PromoteHealth
Physiotherapy & Performance

A confident, informed return to movement and sport

PATIENT INFORMATION GUIDE • TRIGGER POINT RELEASE / TENDER MUSCLE SPOTS

Trigger points: a gentle approach

Trigger point is a term used for a tender muscle spot that may reproduce familiar pain. Gentle pressure may give short-term relief, but tenderness alone does not establish the cause of pain.

YOUR PRACTICAL SELF-CARE PLAN

01	**START WITH ASSESSMENT** **Know the area**	Ask your physiotherapist to check persistent symptoms and show a suitable muscle area. Do not assume every painful lump, swollen area or spreading pain is a trigger point.
02	**APPLY LIGHT PRESSURE** **Stay in control**	Use your fingers or a soft ball against a wall at a demonstrated site. Apply gentle, tolerable pressure. You should be able to breathe normally and release pressure easily.
03	**EASE OFF** **Less can be enough**	Try a brief application, then let go and reassess. Do not press harder to force a release. Stop for sharp pain, tingling, numbness, dizziness or skin changes.
04	**FOLLOW WITH MOVEMENT** **Build the bigger plan**	Use gentle movement afterwards. Combine any helpful symptom relief with appropriate exercise, activity changes and recovery. Repeatedly pressing the same sore spot is not a complete rehabilitation plan.

KEEP EXPECTATIONS REALISTIC

Some people feel less tender after massage, but responses vary and evidence is limited. A temporary change does not confirm that a knot has been removed or the underlying problem cured.

SELF-CARE HAS LIMITS

This sheet covers gentle manual pressure, not dry needling or injections. Do not use needles yourself. Avoid aggressive tools and ask a clinician before treating a sensitive area.

WHEN TO GET MEDICAL HELP

Check before treatment: blood-thinning medicines, easy bruising, fragile bones, reduced sensation or recent surgery. Avoid wounds, bruises, fresh injuries and direct pressure over bones, joints or the neck.

Seek assessment instead: an unexplained lump, persistent night pain, spreading pain, weakness or numbness. A new hot, swollen limb needs urgent GP / NHS 111 advice; do not massage it.

Stop if symptoms worsen: bruising, lasting pain or new nerve symptoms are reasons to stop and seek advice. Sudden chest pain or breathlessness with limb swelling needs emergency help: call 999.

INFORMED BY: Moraska et al.: Massage trial • NCCIH: Massage safety • UW Medicine: Tool safety • NHS: DVT

Disclaimer: For general information only; not a replacement for professional medical advice or an individual rehabilitation plan.

GET IN TOUCH

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Physiotherapy in Abingdon | Online support available