



### IS CUPPING PAINFUL?

The cupping sensation can be a bit painful for the first sixty seconds, the time during which most of the toxins are removed. It is helpful for the patient to try to relax into the process of being cupped, and to acknowledge and tolerate the pain.

It is important not to get cupped on an empty stomach. Inhale and exhale only through the nose. This will slow the breathing and further insure that you do not get dizzy or lightheaded.

Patients typically experience immediate relief in symptomatic areas of the body upon removal of the cups, making the initial discomfort well worth the treatment. Rarely, but occasionally, when the skin turns deep purple, there may be more intense discomfort which will pass within 24-48 hours.



### AFTERCARE

Keep the cupped area covered, warm and free from any drafts immediately after treatment and for the following three days to assure that the muscles do not tighten and spasm.

Over-the-counter pain relief medication may be used to manage any lasting discomfort.

Drink plenty of water to help clear the toxins through the body's normal excretory channels.

Take it easy after the cupping treatment and for the day after. Avoid hot tubs and cold plunges to prevent getting chilled. Avoid any strenuous activity, especially if there is residual soreness.

Remember that your skin has not been bruised or traumatized; the coloration shows toxin release.

If you still have concerns, call your practitioner.

# Cupping Technique for Pain Relief

BY SUSAN JOHNSON, L.AC.



Cupping is an extraordinary technique that has been passed down for thousands of years and continues to be widely used among professionals and lay people across many cultures today.

The healing process can be shortened by weeks, even months, by using this method that manually removes the energy blockage in ways that acupuncture needles, massage and other forms of treatment cannot.

# Freedom from Pain

## WHAT IS CUPPING?

Cupping is a suction technique designed to pull toxin build up and muscle spasm from the body's deeper tissue to the surface of the skin.

The cells of the body use oxygen and give off carbon dioxide; when the energy is blocked, the cell waste or carbon dioxide gets blocked. This is called acid or toxin build up.

Physical pain implies a blockage in the flow of energy through a particular area. When toxins or cell waste stagnate in the muscles or joints, it can be very difficult for the body to get rid of this waste, causing further blockage and discomfort.

By utilizing cupping techniques we are able, by vacuum or suction, to pull the blockage out of the deeper tissue and move it to the skin's surface. Once on the surface, it is much easier for the body to eliminate toxins through the superficial blood supply or capillary system.

In only ten minutes of cupping, not only can we pull toxin build up out of specific areas, but we can also pull the fresh new blood into those areas, which will vitalize and restore proper blood flow.

## WHY CHOOSE CUPPING?

Cupping is diagnostic as well as therapeutic, and can tell us three basic things.

First, cupping will tell us the **kind of problem** with which we are dealing, as problems relating to toxin build up or muscle spasm will cause the skin under the cup to

color, whereas issues dealing with nerve or bone will not color at all.

Second, cupping tells us exactly **where** the problem is, as we usually cup an area slightly larger than the painful area, in order to ensure that the area of pain is completely covered. Some skin under the cups will color, and some won't, though the same amount of suction has been used with all cups. Even on the skin under a single cup, part may color while the rest does not.

Third, cupping will tell us the **severity** of the problem. Light or moderate blockage will cause the skin under a cup to color pink or red, and take a day or two for the color to go away. Severe stagnation can cause the skin to color a deep scarlet, purple, or even black; it may take seven to ten days for the dark color to disperse. All of this information is helpful not only in providing treatment, but in making an accurate diagnosis.

**SUSAN JOHNSON, L.Ac.** has been practicing acupuncture since 1982. Susan teaches cupping techniques nationwide to professionals and the general public. Her patients request cupping regularly for relief of common neck, shoulder and back symptoms.

She maintains a practice in Santa Cruz, CA.



Day 1 Severe Blockage



Day 3



Day 5



Day 7

THIS PATIENT HAD SEVERE TOXIN BUILD-UP CAUSING STIFFNESS AND PAIN IN THE NECK AND SHOULDER AREA. THESE PHOTOS SHOW THE SKIN'S RETURN TO NEAR NORMAL APPEARANCE WITHIN ONE WEEK.