

# UNLEASH YOUR QI

By Jane Leonhardt

Methods of Traditional Chinese Medicine have been around for thousands and thousands of years. Originating in Ancient China, dispersed throughout Asia, and eventually reaching the United States, Chinese methods of therapy have been maintained, evolved and perfected over time.



Photo: xiegenghong/xxapril

Traditional Chinese medicine reached the United States in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and was mainly practiced in Chinatowns by Chinese medical doctors.

In 1918, during an outbreak of the Spanish flu in Oregon, Chinese doctor Ing 'Doc' Hay treated his patients with acupuncture and it is said that all of his patients were healed of the flu that was killing almost all who caught it.

According to Ancient Chinese philosophy, illness is caused by the stagnation, excess or deficiency of

an essential life energy called *qi*. Acupuncture and cupping therapy are two methods of releasing *qi* and promoting the proper flow of it through our bodies.

## WHAT IS QI?

*Qi* is an element of Ancient Chinese philosophy that translates to “vital life force” in English. *Qi* is, at the same time, everything and nothing. It holds together all parts of the universe and flows through our mind and body. In Traditional Chinese Medicine, *qi* has two branches.

One branch of *qi* is part of the physical world. It nourishes us through the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the food we eat.

The other branch of *qi* is formless. It is the flow of energy and fluids that course through our bodies.

One part of *qi* cannot exist without each other. In Traditional Chinese Medicine, the two portions of *qi* are like yin and yang: always within one another, balancing each other out.

When our *qi* is out of whack, our bodies suffer. Ailments such as high blood pressure, stiff muscles, fatigue, anxiety and migraines are a result of the stagnation or imbalance of *qi*.

## LET YOUR QI FLOW

Ancient Chinese methods of cupping and acupuncture are two ways Traditional Chinese Medicine practitioners manipulate our qi and promote its proper flow.

There are many methods of cupping therapy – plastic cups with vacuum pumps, silicone cups that can be applied and slid around the body as massage, and glass cups that use flame to create a vacuum. Any of these tools can be used in wet or dry cupping.

*wet cupping* – small pricks are made on the skin where the cup is placed. When the vacuum is created within the cup, blood flows out of the tiny pricks.

*dry cupping* – vacuums are created within the cups and blood flows underneath the skin, to the area where the vacuum is created.

Although it is said that wet cupping promotes a stronger blood flow and therefore a better flow of qi, either method is effective.

Qi moves through our five meridian points in the body. The meridians are like energy highways that qi rides on and flows through. When cups or needles are methodically placed on the highways, they break up roadblocks, so to speak.

Cupping therapy can reach muscles up to four inches below the skin. For this reason, it is an excellent method of opening our meridians, releasing qi and refreshing our arteries' blood flow.



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## OK, BUT DOESN'T IT *HURT*?

Cupping therapy comes with a slight pinch and a lot of pressure. Any pain felt is the feeling of your stagnated qi and energy flow. Cupping therapy was created to remove this stagnation and remove the pain associated with it.

“Where there’s stagnation, there will be pain. Remove the stagnation, and you remove the pain.” – Chinese proverb

Cupping will leave perfectly round bruises that may be tender to the touch, but they heal quickly. Wear these bruises with pride, knowing that your qi is flowing freely, and your energy is back track.  
<https://www.actcm.edu/blog/featured/the-long-history-of-chinese-medicine-briefly/>

<https://www.amcollege.edu/blog/qi-in-traditional-chinese-medicine>

<https://www.pacificcollege.edu/news/blog/2014/09/20/many-benefits-chinese-cupping>