

## Cupping therapy

Cupping is an ancient Chinese practice in which a cup is applied to the skin and the pressure in the cup is reduced (by using heat or mechanically suctioning out air).

The therapeutic principle behind this therapeutic modality is that cupping suction can penetrate deep into the tissue, up to 3-4 inches which cause the body to release harmful toxins, activate the lymphatic system, activate the skin, clear the veins, arteries and capillaries and activate the flow of fresh new blood into those areas

Cupping is a therapeutic as well a diagnostic procedure. As a diagnostic tool cupping can help to ascertain the kind of problem we are dealing with, its location and severity.

The cupping sensation can be a little painful for a few seconds after they are applied and it is usually associated with the period of time when most of the toxins are mobilized and removed. During that time patients are encouraged to breathe slowly and only through their nose which helps the patient to relax and ease the discomfort that usually disappear after a minute or so.

Very seldom the cups need to be applied for more than 5 to 10 minutes and if no color appears after a few minutes, the cups can be removed and then placed in another area of the body.

Depending of the severity of the condition, generally patients will experience an immediate relieve of symptoms upon removing the cups.

It is important to remember that during cupping the skin subjected to cupping will

colored and depending on the severity of the toxin build up will the intensity of the color vary from light pink to deep scarlet, purple, or even black. It may take up to five to seven days for this color to dissipate.

The frequency for cupping varies and as a rule of thumb it should be repeated as soon as the marks have faded; it is interesting to notice that the marks will be less intense each time you receive a treatment which is associated with the restoration of balancing.

Nowadays, cupping is mainly used for the treatment of pain, gastro-intestinal disorders, lung diseases (especially chronic cough and asthma), gynecologic disorders, common cold insomnia and paralysis, though it can be used for other disorders as well.

Some of the contraindications for cupping include: areas of skin that are inflamed; cases of high fever, convulsions or easy bleeding (i.e., pathological level of low platelets); or the abdominal area or lower back during pregnancy.

After cupping you should take it easy, drink plenty of water, keep the cupped are covered and warm and free from drafts immediately after treatment and avoid any strenuous activity, especially if there is still residual soreness.