

The Ancient Art of Cupping, Revealed

By Toni Eatros, MS, Dipl Ac, AP

If you have watched any of the 2016 summer Olympics swimming events, then you have seen many of the athletes with strange, purple round marks on their bodies. These marks may appear strange, but they are the result of an ancient healing technique called cupping.

Cupping is a suction, or vacuum, technique designed to pull toxin build up, muscle spasm, and stagnant blood from the body's deeper tissues to the surface of the skin. In Chinese medicine, it is said that when there is pain in the body, it is due to the stagnation of the Qi (the body's vital energy) and/or the blood. Each cell of the body uses oxygen and gives off carbon dioxide as a waste product. When the Qi and/or blood is not flowing, this carbon dioxide accumulates, leading to more pain and congestion in the area. The western medical doctors call this toxic or acid build up.

When the cups are applied to certain areas, the suction formed pulls the stagnant toxins and blood to the surface of the skin. Here, the body can more easily eliminate the toxins through the capillary system. The characteristic purple circles are a result of this process. The more stagnation and toxins, the darker the purple circle. With the stagnation removed, fresh new Qi and blood can flow into the area, healing and revitalizing the tissues.

Cupping is often used as a therapy in Chinese medicine, but it is also used as a diagnostic tool for the practitioner. Cupping can tell the practitioner three basic things about a pain condition.



1. **Where** the affected area is. Usually we cup over an area that is a bit larger than the reported pain location. If the cups leave the characteristic purple color, we follow the purple circles to be sure the entire area of involvement is addressed. Often, even under a single cup, part of the circle may discolor and the other part won't.

2. **What** kind of problem is causing the pain? Pain conditions relating to toxin buildup, muscle spasm or blood stagnation will cause the skin under the cup to discolor. The skin under the cup will not discolor if the pain is due to a nerve or bone issue.

3. The **severity** of the condition. Mild or moderate stagnation and toxin accumulation will cause the skin under the cup to turn pink or red and will usually take one or two days for the discoloration to resolve. Severe stagnation can cause the skin under the cup to turn a deep scarlet, purple or even black color that may take up to 10 days to resolve.

Cups rarely need to be applied for more than 10 minutes. If no color appears under the cup after a few minutes, the cups will be removed. The cupping sensation can be a bit uncomfortable for the first minute. This is the time when the majority of the toxins are pulled to the surface and can be the most intense part of the treatment. The discomfort usually eases after the first minute and some people experience a strong sense of relaxation at this time.

Cupping is an ancient and amazing treatment modality that has withstood the test of time. The healing effects of cupping are immediate. Healing of the body can be shortened by weeks, even months using this therapy to manually remove energy blockage in the deep layers of the body.

Acupuncture and Natural Health Solutions has always offered this extraordinary therapy at very reasonable prices. Check out our website, www.AcupunctureSolutionsOnline.com, or call 239-260-4566 for more information on this often overlooked treatment method.

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