

**Clara Cohen:** Lemme ask you something. Have you ever had a patient come and see you and say, I'm really scared of needles, I don't really want needles. Do you do anything else? I always think that's interesting because they came to see an acupuncturist, but fair question.

And maybe you hesitated for half a second.

Not sure what to say. But here's the thing, acupuncture is incredible. You know, acupuncture, rocks, but Chinese medicine has so many tools that we can use to support patients' health. For thousands of years, practitioners have used heat, suction, twiner, or hands-on therapy, herbal remedies, lifestyle medicine, to get results of patients, not just acupuncture.

So today I wanna talk about Cupping therapy. I'm gonna share with you what kind of cups we can use, the different techniques, the function, indication, obviously precaution, which is really, really important, and how we can utilize cupping in clinical practice.

So whether you're a student, a new grad, or a seasoned practitioner, I think this episode will expand how you think about cupping treatment.

I love cupping. I love to receive it. I love to give it, it's one of my favorite non acupuncture tool to address Meridian Qi and blood flow.

So Without further ado, cupping therapy rocks. Oh, let's do this.

Welcome to AcuPro, a show dedicated to making Chinese medicine and acupuncture. Easy to grasp and fun to learn. Hi, I am your host, Clara Cohen. I support practitioners and students and like you in changing the world one patient at a time. My goal is to share my passion for TCM and empower you to achieve superior patient care.

I love to showcase the amazing benefits of acupuncture because after all, acupuncture rocks.

For many, many years now, because we have social media, we've seen a lot of pictures of celebrities, athletes with the cupping marks on the back.

I remember during the summer Olympics, we used to see a lot of swimmers with the cupping marks on the back, right? And everybody was like, what is this? What is this?

Nowadays most people have heard of cupping and a lot of them have experiencing the benefits of cupping.

I know I'm gonna get some heat for what I'm about to say, but cupping is not a Chinese medicine therapy.

I can hear you thinking. What? Are you crazy? I'm kidding. I'm meant to say cupping is not only used in Chinese medicine. Okay, Now we can all breathe easier.

Cupping therapy is one of the oldest and most used globally natural medical treatment in history.

Cupping therapy has been used across cultures for thousands of years. Ancient Egypt, ancient Greece, the Middle East, Europe, and Asia, all developed forms of suction therapy.

One of the earliest records comes from ancient Egypt around 1550. Yes. 1550. 1,550 BC where cupping was described as a way to remove harmful substances.

From the body in ancient Greece, Hippocrates wrote about both dry and wet cupping, and we're gonna talk about those two techniques coming up. He recommended it for back pain, musculoskeletal disorders, and even internal medicine. So even early western physicians understood the value of suction.

And circulation

In Islamic and Middle East Medicine. Cupping evolved into wet cupping called Hijama. We're gonna talk about wet cupping or Hijama coming up. Traditionally, Hijama is believed to remove stagnant blood, reduce inflammation, and restore balance. It is still widely practiced today for headaches, chronic pain, fatigue, and many inflammatory conditions. Chinese medicine also historically used wet cupping, especially for severe stagnation, abscesses, or toxic heat. Though most modern practitioners today focus on dry cupping for safety because it's more practical. 'cause it's a little bit more messy when there's blood, right? Let's be honest. What I love about this history is that across culture, human observed the same thing when stagnation is moved.

The healing happens. So it's different theories from different places, but it's the same wisdom.

Have you signed up to my weekly newsletter yet? It's completely free and I share exclusive content. I don't share anywhere else. I do case studies. I compare points and I provide so much value. If you're not on it yet, the link is below for you. What are you waiting for?

In the first three months or so of my practice, I had this new patient coming to see me and I thought she would benefit from cupping. She had signed my consent form. I explained everything to her. I said that she would probably get a little bit of bruising, and this was in 2004 . We hadn't had social media. People haven't seen cupping marks yet, so this is brand new. And I explained everything in detail. I really wanted her to understand she was all okay with it. And then when the treatment was finished, I said, you know, there are some cupping marks in the back. It'll take a few days and the disappear

The next day I get a phone call from her husband. He is screaming at me on the phone and when you first start to practice, that's very rattling. That just scared me. And he said, I saw the marks on my wife's back. What have you done? I'm gonna call the police. Like he went on and on and on and I explained I was trying to stay calm and say, explain everything to your wife.

Then she tell you that that's the side effect of cupping that will. Slowly disappear and she is safe and it's actually going to make her feel better. And he said, her pain is much better. She's feeling better, but I don't like this. I tried to calm him down and it took me 10, 15 minutes and he wasn't calming down.

And then the next day his wife called me and apologized for him and said that he's finally okay with it because he's seeing that the cupping marks are slowly fading away. But that was really scary. And you know when you are all alone and you don't know where to look for help, I just felt really rattled.

So if that ever happened to you, stay calm. As long as you have your consent form and you have explained everything to the patient, you'll be fine. And I feel like nowadays people are aware of this, so it's a little bit better time. But at the time, I have to say he was not fun at all.

/Now that we talked about side effects already, let's talk about Cupping functions.

It moves blood and she and breaks up obstruction. It detoxifies. It relieves acute and chronic pain. expels, External pathogens, releases, fascia, helps lymphatic drainage and improve circulation.

It is fantastic.

Also, studies show that skin temperature and circulation increase after cupping.

Most Patients when you cup them will say, oh my gosh, that's really intense.

But after they feel so relaxed because Qi is moving.

For indication, often we use cupping therapy for headaches, muscle tension, stiffness can be used for arthritis, for sports injury, for fibromyalgia, I will say for fibromyalgia, some patients love cupping and really feel good, and those are the one that have more blood stasis for the blood deficiency.

Fibromyalgia patients, they cannot handle it. It's too painful for them. They need really gentle touch . Because they are on a fight or flight and their central nervous system is too hyperactive for them to be able to handle it. So you're gonna have to be really careful with fibromyalgia.

We can use it for dysmenorrhea, common cold asthma, bronchitis allergies, stress, and even longstanding emotional trauma.

**Ad:** Are you ready to unlock the remarkable potential of a microsystem that is so effective for pain disorders? You cannot bypass it. This is what Scalp Acupuncture Course taught by my friend and colleague, Dr. Sonia Tan is all about. This is at your own pace and it focus on treating pain and tightness, including all the types of musculoskeletal pain and injury.

Chronic and acute, as well as burning, pain, tingling, and numbness. This course contains what you need to know to start practicing scalp acupuncture immediately upon completion. Now, this course utilizes the balance method from Dr. 10, which makes it such a. Very effective method. Listen to what people who invested in the Scalp Acupuncture course have said.

I want to thank Dr. Sonia for doing an amazing job by attending your course. I have learned the right technique to treat patients when it comes to balanced method for acupuncture scalp. I have started to treat patients using the method and have received great feedbacks already. It has helped my patients.

Body discomfort feel better. It is very easy method to perform on patients. I really did enjoy learning about the system and would be interested in learning other systems. Best teacher I've ever had, generous in know teaching and

friendly, very enthusiastic, clear, and articulates splendid, interesting sharing knowledge in a fluid way.

Very passionate teacher animated Sonia. Alive. I love that. Definitely not a boring course. I could tell you that you'll receive continuing education hours and a certificate after you pass a multiple choice quiz. You have access to the course forever, so you can watch it over and over at your own time because it's prerecorded.

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**Clara Cohen:** Let's talk about cup types. In ancient times and still in some countries today, bamboo and pottery, like clay cups were initially used. Nowadays, especially in the western world, practitioners use glass, cupping plastic or silicone cups, which are the most common type use in clinical practice.

I'm not a big fan of the silicone cups for some reason. It's just not my thing. No, The plastic cups with the suction gun is probably one of the most used in practice. And of course, the glass for fire cupping, which not everybody can practice because of regulation of where you are practicing.

Let's Talk about the most common cupping application. First of all, there are different kind of cupping techniques.

Fixed Cupping, which is achieved when a single or multiple cups are placed on the painful area or acupuncture points. The cups are usually retained between five to 15 minutes.

Fixed Cupping, usually expels pathogen. For example, we can put a cup on Du 14. This is really good for kids because you know, usually young children, it's really hard to needle or we don't wanna needle them, or they're fearful. Of course, and this is really good when there's high fever to put a cup on, Du 14 to help expel pathogens, specifically clearing heat because Du 14 area is where all

the yang meridian cross, right? So it's a very yang area, so it's really good to expel pathogen. Fixed Cupping can be used also to help respiratory issues like asthma and bronchitis. Usually we can put many cups on the upper back-shu point, specifically bladder 13, 14, 15, all that area.

We can also use fixed Cupping to calm the mind for anxiety. If we put it on bladder 15, which is the back-shu point of the heart, for example, and it can be used to relieve menstruation pain if we put the cup on the lower abdominal region area.

The other common technique is quick cupping, basically with this one, you place the cup on an acupuncture point, then remove it immediately. Then you do that again. So it's kind of like on and off, on and off. Like on off repeat, kind of really quick cupping. Right? So you are going to.

Have the suction. Very minimal. It's gonna be pretty small, and you can do this for about a minute. Quick cupping is usually used for people who are very deficient and weak, so that's something you can do for older people. You can do this for, like we talked about, fibromyalgia patients. Earlier, this is a good thing to do for fibromyalgia patients on trigger point, but the cupping suction part or the suction part should be very mild, so not deep.

We're not sucking the skin high and into the cup. It's very, very gentle. Again, you could use this for people who are deficient and weak

Moving cupping is one of my favorite. That's the one that I love to receive and I love to give. So first we have to oil the skin or the area we're gonna move the cup on. So it is not painful.

You have to be aware that some men have very, very hairy back, and so if you do, let's say upper body back moving cup, the hair is gonna be pulled and that is a bit more painful. So you're gonna have to put a lot more oil and be more gentle and aware when you do cupping in someone that has a lot of hair.

Right. Makes sense. Once we put the oil, we can add up the cup and start sliding it along the area, back and forth while the suction is in effect. Often I use this for fascia release.

For lymphatic drainage and of course for muscular pain to improve blood circulation. One of my favorite thing to do is the upper back, upper tension area, so you can slide along the gallbladder meridian along gallbladder 21 area, and then slide around the scapula area. All along on each side of the erector, spina,

basically on each side of the spine, and you can go slowly up and down on all the backs.

Shoe point. That works really well. Now another one that I do it on is the tensor Fascia latae, which is basically your IT band on the gallbladder meridian on the thigh. That is very painful. So we have to go slowly and really allow the patient to breathe through it and make sure that the suction is not deep on this one.

But it is so good for people that have sports injury or a lot of tension in that area, specifically fascia tension. So I love to do that. You can do it on the calf as well. That works really well for people that have really tight, tense calf. However, again, it's very strong. Stimulation. So you're gonna have to really be aware of how the patient is feeling and you're gonna have to make sure you communicate with the patient as you go, because that is pretty strong.

But it works really well.

The next one is needle cupping, which is accomplished by placing a cup over a needle. So we're not moving. This is fixed Cupping, but it is over a needle on an acupuncture point, and really its purpose is to enhance the action of the point.

Specifically if there is excess and we're using this point for excess. So for example, if there is, let's say a lot of pain in the sciatica area on the glutes and you decide to needle gallbladder 30, you can put a cup over gallbladder 30 to try to release that muscle tension. That's really pinching the sciatic nerve.

One of the most common technique is fire cupping, which uses glass cup, and of course the suction is brought on by the flame. So that's something that you can practice for a while until you get really good at it and you can get a really strong suction.

I love fire cupping because it brings warmth.

And patients love it when they are cold because it is so warming. So if there is a lot of stagnation with excess cold pathogen. This is such a good therapy. I love to use this for sciatica, for example, when sciatica is due to blood stasis with internal cold, that works really well.

I know in some clinics, people cannot use fire for regulations,

unfortunately, some practitioners won't be able to practice fire cupping, but if you are allowed, I love it because it brings warmth to the area, so it's such a good. Feeling compared to using plastic or silicone. Right.

And The last one is the one that we talked about earlier. When we talk about Hijama, it's wet cupping or basically blood letting cupping. So that's attained by placing the cup over an acupuncture point usually, but prior to it. We are going to prick to bleed with a lancet needle to allow the blood to be drawn to the surface when we put the cup over it.

Now this is used mostly to detoxify , and the idea is to get just a little bit of blood, but I've seen people specifically doing Hijama in the Middle East, and they get a lot of blood in that cup. I'm not a proponent of this.

This is not what I like to do. Wet cupping is one of my least favorite thing to do, again, because it is a lot more complicated to keep everything clean. So I'm not a big, big fan of it. Like I said, my favorite one is Moving cup or fixed Cup. Those are my favorite one.

**Ad:** Before we continue with today's episode, I wanna share something that honestly feels like a big moment for me if you've been following me for a while. You know, I've always said no to all sponsorships. I've been approached many times, but I turn them all down because if I don't genuinely use a product or love it, I will never recommend it to you.

But today is different. I am super excited to introduce my very first sponsor. Drum roll please. Jane app. I'm also a Jane Ambassador, so this is a company I actually use and love. I am saying yes because I've used Jane for years in my own multidisciplinary clinic. Truly, it's the best practice management software and electronic medical record.

I've ever worked with before, Jane, we were using a clunky system that made everything harder than it needed to be. When we switched the entire clinic, felt the difference immediately. Jane is built by people who actually understand what it's like to be a practitioner. Running a busy practice. One of my favorite features is online booking.

There is nothing better than waking up and seeing patients booking their own appointment. Well, I was asleep. Your patients can book when it works for them and the wait list feature. Fills last minute cancellations automatically. I love that. I used to spend so much time calling eight to 10 people just to fill up one spot.

Jane also automates the things we never enjoy doing, like intake forms, reminders, confirmation. It honestly feels like having an extra assistant handling all the moving parts. You can focus on what really matters, which is supporting your patients and being the TCM rockstar practitioner. You truly are.

There are so many features I could talk about, but we would be here all day if you are looking for a system that brings more ease, more clarity and comment to your practice. I truly. Recommend Jane. You can check it out at [jane.app/demo](http://jane.app/demo). And because you're part of the Acupro community, you can use my code acupro one mo one month when you sign up to get a one month grace period on your new account.

The link and the code are also in the show notes below for you. Now let's get back to today's episode.

**Clara Cohen:** Growing up in France, I remember a lot of older people, men and women, would use cupping after hangovers. They would put cup on the back of the person that over used the alcohol the night before and had hangovers and nausea and headaches and they would basically put them all over their back and it's supposed to help release the hangovers.

So I remember growing up seeing that a lot. I would love for you to share if you grew up with cupping, wherever you are in the world, , and how it was used, , or for what function it was used because it's fascinating to see that most people all over the world are using suction.

I remember also a few years ago, I had a patient that was born in Ukraine and moved to Canada and she came to see me and she said, in Ukraine we used to get cupping all the time. I would love to have cupping on my belly for my digestive system. So that was interesting 'cause that's not something I do a lot.

And she liked the moving cup to help constipation, which made sense in the same flow of the colon. So kind of going around to try to go from the ileocecal valve where the small intestine meets the large intestine, basically on the right lower quadrant, and then going up along the ascending colon and then across, and then the descending colon.

And during this, over and over in that direction, really helped with the constipation. So that was interesting because she kind of gave me the idea. I never thought about doing that because in school we really focused a lot more on external pathogen and pain and stress, but not necessarily digestion. So I wanted to share that with you.

And of course, we always have to think safety around anything we do, so we have to be cautious with strong cupping. Specifically in deficient patient.

During pregnancy.

I don't do a lot of cupping. I've done quick Cupping on the forearm, on the extensors for like carpal tunnel, but I try to avoid doing cupping in pregnancy because it's such a strong treatment.

We wanna avoid broken or fragile thin skin, right? If someone has really thin skin, like an 89-year-old, probably cupping is not the best thing to do.

Of course, if there's an ulcer or a broken skin, we don't want to do that. We have to be also careful with people with excess hair, specifically with moving cup or for that matter, fire cupping.

And Of course we have to tell patients that they might get bruises, which generally dissipate within three to 10 days, depending on how much stagnation there was. The darker the bruise. The more stagnation that person had.

Education and communication builds trust. So make sure you really communicate and explain everything to your patients and make sure you also get their consent with your form, but also your verbal consent as you're doing the treatment.

**Speaker 6:** Thank you so much for spending your time with me today. I truly hope you benefited from this episode and I would love for you to share it with a friend that may benefit from it as well. Follow the show, live a review, and if you want more. Go to my website, [acupro academy.com](http://acuproacademy.com).

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