



GUA SHUA AND CUPPING

Disclaimer: We are not licensed massage therapists. We have learned how to properly perform Gua Shua and Cupping on patients, under our studies with Dr. Shanwen Gao LAc, OMD

WHAT IS CUPPING THERAPY?

Cupping is an ancient taoist practice that uses glass, plastic or even rubber cups to draw out stagnation and promote optimal “Qi” circulation to targeted areas. These cups are placed on the skin, and pressure is applied to create a vacuum effect within the cup, pulling the skin up and stretching the tissue. This suction force promotes blood flow to the area, and in turn facilitates healing.

Toxins can accumulate in the body, especially if one is experiencing inflammation, or poor blood flow. Blockages in the body’s tissue can lead to pain and swelling and congestion in our lymph flow can lead to a stressed immune system. Cupping helps with detoxifying the body while also reducing swelling. Unlike massage that applies pressure to swollen areas, cupping draws pressure out by separating the tissue layers and opening the veins and arteries. This in turn, breaks up the tension or stagnation and creates a boost of energy flow or “qi” in these targeted tissues.

You might seek cupping therapy if you are experiencing chronic low back pain, muscle knots, tightness due to anxiety, swelling or stiffness.

WHAT IS GUA SHUA THERAPY?

Gua Sha (pronounced “gwa sha”) is an ancient technique that has been practiced for over 2000 years. In Chinese gua means stroke or press while sha refers to redness. During a session a flat edge of a gemstone is scraped along the skin’s surface. The motion boosts circulation and breaks up scar tissue in the treated area. Internally, Gua Sha stimulates the lymphatic system and carries away excess drainage and toxins while relaxing and toning your muscles.

Treatment is not supposed to be painful, but does intend to bruise. The scraping motion causes tiny blood vessels near the skin’s surface to burst causing bruising. These bruises may be tender and may take a few days up to a week to heal. An ice pack can reduce this swelling.

At times this therapy is not suitable and may cause even more harm than good. Please seek another therapy if you have any of the following:

- Have had a surgery in the last six weeks.
- Have any medical conditions affecting the skin or veins.
- Have an infection or wound that has not completely healed.
- Take any medications to thin the blood, or have blood clotting disorders.

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AT HEALING MINISTERS UNITED WE OFFER 2 TYPES OF CUPPING THERAPY



DRY CUPPING "FIRE CUPPING"- USED WITH GLASS

A cotton ball soaked in alcohol is lit by fire and placed into the glass cup very quickly and removed. The cups are placed in strategic places along the body. These areas are based on the patient's goals for the session. As the cups are placed on the patient's skin, oxygen is removed in the cup, creating the vacuum effect. The cups are fixed to the skin for a designated time; anywhere between 10-15 minutes.



MOVING CUPPING - USED WITH PLASTIC

First, a massage oil is applied to the skin, helping the cups glide over the tissues more easily. Cups are placed on strategic areas of the body based on patient's goals. Instead of fire creating the suction effect though, a pump is used on the plastic cups to pull the oxygen out of the cup. Cups are then moved across the muscles to create separation in these tissue layers. Although, this therapy can feel a bit different, it is really beneficial if you want to improve a greater area on the body during your visit.

IS CUPPING THERAPY SAFE?

During a session it is common to feel some heat and tightness around the cup. Some find this feeling to be relaxing and soothing while others find it to be uncomfortable. If it is painful at all, please let the practitioner know- but a session should feel anywhere in between slightly uncomfortable to relaxing. Both cupping and gua sha should be avoided if the patient is experiencing any skin infections, inflammations, ulcers or hypersensitivity. Not enough research has been done to date on therapy during pregnancy thus these therapies should also be avoided if the patient is pregnant.

It is common to have skin discoloration develop after therapy and this may last anywhere between a few hours to a couple of weeks depending on the stress in the tissues. Similar to gua sha, cupping can also create temporary or minor bruising in areas and icing these areas after the session could be helpful.

If cupping marks are present at your next visit, we will place cups next to the target areas but not on top of current markings. This is to ensure we do not affect these areas that haven't been cleared yet by the body's circulation.

PLEASE LET US KNOW IF YOU HAVE
ANY QUESTIONS

