately reduced after the local twitch response. Subsequently, pain and spasms are reduced and joint mobility is increased.

Instrument assisted trigger point therapy such as Graston® can also be used to alleviate the pain associated with muscle knots. These techniques utilize tools that enable physicians to effectively address scar tissue and muscular adhesions. The anti-inflammatory and immune response produced by these techniques can be effective in reducing pain and improving function after treatment.

Cold Laser Therapy has been shown in numerous studies to decrease pain and inflammation. The Cold Laser works by emitting a low-level light energy through the skin up to five inches deep into the muscles. The Cold Laser targets injured tissue and spares healthy tissue. The light energy stimulates cell repair, reduces inflammation, increases the release of endorphins, and speeds natural collagen growth.

The trigger point therapies listed above can be used as a precursor or a complement to chiropractic adjustments. These therapies can also help alleviate muscle spasms which can occur due to nerve irritation caused by spinal misalignment. Treating the trigger points to relax the muscles helps speed the healing process following chiropractic adjustments.

If you or someone you know is suffering from trigger points and have not found the relief for which you are looking, please contact our office. We may be able to help you.

*Information provided by Anthony R. Meyer, D.C., of Renze Chiropractic Clinic, P.C. For more information, visit [www.renzechiro.com](http://www.renzechiro.com) or call the office at 965-3844.*