

AMT Position Statement

Dry Needling Practice

BACKGROUND

In August 2023, the AMT Education Committee reviewed and amended AMT's recognition criteria for postgraduate dry needling workshops in line with the standard for Dry Needling in the AMT Code of Practice, industry consultation and the current national competency standards.

Dry needling is an invasive procedure that carries both minor and major risks of harm. For example, serious adverse events such as pneumothorax [are documented in the literature](#).

Massage therapists who are suitably qualified and experienced to perform dry needling must carefully assess the risk-to-benefit ratio associated with this treatment.

[AMT's Dry Needling standard](#) sets out the minimum requirements for the safe, lawful, and ethical practice of dry needling in the massage industry. It is the therapist's responsibility to formulate a risk management framework and ensure that their dry needling policy, protocols, and informed consent processes are consistent with the Standard.

AMT expects that members who use dry needling as a treatment technique hold a nationally-recognised Diploma or Advanced Diploma and have completed dry needling training that substantially adheres to the national competency standard, [VU21879 Provide Myofascial Dry Needling](https://training.gov.au/Training/Details/VU21879) <https://training.gov.au/Training/Details/VU21879>. Dry needling competency can be achieved either through completion of the nationally recognised 22316VIC Advanced Diploma of Myotherapy or comprehensive professional development courses at a postgraduate level that incorporate supervision and practical skills assessment.

The AMT Dry Needling standard clearly and comprehensively sets out AMT's position if called on to give expert witness evidence in disciplinary and legal matters pertaining to dry needling practice. Therapists whose training does not broadly conform to AMT's expected qualification standards for dry needling may be in breach of AMT standards and void their insurance cover. Training that does not meet the AMT qualification standards for postgraduate Dry Needling workshops will not be accepted as professional development.

Massage therapists must be able to demonstrate sound clinical reasoning for utilising dry needling in practice and exercise caution when considering the application of this technique in anatomical regions that carry a higher risk profile. Therapists should limit the use of needles in areas of high risk and evaluate the balance between potential benefits and risks associated with this treatment. Therapists must possess a thorough understanding of local anatomy and any anatomical variations within these high-risk areas. It is strongly advised that non-invasive treatment alternatives are explored before resorting to the application of dry needling in these regions.



PO Box 826
Broadway NSW 2007

T: 02 9211 2441

F: 02 9211 2281

www.amt.org.au

info@amt.org.au

ABN 32 001 859 285

Established 1966

QUALIFICATIONS AND POSTGRADUATE WORKSHOPS

Massage therapists who practice dry needling must hold a nationally recognised Diploma or Advanced Diploma (AQTF standard). For those who learn Dry Needling in a postgraduate workshop, the training must consist of a minimum of 80 nominal hours of learning. This training must include face-to-face sessions for comprehensive skill acquisition and clinical competence confirmation, along with a minimum of 15 hours of directly supervised clinical practice. During the assessment, it is essential to demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of infection control and work health and safety principles. Additionally, members who practice dry needling must demonstrate a thorough knowledge of Skin Penetration legislation. These criteria are essential for maintaining high standards and ensuring safe and effective dry needling practice.

Therapists who have completed a Dry Needling Workshop must ensure that both they and their practice meet all relevant statutory requirements, including those related to Work Health and Safety and Infection Control.

Practitioners of dry needling have an obligation to maintain current and up-to-date knowledge, consistently refreshing their understanding of the latest developments in dry needling methodologies, safety practices, and relevant regulations.

AMT members who practice dry needling must:

- hold professional indemnity insurance that provides coverage for dry needling. Dry needling must be listed on their policy as a modality you practise.
- be aware of the statutory requirements for skin penetration procedures in their state or territory and always comply with those requirements. This may also include registering a premises with the local council.
- have read and understood AMT's Dry Needling policy and comply with the requirements therein.
- have read and understood AMT's Infection Control and Hygiene policy and comply with the requirements therein.
- have read and understood AMT's Workplace Health and Safety policy and comply with the requirements therein.
- have read and understood AMT's Informed Consent policy and obtain written informed consent from the client before embarking on a course of Dry Needling treatments.
- be able to manage all risks associated with skin penetration procedures.

AMT recommends that newly diploma-qualified therapists should gain at least 1 year of practical experience before pursuing postgraduate dry needling training. This timeframe allows ample opportunity to develop and refine palpation skills and clinical knowledge.