



What is cupping?

Cupping is an ancient healing technique used to increase circulation to the area of the body over which it is performed. Glass, plastic, or sometimes silicone cups are used to create suction over the body region(s) being treated. While cupping can be used in the treatment of a number of different conditions and performed in various ways, some generalities and important aftercare instructions are listed below.

When is cupping performed?

Cupping can be performed in a wide variety of instances, but two of its main uses are:

👉 after a lot of exercise/strenuous activity

😓 in the earliest possible stages of when you feel you're "coming down with something"

👉 Why after physical activity?

Muscles get tense and tight after being worked hard, and the blood, fluids, fascia, and other soft tissue can all get bound up alongside the muscles. Cupping helps move and disperse stagnant blood, fluids, and energy ~ this spells quicker removal of metabolic wastes from the tissue and improved circulation/arrival of nutrients/oxygen via blood.

😓 Why when you're getting sick?

In Chinese medicine, the "Wei" qi (likened to our Western concept of the immune system) resides in the outermost layer of our physical being (skin and upper muscle layers). Pathogens enter from the outermost layers first, so if you can catch them before they go deeper (cupping helps draw pathogens out from a Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) perspective), you prevent said pathogen(s) from creating full blown disease.

In GENERAL:

- Cupping feels good.

- It's good for tissue, similar to massage.
- It can help keep the skin, muscles, and everything between healthier when done regularly.

And did you know that cupping can be done on most regions of the body? It's not for the back only!

Why is cupping aftercare important?

While more and more people are trying out cupping, many don't know what they should and shouldn't be doing after a cupping treatment.

Basically, the cupping creates "openings" to external influences, which, in TCM, are considered causes of or contributors to disease. Try to keep too much heat and especially too much cold, and also damp and wind, out while your cupping marks are healing.

Aim to avoid the previous (heat, cold, damp, wind) for at least 24-48 hours. Some traditional TCM practitioners will say to avoid until the cupping marks are gone, but this can be impractical. The most crucial time to avoid these TCM "pathogens" is in the first few days following cupping.

Cupping Aftercare DOs and DON'Ts

After cupping, DO NOT

- Go swimming - this includes pools, oceans, bathtubs, etc (If you can put off showering for 24-48 hours after cupping, this is ideal.)
- Leave the cupped area uncovered
- Consume excessively cold foods (ice cream, ice water, raw fish, etc)
- Do vigorous activity
- Get cupping again over the same area until the marks have disappeared (this can take from a few days to a few weeks)

After cupping, DO

- Take it easy for a day or two (you may have soreness along with the cupping marks and this should help remind you!)
- Keep the area covered
- Stay well hydrated. Water and herbal teas are ideal!
- Eat well-cooked, nourishing, easy to digest foods ~ try to create less energetic demand in the digestive organs so that more healing energy is available to the cupping sites and body overall.
- Schedule your next cupping session once the marks are gone! With regular treatments, you'll get better circulation and less stagnation in the area ~ recovery times will continue to decrease until the tissue has reached a new state of healthy.