What is Myofascial Pain (MPS)?
Occupational or recreational activities that produce repetitive stress on a specific muscle or muscle group can cause chronic stress in muscle fibers, leading to myofascial trigger points. An example of this would be holding a telephone receiver between the ear and shoulder to free one’s arms. The pain associated with MPS is described as dull, poorly localized, and deep. The patient may describe a muscle spasm that may respond to deep massage, but usually returns sometime later. There are numerous causes of MPS some examples include acute trauma or repetitive micro-trauma such as a whiplash injury sustained in a motor vehicle accident or a sports injury. The physician will “palpate” or feel the area in which the patient has pain. He / she will notice bands that are painful when pressed and the patient may experience a painful sensation when pressure is applied to these areas.

What other treatments exist for myofascial pain?
The usual treatment for MPS is conservative at first, such as heat, chiropractic therapy, physical therapy, TENS and other non-invasive modalities. If these measures fail, more aggressive measures, such as trigger point injections in conjunction with PENS should be attempted.

What is PENS?
PENS is a procedure where very fine needles, usually acupuncture needles are inserted into certain areas of the body to treat pain. Percutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (PENS) is similar in concept to transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS), but differs in that needles are inserted either around or immediately adjacent to the nerve serving the painful area and then stimulated. PENS is generally reserved for patients who fail to get pain relief from TENS, apparently due to obvious physical barriers to the conduction of electrical stimulation (e.g., scar tissue, obesity). PENS must be distinguished from acupuncture with electrical stimulation. In electrical acupuncture, needles are also inserted just below the skin, but the placement of needles is based on specific theories regarding energy flow through the human body. Thus in PENS the location of the stimulation is determined by proximity to the pain rather than the theories of energy flow that guide placement of stimulation for acupuncture.

Who can benefit from PENS?
Patients with chronic headaches, chronic lower back pain, cervical, and thoracic regional pain.

How does PENS help?
Combining trigger point injections, PENS, and more conservative modalities such as chiropractic and physical therapy, will decrease pain, reduce medications, improve sleep and return the patient to a normal, more functional life.

Is the procedure painful?
The treatment is relatively painless. You will feel initial “pinches” upon needle placement.

How often will I receive a treatment?
Initially, you may receive treatments twice a week for approximately 2-4 weeks. After the pain level has decreased, the frequency may be reduced to weekly treatments for 2-4 weeks.