

Western acupuncture & dry needling for triathletes

McCutcheon LM

Combined Health Acupuncture and Dry Needling Education

Research Fellow School of Medicine, Griffith University

The role of physiotherapy with the triathlete often includes sports screening, injury prevention, performance enhancement and treatment of musculoskeletal injuries. The sport of triathlon has a high incidence of injury ranging from 37% to 91%. Injuries are predominately due to overuse, however they may also be traumatic in origin. The most commonly reported sites of injury are the knee and lower leg regions, although the shoulder, back and neck have also been identified as commonly injured in triathletes. Western acupuncture has developed over the past 30-40 years having its foundations in neurophysiological clinical reasoning and combining local, segmental and extra-segmental needling points. Dry needling using a Travell & Simons style is an established form of needling therapy which addresses the aetiology and treatment of myofascial pain syndromes. Both Dry Needling and Western Acupuncture can be effective in the treatment of triathlete related injuries although there is only presently limited reference to the use of needling therapies in triathlete related injuries in the research literature. A review of various musculoskeletal conditions that triathletes commonly present with are discussed along with a presentation of Dry Needling and Western Acupuncture techniques that may be employed in the overall management of the triathlete.