



Cupping: Who, What, When, Where and Why?



Presented by:
Paul Kohlmeier RMT, R.Ac.

What is Cupping?



History of Cupping

- Earliest mention from Egypt around 1500 BC. Wikipedia contributors (2018).
- 400BC in Greece.
- 281 - 341 AD in China (Ge Hong wrote about it in *A Handbook of Prescriptions for Emergencies*).
- From these places it moved through European and Asian civilizations.



Types of Cups

- Antler, Bamboo
- Glass, Porcelain, Metal (historically Iron, Brass and Bronze)
- Silicone, Plastic, Rubber



Types of Cupping Techniques

- Dry Cupping - no lubrication
- Wet Cupping - blood-letting with cups - out of scope of practice for MTs
- Fire Cupping - creating a vacuum via an open flame
- Static Cupping - placing the cups on the patient and leaving them in place
- Dynamic Cupping - placing a cup on a patient and then sliding the cup
- Light, Medium or Strong Cupping - denotes the strength of the suction used
- Pulsatile Cupping - a method that uses variable suction - usually automated
- Cosmetic Cupping - cupping for the intent of enhancing aesthetics - out of scope of practice for MTs



- Video titled "types of cupping" (time)



Cupping Marks

- Caused by the capillaries bursting - creates a hematoma
- Hematoma: A collection of clotted blood in a tissue.
- Bruise: Injury of the soft tissues that results in breakage of the local capillaries and leakage of red blood cells. (some definitions include verbiage about an impact)
- There is a semantic argument of hematoma/cupping mark/bruise.
- There is a history of Chinese Medicine using the cupping mark as a diagnostic tool, the physiology of Chinese medicine is not the same as the physiology of western medicine. RMTs are expected to speak in terms of western medicine, and it is the language that patients think in.



Research

- Seems to have therapeutic value
 - Perceptions of pain and disability
 - Increasing ROM
 - Nonspecific low back pain, neck pain, carpal tunnel syndrome
- Physiology
 - Increased oxygen in local areas from increased local blood flow
 - Reductions in creatine kinase (anti-inflammatory)
 - Increases in ROM in injured patients, not in healthy patients



Why Add Cupping to Your Practice?



Save Your Hands

- Myofascial treatments are held for a long time. Cups don't tire out.
- Trigger Points respond well without using thumbs.
- Rest while the cups are on.
- Cupping can have the desired effects in less time with less effort.



Reaction of Patients

- Patients respond favourably - both in tissue responses and attitudes toward the treatment.
- Seems to have a very fast effect on the neurological system.
- Patients have seen the marks in media and are curious and interested. "If Olympic athletes do it..."



Differentiate Your Practice

- Differentiate your practice in the eyes of the community.
- Marks are visible and conversation starters.



Increase revenue

- Add on price to your treatment.
- Or increases the value of your treatments.
- Marks are visible, patients will talk about them, increasing referrals.



Who Can Get Cupping?



Contraindications

- Just say no when:
 - Cupping on veins, arteries and nerves and varicose veins
 - Over skin lesions or inflammation
 - Over orifices, or eyes



Contraindications

- Absolute conditions: Do No Harm
 - Patients who have cancer
 - Organ failure - Renal, hepatic or cardiac
 - Renal failure symptoms:
 - Hepatic failure symptoms:
 - Cardiac failure symptoms:
 - Patients with pacemakers
 - Patients with hemophilia or similar bleeding disorder



Contraindications

- Relative conditions: Do No Harm
 - Patients with acute infections
 - Patients using anticoagulants - aspirin, warfarin, etc
 - Patients with severe chronic disease (like heart disease)
 - Patients that are pregnant, during puerperium or menstruating
 - Patients who are anemic
 - Patients who have recently given blood or undergone medical procedure
 - Patients who do not consent



Indications of Cupping

- Pain conditions
- Muscular tightness
- Arthritis (research tends to point more to rheumatoid)
- Entrapment syndromes (CTS, TOS, etc)
- Conditions you would do massage where the physiology of cupping may be beneficial.



Consent

- Cupping can be applied to nearly all patients that one would normally see. It must be done so with consent.
- Consent must come with knowing the risks as well as the rewards.
- What is your script?



How Is Cupping Done?

- Video "how to cup"



Cleaning

- Soap and Water
- Goal is to remove all visible material on the cup
- Done **regardless** of level of disinfection
- Before moving on to disinfection, the majority of excess water should be allowed to drain off the cups



High Level Disinfection

- Cups are cleaned first
- High-level disinfectants include 2% glutaraldehyde, 7.5% hydrogen peroxide, 0.2% peracetic acid, 2-7% enhanced action formulation hydrogen peroxide and 0.55% ortho-phthalaldehyde (OPA). Pasteurization also achieves high-level disinfection.
- Of these, 7.5% hydrogen peroxide is a cheap and environmentally friendly option. Cups must be left to soak for 30 minutes to achieve high level disinfection. (If you leave them 6 hours, they will be considered sterile!)



Safety in Your Practice

- Insurance - check your liability insurance
- Stock of cups vs cleaning between patients
- Supplies on-hand in your treatment room
- Safety in advertising and communications



Treatment Planning

- Doesn't really alter a massage therapy treatment plan, RMTs can just add it in.
- Allows for more frequent, fast treatments if indicated.
- Cups generally stay on 3-10 minutes.



When to Cup

- Video "cupping with massage"
- Video "cupping with rem ex"



Assess and Treat

- Cupping is generally performed during a massage therapy treatment, and its use is predicated from the RMTs assessment.
- It is a modality, a tool that the RMT can use.



Where to Cup



Cupping and Draping

- Draping and consent are closely tied to patient comfort and safety. When deciding where to cup keep in mind the ease of draping, and cup only on areas you can drape well, making sure your patient is feeling safe and confident in your treatment.



Last Words

- Consent is about the positives and the negatives, make sure your patients agree to the treatments.
- Use cupping as you would any modality, as it fits into your treatment plan.



Thank You

Cupping Canada Inc.
#2, 74249 – 49 Ave.
Red Deer, AB
T4P 1N2

T: 403-505-7904

E: info@cuppingcanada.com or info@cuppingusa.com

W: www.cuppingcanada.com or www.cuppingusa.com

Instagram: @CuppingCanada

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