

## Cupping as Part of Self Care

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Cupping can be a powerful tool in anyone's self-care regimen. It is easy to perform and is good for treating aches and pains, range of motion restrictions, and generally making you feel better.

There are different cups for different jobs. For self-care, the easiest ones to use are negative ion cups. The design makes them easy to apply one-handed, and the silicone is soft enough that it is forgiving of curvy areas (like forearms and shoulders). A great daily cool down for massage therapists is to use 6 negative ion cups, 3 on each side – over the forearm flexors and extensors, and then stretch out the forearm. The stretches don't have to be held, just take the wrist through flexion and extension to end range. The active range of motion in getting to the stretch and the passive stretch through the temporary restriction created by the cups seems to reduce the time of treatment. Generally, all you need is 3 to 5 repetitions of stretches and then the cups can be removed. This is usually not enough time with the cups on with not a lot of suction (for these cups), to mark the person receiving the treatment.

Cup marks are bruises caused by the suction of the cups. People bruise at different rates and with different pressure, it is improper to say that these cups won't mark the patient. With decreased treatment times, and with softer silicone cups (that tend to have less suction) there will be less of a chance of marking. However, with increased movement of the tissue under the cups, there is increased chance of marking.