

# Certificate in

## Dry Cupping Therapy

### Dry Cupping Therapy

Cupping is a technique used in conjunction with massage, dry needling & acupuncture.

Cupping pulls blood to a region to stimulate healing. It is effective at stretching tight fascia and muscles. The cupping helps the tissue develop new blood flow and stimulate the healing process. Cupping is generally painless, and many versions of the cupping can be found in different cultures such as; Europe, the middle east, Asia and Latin America.

### Science behind dry cupping

As we age. Especially after 40 years old, our bodies start to degenerate at an increased rate. The Breakdown includes loss of muscle, increased numbers of adhesions in fascia and muscle and decreased blood flow.

Through progressive inactivity their blood supply to tissue decreases and fascia gets knotted and scarred, which further limits movement. And because of this can become a vicious cycle. The use of dry cupping, in likeness with manual massage, can help aid these effects by increasing the blood supply to the muscle and fascia and increase pliability of their soft tissue creating more movement.

Initially dry cupping pulls blood into an area. The tissue then becomes saturated with fresh blood while the vacuum pulls stagnated blood out of the area. This is demonstrated by the hickey appearance that is typically left behind. The mark may produce a black and blue appearance but it's rarely painful.

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As new blood is forced into the tissues around the cups the body will begin to develop new blood vessels called neovascularisation (new blood vessel formation). As the new vessels form, they will have the capability to feed tissues with nutrient and oxygen.

Sterile inflammation is also produced by the process of dry cupping. This is where the body releases white blood cells, platelets, fibroblasts and other healing chemicals to promote healing. When the vacuum occurs, it causes separation of the different layers of tissue which can cause micro trauma and tearing. The healing chemicals are released, thus stimulate healing.

Fascia and tissue can be stretched several feet with cupping. The stretch action produces micro, trauma, which stimulates the formation of the new blood vessels and the migration of the blood and nutrients to them damaged tissue.

When 10 or more cups are used around an injured area it can produce a stretch reflex within the connective tissue and fascia which results in increased pliability and range of movement.

#### **Key Benefits Include:**

- Increased circulation which increases oxygenation and nutrient levels within tissue
- Increases the removal of chemical irritants within muscle and fascia and the removal of stagnant blood
- Causing micro trauma which leads to sterile inflammation and a renewed healing process
- Produces a stretch reflex in fascia and connective tissue, which increases mobility at the joint
- Works well in conjunction with other therapy such as sports and remedial massage, joint mobilisations and medical acupuncture

#### **Cupping In Traditional Chinese Medicine**

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) is an ancient holistic healthcare system that has been used for the treatment of injuries, whether derived from sports or everyday activities, for thousands of years. Cupping is one of the main techniques of TCM along with acupuncture, moxibustion, herbs, Tui Na and Gua Sha.

Many believe that TCM style of cupping differs from other more modern techniques used by sports therapist as TCH specifically targets the acupuncture channels and the acupuncturists main aim is to balance, or move energy (Qi) within the body. Sports therapists mainly target the muscular-skeletal system more directly.

However, the musculo-skeletal system is considered part of the external aspect of the body with TCM, where the function is controlled by the Qi and blood as they

circulate through the Jing-Luo network. In reality both systems work in very similar ways, and as a TCM practitioners offer work on both levels as cupping has both a physical and energetic aspect to it.

Cupping can be used in many different ways: including:

- Being placed directly over acupuncture points
- Being placed directly over trigger points
- Being moved along acupuncture channels

Often uses when:

- An area is too large for needling to be comfortable
- An area is non-responsive to massage
- In conjunction with needling or massage therapy

### **Types of cups**

Cups are either robust rounded glass, bamboo or plastic. The vacuum can be created using a flame (fire cupping), suction pump with release valve or with a suction bulb attached to the cup.



### **Considerations**

Before treatment, practitioners need to consider:

- The age of the client
- The condition location, severity and duration

- Size of cups; small, medium or large used according to the size of the area to be treated.
- Strength of cupping: stronger the suction the more reducing the effect
- Number of cups: the more cups the stronger the effect
- The size of the area to be treated will also influence the number of cups
- Duration of cupping: the longer the cups are left on the more reducing the effect
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### **Contraindications**

Same as traditional massage theory and –

- Avoid head, throat or other bony ridges
- Avoid enlarged blood vessels, varicose veins and thromboses
- Do not use over cuts, broken, ulcerated or inflamed skin
- Do not cup a client taking anticoagulants
- Avoid abdomen and lower back cupping during pregnancy

### **Colour of cupping marks**

Cupping draws blood to the external capillaries of the body and as a result minor bruising may occur. With static cupping, circular cup marks may be visible after treatment. This may last anything from a few hours to 10+ days depending on the strength of the treatment, and the severity of the condition. As the stagnation clears clients will often start to feel the benefits of treatment more. With subsequent treatments, the bruising will decrease and clear up quicker. If blisters or blood spots occur after the treatment this often indicates that the cupping was too strong.

In traditional cupping therapy the colours brought up from treatment can be an important indication tool:

Light red/ orange	Qi stagnation & possibly blood deficiency
Brown	Chronic Qi stagnation
Mid red through to dark purple	Blood stagnation
Blue	Cold
White/ pores open	Poor/ no circulation

For cupping to take place, a vacuum need to be created to allow the suction onto the skin. Traditionally this was done by wafting a flame into a glass for a very short period of time until the oxygen was exhausted. This creates a vacuum inside the cup, which then anchors the cup to the skin. The strength of the vacuum depends on the amount of oxygen burned inside the cup and the skill of the practitioner in quickly placing the cup into position.

***When using suction cup procedure, the oxygen is sucked out of the cup with a pump, reducing the risk of burn with fire cups.***

## **Cupping Procedure**

### **Prior to application**

- Make sure the client is in a good position and relaxed
- Make sure hair and clothing is out the area
- Apply base medium if using the slide effect

### **During cupping**

- Warn client to not make necessary movements that might undo the suction and that the cupping should cause a pulling sensation on the skin but not painful
- Stay with client in case of faintness

### **Withdrawing the cups**

- Release the top of the suction cup, to reduce suction and to remove the cup
- Massage the area afterwards

### **Cleaning the cups**

It's essential that the cups are disinfected and cleaned between use to avoid cross contamination between clients

## **Cupping Techniques**

Static	Vacuum is created and the cup is left in place
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- Weak cupping: older clients or children under 7

5 mins duration & maximum 2 cups

- Medium strength cupping: children 7-14 yrs, older clients or delicate skin

5 mins & maximum 5 cups

- Strong cupping: adults on the back, shoulders and knee areas

20 mins maximum & 10 cups maximum

Slide	Oil is placed lightly over the area and moved across the skin
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- Good for pain over a larger area, can be more painful for the client
- Can be done with either weak, medium or strong suction
- Can be combined with active movement techniques

Walking/ flash	Multiple cups are placed along the muscle. Then the first cup is removed and reapplied in front of the last cup providing continues movement cups
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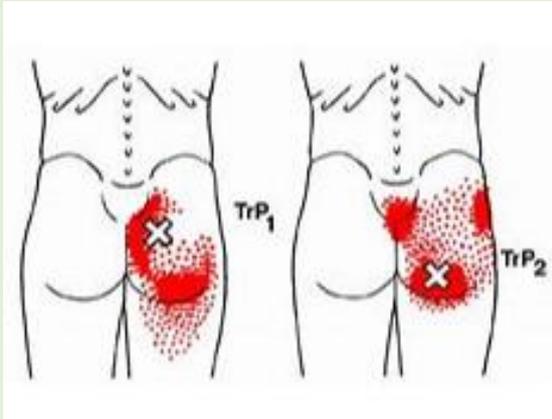
- Can be lighter and more superficial depending on suction used
- Can produce less cupping marks than other techniques

\*\*Cupping therapy can be combined with heat therapy such as an infra-red lamp

Area	Notes
Lower Limb 	
Plantar Fascia	



Glutes Area



Area

Upper Limb



Notes

Pectoral Area



Back

