



The Advantages of Massaging With Soft Silicone Cups

By Mary Henderson MA, LMT

It is easy to talk about the advantages of massaging with soft silicone cups. This work has had a dramatic impact on my career as a massage therapist. Adding cupping massage into your practice offers many advantages and is easily integrated into your primary modality of massage! Practitioners experienced in other types of cupping will also love the versatility of this work.

My first experience with cupping massage occurred several years ago when my massage therapist first introduced the idea of doing cupping work on me. I remember being concerned about it leaving marks and wasn't sure how cupping worked. I was skeptical... until I received this work! I began to study and learn how to massage with soft silicone cups. In time, I developed my own style and techniques of applying massage cups to address soft tissue dysfunction. In 2016, I became an NCBTMB approved CE provider and began to share this powerful work with other therapists. Cupping massage has become integral to my work. In fact, it has revitalized my massage practice!

I have had many repetitive use injuries over my 15 plus years as a massage therapist. I started out doing deep tissue work. My clients loved this work and got great benefit. Over the years however, this work took its toll. Cupping massage has allowed me to continue to give my clients the great results they love without the stress to my hands and body and with less discomfort for them.

I have really been drawn to the orthopedic use of these cups. Mobilizing the soft tissue using soft silicone cups has opened up a whole new world of benefit for me and my clients. Massage using soft silicone cups provides a massage-like experience while providing the benefit of stationary placement where appropriate. Clients obtain greater results in less time with less stress on the client and the therapist. Cupping massage provides a kind of reverse massage, pulling up through the tissue, which increases hydration and blood flow. Pain and tension are reduced in a fraction of the time, often with much less discomfort than with other manual techniques.

Cupping massage works by expanding the capillaries and increasing the amount of fluid moving into and out of the tissue. Cupping massage increases local circulation, both vascular and lymphatic and is calming to the peripheral nervous system. Cupping massage decreases muscular hypertonicity at a substantially faster rate with less discomfort and pressure. This work can be used to release general muscular tension. It can also be focused to relieve specific areas of tightness and pain including trigger points. The benefit to circulation has implications for supporting immune function, hydrating the tissue, and flushing metabolic wastes and toxins. Therefore because of these effects, cupping massage can benefit general muscular health, facilitate muscular recovery from physical activity, improve skin tone, reduce pain and inflammation and enhance healing of muscular injuries.

Massage using soft silicone cups offers great flexibility. Soft silicone cups can be easily moved. This allows the practitioner to literally massage with the cups. However because these cups can also be left in place, a deeper decompression can be achieved. In addition, the practitioner has a great degree of control over the resistance applied with a soft cup. This virtually allows the practitioner to avoid leaving any marks where this is of concern to the client or the therapist.

Cupping massage can be easily integrated into the massage therapist's practice, complementing and augmenting manual mobilization of the soft tissue. Integrating cupping massage with manual massage is like a dance, with the therapist free to move back and forth between the two modalities. Cupping massage will also reveal restriction and pain in an area. This allows the massage therapist to prioritize and strategize their approach, integrating manual and cupping massage.

When trained and skilled at cupping massage, the possibilities are endless for combining the massage therapist's preferred style of work with this modality. Clients and massage therapists love this work!

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