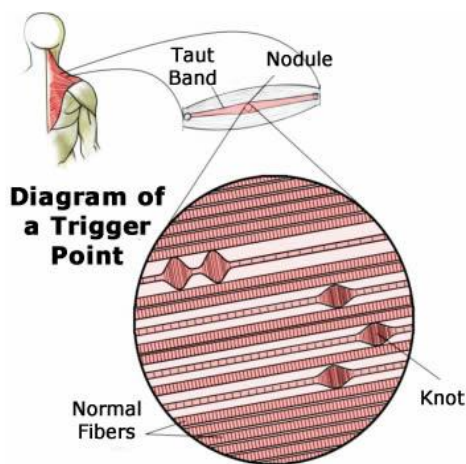

Myofascial Pain Syndrome

What is it?

Myofascial pain syndrome is a chronic pain disorder characterized by pain and/or numbness produced with pressure on sensitive bands within your muscles.



These sensitive bands are called trigger points. When pressure is applied to these trigger points, they often reproduce pain and/or numbness in distant parts of your body called *referred pain*.

While it is normal to have some muscle tenderness from time to time, in myofascial pain syndrome, pain and/or numbness often *persists* and *worsens*.

Myofascial pain syndrome usually occurs as a result of an *injury* to a part of your body, *overuse* of certain muscles, an *underlying muscle/joint issue* or even from simply *bad posture*.

While myofascial pain syndrome is *usually* as a result of another cause, it can sometimes happen without any major injury or overuse syndrome.

How do we manage it?

The mainstay of treatment for myofascial pain syndrome is an *active rehabilitation* focused on a *stretching, strengthening and improving posture*. This should be facilitated through a home-based program, often under the guidance of a physiotherapist.



Physical therapists may utilize local modalities such as heat/ice, acupuncture, massage, ultrasound, TENS, dry needling, acupuncture or IMS to augment the exercise program.

If these local modalities relieve pain for even a short period of time, your doctor may consider adding myofascial trigger point injections to your treatment plan to further optimize the benefits of stretching and strengthening.

Although local modalities may help relieve your pain they are only useful if they enhance your ability to participate in an active rehabilitation program more comfortably.



Lifestyle modifications can be particularly beneficial, these include: trying to remain as *active as possible* through gentle exercise, *relaxation* and *healthy eating*.

Although exercise may transiently increase your pain, this does not necessarily mean that you are causing harm to your body. In fact, a little bit of discomfort is often a good sign as it is expected to occur when otherwise healthy people initiate a new exercise program. If you do experience excessive pain after initiating exercise, rather than stopping the program, you should decrease your resistance (weights/bands) or number of reps/sets in a process called *pacing*.

If you are unable to progress in your active exercise program, your doctor might consider adding medication management. There are many types of medications that may be beneficial for myofascial pain including over the counter and prescription medication. Again, these medications are only effective if they are used to augment an active rehabilitation program, aimed at enhancing your ability to live an active, productive lifestyle.