

ALABAMA BOARD OF ATHLETIC TRAINERS
Dry Needling Standards

The following standards and protocols are established for athletic trainers in the State of Alabama to perform clinical skills related to dry needling.

Section 1: Definitions

As used in these standards, the following terms shall have the following meanings, respectively, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

- (1) ATTESTANT. The athletic trainer submitting a Dry Needling Attestation Form for which that athletic trainer, upon approval, may implement dry needling in the practice of athletic training.
- (2) DRY NEEDLING. The insertion of fine, solid core needles into soft tissues to treat pain, spasm, inflammation, and tendinopathy.

Section 2: Education and Training Standards for Dry Needling

An athletic trainer must meet the education and training standards outlined in this section prior to performing dry needling in the practice of athletic training.

2.1 Licensure Requirement

An attestant must be licensed by the Alabama Board of Athletic Trainers.

2.2 Required Education and Training

An attestant must complete a minimum of 25 hours of in-person coursework that meet the following requirements:

- 1) face-to-face in nature
- 2) includes all regions of the body

No extremity specific only courses are allowed. Coursework must be sponsored by a BOC-approved provider.

An attestant shall perform any necessary continuing education required by coursework to optimize the attestant's implementation of dry needling in the practice of athletic training.

2.3 Completion and Submission of Dry Needling Attestation Form

An attestant must complete and submit an attestation form to the Alabama Board of Athletic Trainers that includes:

- 1) Name and location of dry needling course(s)
- 2) Course sponsor, including BOC provider number
- 3) Date of course certificate/certification
- 4) Number of contact hours for each completed course
- 5) Copy of course certificate(s)

The attestant will also attest to understanding, acknowledgment, and adherence to the Education and Training Standards, as well as Clinical Standards, set forth to perform dry needling in the practice of athletic training. In completing and submitting the Dry Needling Attestation form, Acknowledgement is also made that dry needling shall not be performed outside of, or beyond, the scope of training that the attestant has completed and for which the Board of Athletic Trainers have approved.

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2.4 Approval from Supervising Physician

An attestant's supervising physician must provide approval, by signature, to perform dry needling via the Athletic Trainers' Licensure Attestation form prior to the attestant's implementation of dry needling in the practice of athletic training.

2.5 Receipt of Written Approval

An attestant must receive written approval from the Alabama Board of Athletic Trainers confirming the attestant has met education and training standards set forth prior to implementing dry needling in the practice of athletic training.

2.6 Dry Needling Prohibited without Written Approval

An athletic trainer is prohibited from performing dry needling in the practice of athletic training without written approval from the Alabama Board of Athletic Trainers.

2.7 Dry Needling Following a Change in Supervising Physician

An athletic trainer that has received previous written approval from the Alabama Board of Athletic Trainers to perform dry needling in the practice of athletic training and undergoes a change in supervising physician, is prohibited from performing dry needling in the practice of athletic training until the athletic trainer submits an updated attestation form to the Alabama Board of Athletic Trainers reflecting approval, by signature, of the athletic trainer's new supervising physician.

2.8 Acupuncture Prohibited

Nothing in the education and training of dry needling shall grant an attestant or athletic trainer the ability to perform acupuncture.

Section 3: Clinical Standards for Dry Needling

Athletic Trainers must adhere to the clinical standards outlined in the following subsections for dry needling in the practice of athletic training.

3.1 Anatomical Structures Approved for Dry Needling

- (1) Muscular, tendinous, and ligamentous structures
- (2) Scar Tissue
- (3) Myofascial trigger points

3.2 Anatomical Structures Excluded for Dry Needling

- (1) Non-musculoskeletal organs and functions
- (2) Intra-articular structures
- (3) Bones
- (4) Meridian Lines

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3.3 Persons Eligible for Dry Needling

An athletic trainer, that has received written approval from the Alabama Board of Athletic Trainers, may perform dry needling on an individual in one of the following circumstances:

- 1) A person that is 18 years old in an occupational setting.
- 2) A person that is actively participating as a member of an intercollegiate sports team or professional sports organization and has received clearance for athletic participation bases upon a pre-participation physical examination.
- 3) A person between the ages of 14 and 19 years old with a written prescription from the athletic trainer's supervising physician prescribing:
 - a. Diagnosis of condition to be treated
 - b. Length of time before required follow-up with physician
 - c. Maximum frequency of treatment
 - d. Location of treatment facility where dry needling shall be performed

3.4 Persons Ineligible for Dry Needling

An athletic trainer is prohibited from performing dry needling on a person under the age of 14.

3.5 Use of Therapeutic Electrical Currents Prohibited

An athletic trainer is prohibited from using therapeutic electrical currents in conjunction with dry needling.