

## **Suction Cupping Explained**

Suction Cupping involves creating a vacuum over various parts of the body for therapeutic effects. The original classic method of cupping involved briefly heating the air in an inverted cup, which then produces a vacuum when the air cools after the cup is applied to the skin.



The resultant low pressure under the cup causes a localized expansion of tissue.

Suction Cupping is used therapeutically to draw blood flow to areas of pain, thus flushing capillary beds and re-supplying vital nutrients. Suction also mobilizes and stretches soft tissue thus loosening areas of restriction. Suction cups are usually placed over disease/injury sites for 5 – 10 minutes.

Applying an oil based lubricant to the skin just prior to cup application facilitates a tight seal, and allows for sliding cups around in the treatment area. Cups of all sizes are used to treat a wide range of disorders. For example, small cups may be applied to the face to treat facial paralysis, whereas larger cups placed in the lumbar region can be used to treat lumbago.

## **Dry Cupping and Wet Cupping**

There are two main types of cupping: dry cupping and wet cupping. Dry cupping involves stimulation of the skin by suction. Wet cupping includes blood-letting, achieved by puncturing the skin with tiny needles before the cups are applied.



Wet cupping has a stronger stimulatory action on the skin, muscles and corresponding organs.

This type of cupping is usually used for areas of congestion to reduce inflammation, pain, and cramping. Wet cupping is helpful for patients with a tendency for high blood pressure and weight gain. Patients suffering from anemia would benefit more with dry cupping.

## **How does Suction Cupping work?**

Suction cupping should always be performed by a qualified health care professional. Cupping is almost solely practiced on the back, often on either side of the spine, though cups can be used on the abdomen and upper arms and legs.

Cups are available with elastic knobs that provide a sucking action when pumped. When placed on the skin, the cups can be pumped until the skin has reached the desired height inside the glass. A more traditional method uses plain glass cups where a small flame creates a vacuum inside the glass which sucks the skin into the glass. Both of these techniques are very popular today.

In either method, several cups are applied one after another and then left on the skin for ten to thirty minutes. This stimulation increases circulation and in response, the skin discolors and bruising occurs. This

bruising doesn't last long unless the person bruises easily. Cupping may feel uncomfortable but it is not painful.

### **Benefits of Suction Cupping**

Cupping is helpful for relief from muscle spasms, back pain, as well as arthritic and rheumatic problems. While stimulating the skin and underlying muscles, it promotes the release of toxins that have accumulated in the area and increases circulation of blood and lymph vessels.

Cupping also stimulates the organ-related reflex zones in the skin to further improve the function of inner organs, including the stomach, liver, kidneys and intestines.



Cupping can also increase immunity in a particular area since the suction causes the release of a histamine-like substance in the skin which stimulates immune system response.

### **Detoxify with Suction Cupping**

Other detoxification therapies are often used in conjunction to enhance the eliminatory action of cupping. Other therapies combined with cupping can be used to treat chronic pain and discomfort more successfully, even where other therapies have failed. There are very few conditions in which cupping should not be used, such as high fever, skin disease, or if the person tends to bleed easily.

With fire cupping, a vacuum is created by air (heated by fire) in a glass cup placed flush against the patient's skin. As the air cools in the cup, a vacuum forms that pulls up on the skin, stimulating the acupuncture effect. This type of therapy is used in the treatment of respiratory diseases such as the common cold, pneumonia, and bronchitis. It can also be used to treat back, neck, shoulder and other musculoskeletal pain. Cupping may feel uncomfortable, but the patient will not feel pain.

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