

What is Cupping?

Cupping is a Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) technique that is utilized by many TCM practitioners. The technique is said to influence the flow of both Qi and Blood throughout the body and or meridians. Cupping's long history of use in acupuncture practice has been well noted, however, it can be seen as a therapy in its own right, and there are also variations adopted in other countries such as Greece, France, Italy, Turkey, and regions such as Eastern Europe and South America.

Cupping is a safe and non-invasive technique, which practitioners use to treat a variety of conditions like musculo-skeletal pain, colds and flu and upper respiratory infections. Cupping therapy stimulates micro blood circulation to the localized area.

Cupping disperses and moves Qi and Blood by exerting suction and pressure on the prescribed area. Cupping is primarily used when the Qi is inhibited at certain points, or when Qi stagnation needs to be drawn to the surface of the body from deep within. For instance, cupping can be used to “pull out” such conditions as "wind-cold", which in Chinese Medicine is believed to be an exogenous pathogenic factor, which will affect the Lung organ. In this manner it can treat cough, congestion, and tightness in the chest.

To create a vacuum seal on the skin, a flame from a burning cotton ball held with in forceps is placed in and out an upside-down cup. When the oxygen in the cup is exhausted, the glass cup is placed directly on to the skin, where it is held in place by a strong suction. Often, the skin inside the cup visibly rises with the suction. There are also cups available that use manual hand pumping instead of the traditional burning type to create the suction.

Cups may be left for several minutes, or removed quickly and placed elsewhere. Cups are sometimes placed over an acupuncture needle that has been inserted. Moving or sliding cupping, which is a variation, may also be performed, first by rubbing the skin with a small amount of oil - which permits the cups to slide with ease. When cups are used to treat colds and flu patients are advised to wrap up in blankets to stay warm after the treatment.

Although cupping is a painless treatment, it causes blood to be drawn to the surface of the skin. As such, and the appearance of reddish circular marks, similar to bruising will be apparent. These marks will subside with in a few hours or days.



