

HEALTH

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TCM

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Sprain relief

Whether you're a weekend jogger or a hard-core marathon competitor, you could suffer an injury or sprain.

According to traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), sports injuries don't only cause tissue damage, they also allow external pathogens to invade, disrupting the circulations of *chi* and blood at the affected area. When *chi* or blood becomes stagnant, the

meridians around the area become blocked. External pathogens can take advantage of this weaker moment to attack a wound.

TCM aims to expel the pathogens and unblock the local stagnations inside the meridians. If active inflammatory reactions occur, acupuncture is usually able to resolve the problem. If someone has severe pain due to cold characteristics, then moxibustion should be the main treatment.

For cases such as dampness invasion leading to pain, swelling and numbness, cupping (right) should be applied in combination with acupuncture and moxibustion.

TCM dressing methods also play a significant role in treating

sports injuries. Topical herbal methods are suitable for chronic conditions, and can achieve deep, sustainable pain relief.

Herbs used for wounds in the lower limbs include pubescent angelica root, achyranthes root, papaya, Japanese teasel root and *evolvulus*. During the procedure,

special massage techniques are used for quicker results. Rest is the key to healing, and patients should stay in warm, dry places and watch any weather changes.

Protect the wound from windy, cold or damp weather. A dose of sunshine helps to speed up the healing. Eat warm foods and limit the amount of cold and raw foods.

Traditional medicinal wines with ingredients such as papaya, *acanthopanax* root bark, black snake and *achyranthes* root help promote the meridian flows and remove stagnations.

Before taking any medicine, consult your TCM or medical practitioner