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THE ANCIENT CHINESE TREATMENT OF CUPPING

By: *Dr. Selene Wilkinson, Naturopathic Doctor*

What is cupping?

Cupping is an ancient Chinese treatment method that creates local congestion in order to promote optimum health. Cupping therapy was developed as a means to open the meridians of the body. Meridians are the conduits in the body through which energy flows to every part of the body and through every organ and tissue. There are five meridians on the back that, when opened, allow invigorating energy to travel the whole length of the body. It has been found that cupping is the best way of opening those meridians. From physiological perspective, treating back pain or tight iliotibial (IT) bands works the same way as a very deep massage by breaking down and releasing tight muscle tissue.

What is cupping used for?

Cupping is generally indicated in the treatment of any inflammatory condition, arthritic pain, abdominal pain, indigestion, headaches, hypertension, the common cold, cough, low back pain, painful menstruation, infertility, muscle pain and to boost the immune system. Cupping has been found to affect the body up to four inches into the tissues, causing tissues to release toxins, activate the lymphatic system, clear colon blockages, help activate and clear the veins, arteries and capillaries, activate the skin, and improve stretch marks and varicose veins. Cupping is one of the best forms of deep tissue massage available.

How is cupping performed?

A partial vacuum is created in cups placed on the skin (usually the back) either by means of heat or suction. The underlying tissue is drawn up into the jar forming an area of blood stasis. This appears to bruise the area, or at least turn it a bright red. The amount of dark red or even purple blood drawn to the surface indicates the degree of stagnation. Dark blood is a sign of stagnation, which in many cases in modern terms is the amount of toxins in the blood. The cups are left in place for 10 to 15 minutes and then removed. Depending on the patient, treatment may include running the cups up and down the back of a person, especially if the patient has back pain. This type of treatment is an excellent way to release back muscle tension. Cupping can also be used to treat tight IT bands by running the cups up and down the IT band.

While cupping is an extremely effective treatment for a wide variety of conditions, muscle strain injuries and for drawing out toxins, the treatment can leave areas of bruising. These bruises are not dangerous and disappear in a few days.



Are there any contraindications to cupping?

Cupping should not be used when there is a high fever, allergic skin conditions, or ulcerated sores. Cupping should only be used on the soft muscle tissue and should not be done where the muscle layer is thin, on the face, or on the abdomen or lower back of pregnant women.

Where can I receive a cupping treatment?

A licensed Naturopathic Doctor or Doctor of Chinese Medicine should administer cupping. Most extended health care plans offer coverage for cupping under Naturopathic or Acupuncture treatments.

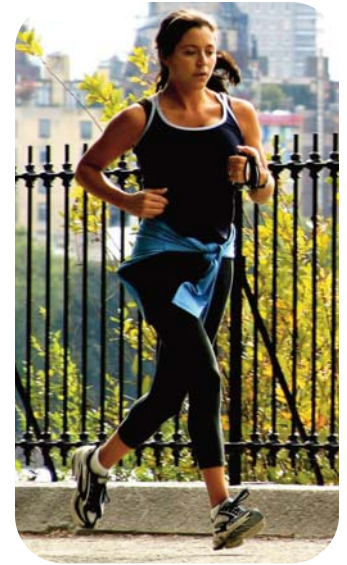
To book an appointment for cupping or to find out more information contact Dr. Selene Wilkinson at the Adelaide Health Clinic – 416.367.5200.

PHYSIOTHERAPY, Is it right for your problem?

By: Mark McFadden, Physiotherapist

Definitely, it is good to know that physiotherapy can assist in recovery of your body's aches and pains and that you can seek physiotherapy care with or without a medical doctor's prescription. However, there is more you should know and I encourage and challenge you to go further and to learn a little more about your physiotherapist and the care plan that they create with you. It is your body and you should know what is wrong and what will help you most. The more you know the better the benefit and experience in physiotherapy treatment will be.

If you have seen your medical doctor and a prescription for physiotherapy care has been provided than there are probably sound reasons for the medical doctor to believe physiotherapy can help you, but don't settle with that assumption. Whether you have a prescription or you are seeking physiotherapy care directly the answer to this question should always be provided by the physiotherapist. The answer can be based on a quick description of your symptoms, but the best answer will be provided after the physiotherapy evaluation when there is a more precise understanding of your symptoms and the impairments of the body structures.



What to expect in order to answer the question as to whether physiotherapy is right for you?

Upon the completion of the initial assessment the first thing to expect is a series of answers about the physiotherapist's impression of your problem.

1. The body parts that are the most compromised or injured and the nature of the impairment.
 - (e.g. a ligament sprain, a muscular/tendon strain, muscle strength imbalance, a nerve irritation, a herniated disc)
2. Providing a clinical name for what you are experiencing that you may be familiar with.
 - (e.g. tennis elbow, frozen shoulder, carpal tunnel syndrome)
3. Identifying the body parts that may be aggravating your problem or secondary factors to your problem.
4. The movements, postures or activities that will be helpful and which will be detrimental to your recovery.
5. The severity and intensity of your problem.

Don't be satisfied yet. The above information only explains what is wrong.

The question, is physiotherapy right for your problem, has yet to be answered. This should be answered clearly by the physiotherapist through additional information.

1. Clear statement from the physiotherapist that your problem can appropriately be treated by physiotherapy.
2. Whether this is a problem the physiotherapist has had experience with and the degree of success from treatment. (This may be particularly reassuring to know)
3. The types of physiotherapy treatment best suited to treat your problem.
 - (e.g. Manual therapy, electrotherapy, thermotherapy, exercise)
4. The estimated time for the different components of the recovery process that is realistic for you to expect.
5. The self-care exercises and activities that you should be doing for recovery?
6. The types of complementary care appropriate for you to be incorporating into your recovery plan?

Knowledge is power and your understanding of your problem, the treatment and recovery process, along with being confident you are receiving the proper care are all essential elements for you to have a successful recovery and a positive experience in physiotherapy.

The best advice I can provide when deciding on what care is best for you is to ask as many questions as possible, even the ones that may challenge your physiotherapist or other health care provider. Remember you only have one body, it is your alone and so treat it like gold!

Note: Always verify the credentials of your health care provider when seeking their care and expertise



Cambridge Group of Clubs

adelaide health clinic
416-367-5200
info@adelaideclinic.com

www.adelaideclinic.com