

## What is a Trigger Point?

A trigger point refers to knots within the muscles or tight bands of muscle tissue that cause lack of mobility and pain within that particular muscle. In most instances, the pain is actually referred and felt in a different area than where the knot is located in that particular muscle.

There are approximately 400 muscles in the human body. At any time, any one of them can develop trigger points. This can potentially lead to dysfunction and referred pain. Symptoms can range from agonizing, intolerable pain to a distortion of posture and painless restriction of movement.

Some individuals may have multiple trigger points, although, they may only feel a few. The ones that give you painful issues are called "Active" and the ones that you only feel when you press on them are referred to as "Latent." The trigger points that the majority of clients seek help for are the active points. These are the ones that can severely restrict their motion and create tremendous pain.

The majority of the times trigger points are not situated in the same location where you feel the symptoms. This means that if you only work on the area where you feel pain, you essentially will not get pain relief. For instance, trigger points in your neck and shoulder area, or in the upper portion of your back, can lead to pain at the base of your skull and pain in your temples. You may also feel this referred pain over your eye, above your ear and in the side of your jaw!

When there is pressure applied to a trigger point, it often reproduces the referred pain pattern that this muscle represents. Burning, numbness, or referred tingling sensations are likely due to certain trigger points putting pressure on a nerve or contracting in that area.

Trigger points lead to loss of coordination of the muscle involved and cause weakness. As well, the muscle is unable to tolerate being used. Sports Trainers, along with many people, take this as a sign that you need to strengthen the weaker muscle. If however, the trigger points are not deactivated first, the conditioning exercises will likely encourage the surrounding muscles to do the work, as opposed to the muscle containing the trigger point. This will lead to weakening of the muscle within the trigger point.

The more brutal and intense your pain is, it is likely that you have a greater amount of active trigger points in your body. Pain is very uncomfortable and unpleasant, both emotionally and physically. The more anxious we feel about the pain, the worse the pain may seem to be.

Pain takes us to the doctor and other health professionals more often than any other reason. When we are in pain, it is important to listen to our body and seek advice and help. Simply masking the pain by using pain-killers and not healing the root cause is only a temporary solution. We need to fix the issue so our body can thoroughly heal. At times, pain can be mysterious and seem to have no obvious cause. For many people, this is the most worrisome kind of pain. Often, a person's imagination can get involved and an ache that is the result of nothing more than lack of exercise and poor posture can escalate into something much more serious in a person's mind.

These negative thought processes can become worse when the pain is felt in an area where there is truly nothing wrong. A pain for example, felt in the head and the face, may be the end result of trigger points located in muscles within the neck area. Since the pain is felt around your ears, face and eyes, we might imagine we have a more serious problem. Once you determine that the pain is actually stemming from your shoulder or neck area, your anxiety will likely disappear.

A chiropractor understands where all of our nerve endings and muscles are in relation to each other. They will be able to explain why you are feeling pain in certain areas and help you work through the healing process. It is common to have to visit the chiropractor numerous times to get relief. This is necessary since our muscles and nerves are continuously adapting. If we have been out of line or pinching a nerve for a while, the knots and bands of muscle tissue may require multiple visits to be manipulated back into their proper place and the body has to respond by holding them in place. The bottom line, listen to your body and do not give up. Do not accept chronic pain as a regular part of your life if it is musculoskeletal in origin.

Your chiropractor should be able to give you an estimate of how many appointments you will need to feel relief; however, everybody is different and treatment is individual. It is worth every penny to feel the best you can each day and be pain free!