

Specialty

Cupping Therapy

What is Cupping Therapy?

Eastern and Middle Eastern cultures have relied on cupping therapy for thousands of years, but it's only through popular culture moments such as the televised Olympics, that Westerners have been introduced to the ancient medical practice now popular with athletes, among others.

As the name suggests, "cupping" involves placing several cups over strategic points on the body. Traditionally, suction was created when the practitioner lit a fire inside the cup to warm it, and then placed it on the patient's skin to cool, but modern versions also exist. The resulting suction redirected circulation, allowing blood and other fluids to flow to areas in need of healing.

The preferred Cupping Practice at BodyFit Physical Therapy by our physical therapist in Avon involves the use of plastic or glass cups, which when applied by a vacuum pistol or machine, create a suction on the body's surface. The cups are moved over the skin with a combination of gliding, shaking, popping, and/or rotating techniques while pulling up on the cup. The cup may also be "parked" for a short time to facilitate joint mobilization or soft tissue release. Cupping can reach deep into soft tissue and has been reported to have a sedating effect on the nervous system. Another reported benefit is the pulling of inflammation and toxins from the body tissues so that the skin and lymphatic system can eliminate them. Scar tissue can also be released quickly, despite the age of the injury or keloid tendencies.

The Purpose of Cupping Therapy is to Mobilize:

- Soft tissue-fascia, muscle, tendons, and ligaments
- Stagnation of lymph, old blood and old debris, inflammation
- Joints
- Body Fluids
- Organs

Conditions that Respond to Cupping Therapy

- Athletic Stress and Injury, Post-Event
- Trigger Points effecting joint movement and causing pain
- Bursitis, Tendonitis and Plantar Fasciitis
- Scars and Adhesions
- Muscular Aches
- Pre-and Post-Operative Conditions
- Edema: General & Post-Operative
- Fibromyalgia
- **Sciatica**
- TMJ Dysfunction
- Chronic Pain · Arthritis
- Neuralgia
- Migraine, Tension Headaches and Sinusitis

Treatment Frequency

Cupping can be done once for simple conditions/issues or post-athletic exertion (see below) but typically best applied over 4-6 sessions for a cumulative effect for more stubborn/chronic conditions. Cupping is not a “one and done” treatment approach due to the gradual effect of the vacuum to release soft tissue.

Potential Contraindications to Receiving Cupping

- Pregnancy
- Varicose Veins in region to be cupped
- Patients on blood thinners or who are diabetic
- Cannot be administered over the kidney's or over loose bodies such as meniscus or herniated discs.
- Botox injections given to the face—you must wait 30 days to receive cupping to the face

Potential Reactions:

- Cup “Kiss”—discoloration due to toxins and old blood being brought to the surface—usually will dissipate after a few hours or few days. Post-Treatment Tenderness— usually less than from deep tissue work but it can last a day.
- Redness and Itching—increased vasodilation and/or inflammation brought to the surface.
- Decreased Blood Pressure—due to vasodilation and/or nervous system sedation.

Treatment Application:

The most common misuse of cupping is overuse. Treatments to the same area are restricted to every 48 hours. Cupping is an option in the physical therapy setting to be used in combination with additional therapeutic applications chosen by your physical therapist.

Exclusive Cupping Treatments:

Cupping for Post-Exercise Recovery: Cupping can also be used as a stand-alone treatment as a full body drainage following athletic events such as post-marathon, post-half marathon, or post-triathlon participation to assist with removal of inflammation and toxins from the body. This is a full body cupping treatment, from toes to head, facilitating the movement of the post-exercise fluid towards the kidneys. This is an extended full treatment and requires 1 ½ hours. * Please inquire by telephone call if you are interested in this specialty service.

Cupping for Face “Lifting”: Cupping can also be a method of facial drainage, improving the appearance of fine lines. This is a full face cupping experience with light vacuum cupping provided from all areas of the face towards the collar bone for elimination of unwanted fluid. *Please inquire by telephone call if you are interested in this specialty service.

What Should I do if I'm Interested?

Our **physical therapist in Avon CT** is highly trained in modern cupping techniques, but it's always wise to consult your primary physician if you have reservations. The risk of adverse effects from cupping has proven to be low in numerous studies. But if you have excessive bruising issues or are on blood thinners,

some cupping methods may not be right for you.

Contact us today to learn more about our modern cupping treatment methods, and how we integrate them to complement our other physical therapy treatments, in order to help you conquer your pain and mobility issues.