

Cupping



Cupping is a method of relieving local congestion by applying a partial vacuum that is created in a cup(s), either by heat or by suction, which then draws up the underlying tissues. When the cups are left in place on the skin for a few minutes, blood stasis is formed and localized healing takes place. I use partial vacuum air suction in my practice. Perhaps you have seen one of the pictures of famous people with their “cupping marks?” Jennifer Aniston, Gwyneth Paltrow, Jessica Simpson, even an Olympic athlete,



who have proudly displayed evidence of cupping.

There are many clinical applications for cupping including treatment of:

- Arthritic symptoms
- Asthma
- Chronic cough
- Common cold
- Deep tissue therapy
- Encourage blood flow
- Facial rejuvenation
- Indigestion problems

- Lower back pain
- Moving blood stagnation
- Moving toxins
- Muscle relief
- Promoting mental, and physical relaxation
- Skin conditions
- Treating neck and cervical pain

There may be some side effects such as small circular bruises on the areas where the cups were applied. These bruises are usually painless, and can be light red to dark purple in color, usually disappearing within a few days of treatment.



Some research in 2012 published in the journal *PLoS ONE* looks promising. It suggests that cupping therapy may have more than a placebo effect. 135 studies were reviewed by Australian and Chinese researchers on cupping therapy published between 1992 and 2010. Although they concluded there needs to be more research, they concluded that cupping may be effective when combined with other treatments like acupuncture and medication.

“Depending on the condition being treated, the cups will be left in place from 5 to 10 minutes. Several cups may be placed on a patient’s body at the same time. Some practitioners will also apply small amounts of medicated oils or herbal oils to the skin just before the cupping procedure, which lets them move the cups up and down particular acupoints or meridians after they have been applied. In “air” cupping, instead of using a flame to heat the cup, the cup is applied to the skin, and a suction pump is attached to the rounded end of the jar. The pump is then used to create the vacuum. In “wet” cupping, the skin is punctured before treatment. When the cup is applied and the skin is drawn up, a small amount of blood may flow from the puncture site, which is believed to help remove harmful substances and toxins from the body.”
 -Acupuncture Today

