

July 27, 2023

When can I start performing intramuscular needling (aka dry needling)?

HB 1039 becomes effective on July 23rd. However, a physical therapist cannot perform dry needling until they receive an endorsement from the Department of Health (DOH).

Who can perform intramuscular needling (aka dry needling)?

A physical therapist with an intramuscular needling endorsement from the Department of Health (DOH) may perform intramuscular needling.

What are the requirements of the endorsement?

The requirements of the endorsement are:

- A physical therapist licensed in Washington with at least one year of postgraduate, direct patient care practice experience that averages at least 36 hours a week. However, a PT can apply for the endorsement before they have one year of clinical experience if they meet all the other endorsement requirements
- 100 hours of didactic instruction that includes:
 - Anatomy and physiology of the musculoskeletal and neuromuscular systems
 - Anatomical basis of pain mechanisms, chronic pain, and referred pain point evaluation and management
 - Universal precautions in avoiding contact with a patient's bodily fluids
 - Preparedness and response to unexpected events including but not limited to injury to blood vessels, nerves, and organs, and psychological effects or complications
- 75 hours of in-person intramuscular needling instruction in the following areas:
 - Intramuscular needling technique
 - Intramuscular needling indications and contraindications
 - Documentation and informed consent for intramuscular needling
 - Management of adverse effects
 - Practical psychomotor competency
 - Occupational safety and health administration's bloodborne pathogens protocol
- A successful clinical review of a minimum of 150 hours of at least 150 individual intramuscular needling treatment sessions by a qualified provider.

If I work part-time now, can I still get the endorsement?

Yes, if you have at least one year of postgraduate, direct patient care practice experience that averages at least 36 hours a week. There are no minimum hours of practice once you receive the endorsement.

What does the clinical review requirement mean?

Clinical review means the review of the diagnosis, points needed, the outcome of the treatment, and any adverse reactions of 150 treatments. Clinical review is not direct or indirect supervision nor a retrospective review of patient charts.

When can I start collecting the clinical reviews?

You can start collecting the clinical reviews once you have received the 100 hours of didactic instruction and the 75 hours of in-person intramuscular needling instruction.

How long do I have to complete the clinical reviews?

You have up to 18 months to complete the 150 treatment sessions for review.

Who is a qualified reviewer?

The qualified reviewers include:

- Licensed PTs who are credentialed to perform intramuscular needling in any branch of the military
- Licensed PTs who hold the Washington intramuscular needling endorsement
- Licensed PTs who meet the requirements of the intramuscular needling endorsement
- Physicians, osteopathic physicians, acupuncturists, naturopaths, and ARNPs who are licensed to practice in Washington

When will the endorsement be available?

DOH and the Physical Therapy Board will be conducting rule-making on the endorsement. DOH has said that it will take 12-18 months to do this. However, it's unclear whether it will take this long.

If I take a dry needling class in Washington before the endorsement is established, will the hours still count toward the 75 hours?

Yes, those hours will still count.

When can intramuscular needling classes be offered in Washington?

These classes can be offered after the July 23rd effective date of HB 1039.

Can intramuscular needling be administered as a stand-alone treatment by a PT?

No, intramuscular needling must be administered within a physical therapy plan of care.

The new law requires patients receiving intramuscular needling from a physical therapist to sign a consent form. What must the consent form include?

The consent form must include:

- The definition of intramuscular needling
- A description of the risks of intramuscular needling

- A description of the benefits of intramuscular needling
- A description of the potential side effects of intramuscular needling
- A statement clearly differentiating the procedure from the practice of acupuncture