

What is EFT?



EFT ***Tapping
Training***

I N S T I T U T E

The question of “What is EFT? Tapping” is a common question that can elicit a brief or lengthy response. I will do my best to provide the essential information in response to this query.

EFT stands for the Emotional Freedom Techniques. It has also come to be commonly referred to as “tapping” as the techniques involve a gentle tapping or percussion of the fingertips on the skin. EFT is a form of psychological acupressure, based on the same energy meridians used in traditional acupuncture to treat physical and emotional ailments for over 5,000 years, but without the invasiveness of needles. Instead, simple tapping with the fingertips is used to input kinetic energy onto specific meridians on the head and chest while you think about your specific problem — whether it is a traumatic event, an addiction, pain, etc. — and voice positive affirmations. This combination of tapping the energy meridians and voicing positive affirmation works to clear the “short-circuit” — the emotional block — from your body’s bioenergy system, thus restoring your mind and body’s balance, which is essential for optimal health and the healing of physical disease. (1)

EFT is often used to change negative feelings, reduce distressing and/or self-limiting thoughts, to alter repetitive unwanted behaviors and is even effective for working with and resolving traumatic memories. It is also commonly used to create positive emotional states, achieve desired goals and attain higher states of health, well-being and resilience.

The popularity and use of EFT has grown significantly since its inception in the late 1990s. [Scientific research](#) continues to demonstrate its effectiveness for a wide variety of conditions including reductions in physical pain, anxiety, emotional stress, depression, PTSD, food cravings/weight loss issues, phobias and more. (2)

In fact, [over 100 scientific papers about EFT](#) have been published in peer-reviewed medical and psychology journals that include dozens of randomized controlled trials, outcome studies, and review articles. These papers have been written by researchers from Purdue University, Stanford University, University of Arizona, Bond University in Australia, Staffordshire University in the UK and many other top worldwide institutions. (3)

EFT for Self Help

EFT can be employed as a self-help method. Millions of people are thought to be using the technique to self-regulate their own distressing and troublesome emotions. Over 5 million people a month search online for “EFT tapping” and related terms, and the 5 highest-traffic EFT web sites have over 2 million page views a month. (3) While of course EFT does not help everyone and does not have a 100% success rate, anecdotal reports abound from those who have successfully utilized EFT Tapping for relief of physical and emotional distress. It can be utilized as a self-help stress reduction method applied in the midst of increased stressful situations to self-regulate and find greater calm and ease. EFT can be

learned, especially from a certified experienced practitioner for best results and then self applied to work with more longstanding issues as well. (For more severe reactions and circumstances such as with psychological and physical trauma, if you have chronic or intense emotional or physical trauma it is still important that you consult your physician or licensed mental health practitioner before using EFT or any other stress-reduction method as EFT is not a substitute for medical or mental health treatment.)

EFT with a Practitioner

When EFT is performed in conjunction with a practitioner, a therapeutic relationship is formed to assist the client to work with general or specific issues, whether it's to reduce the intensity of fears, doubts and worries about specific concerns in their life, find a greater sense of peace and calm or to achieve greater excellence and performance in sport or business achievement. Practitioners who have thoroughly trained in EFT may run the gamut from being a certified practitioner to also being a life coach, psychologist, psychotherapist, physician, acupuncturist and more. It is a growing practice for a healing arts/health care provider who is interested in the mind-body connection to learn and integrate EFT into their practice. Sessions may be provided in-person or are also commonly offered remotely, typically via online video platforms. A caveat should be noted here. Not all professionals who advertise that they do EFT have been through a [rigorous certification program](#) that includes

classroom hours, examinations, training in practice ethics and supervised mentoring, so please make sure to inquire about this when seeking out EFT care. (4)

How Does EFT Work?

This is an excellent question and scientific investigation continues to explore the mechanisms for its effectiveness. There are multiple aspects of intervention that appear to be generating the relaxation response that EFT offers. EFT of course involves the stimulation of meridian endpoints which seems to have calming effect on the subtle energy systems of the body. It also includes a somatic (body based) stimulation that evokes a relaxation response. Beyond that, there is a critical and verbal/cognitive and self-affirming aspect as well. The combination of these elements appears to have an effect on the emotional and memory parts of the [limbic system of the brain](#). This area includes the [amygdala](#) (the stress center in the brain) and the [hippocampus](#) (the memory center), both of which play a role in the decision-making process in response to stressful and especially fear or anxiety inducing situations. Ongoing studies using EEGs, [fMRI brain imaging](#), hormonal and [epigenetic lab studies](#) are ongoing to help discover exactly why EFT offers such high levels of effectiveness in such a rapid time period.

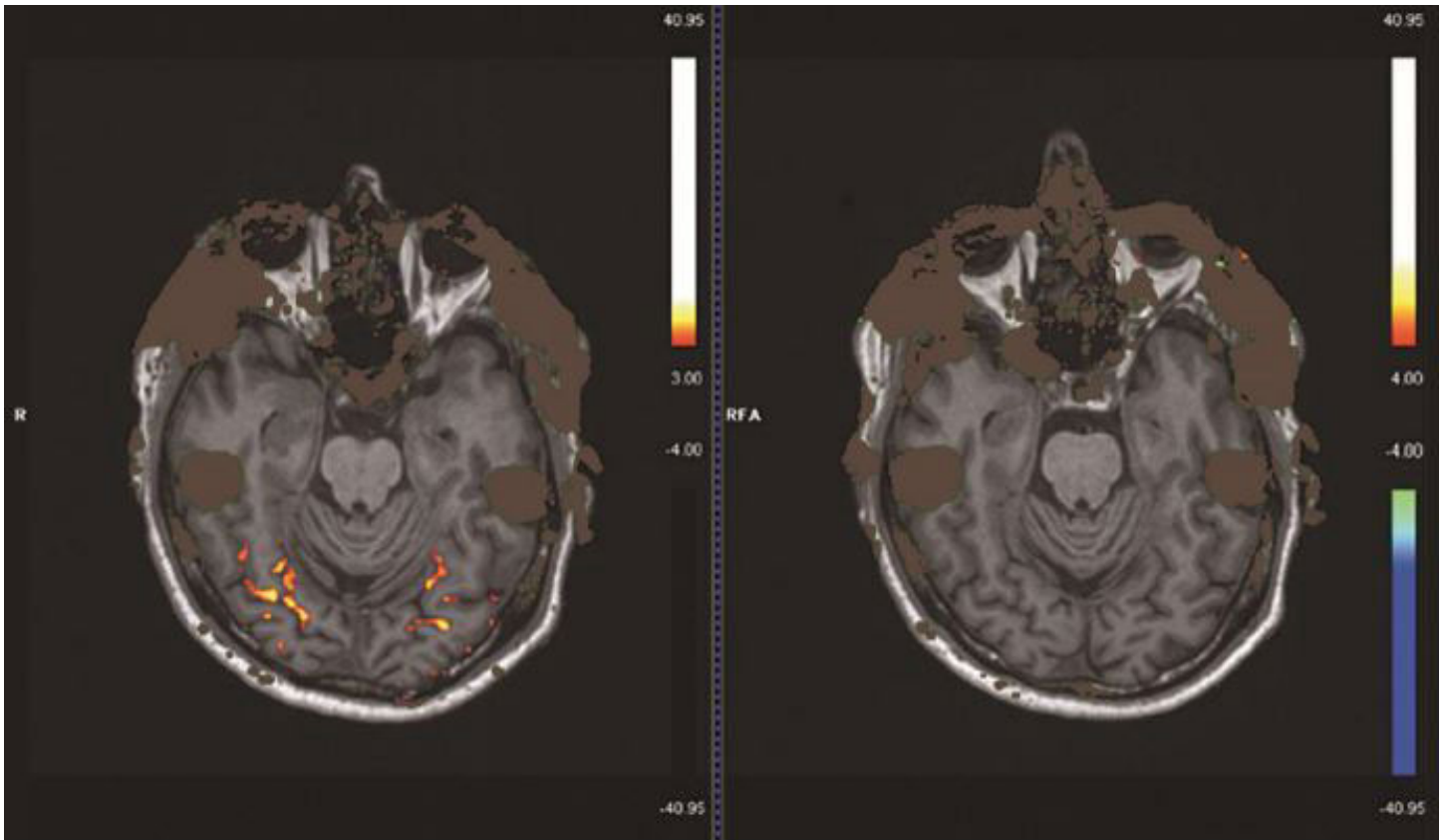
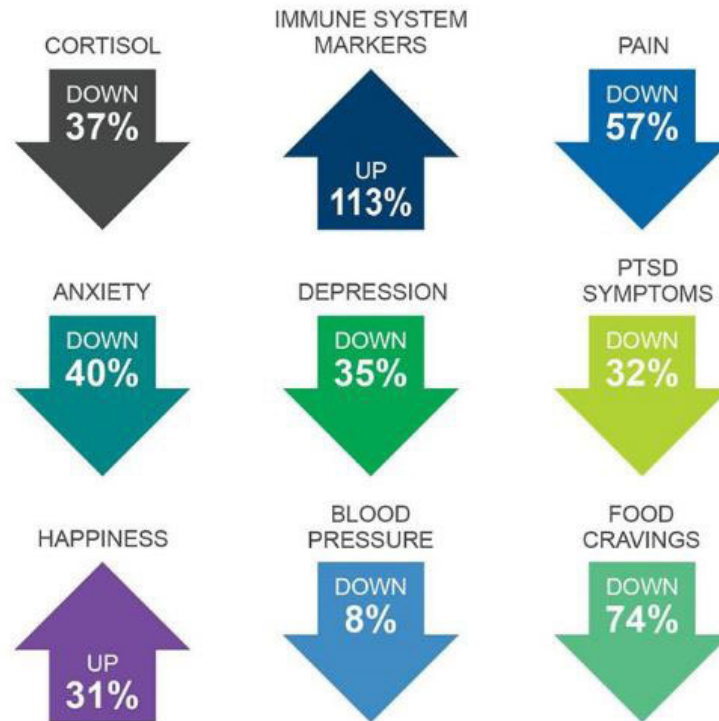


Figure 1 Pre and post fMRI for subject in EFT treatment condition

Ongoing research is also showing us that EFT lowers stress hormone levels (cortisol) that has an important enhancing effect on a person's ability to return to a relaxed and calm state instead of a stressed and anxious state. High levels of cortisol are also associated with lowered immune function with in turn can have significant and deleterious effects on our physical health.

Clinical EFT Improves Multiple Physiological Markers of Health



© Mind Heart Connect 2018. Bach, D., Groesbeck, G., Stapleton, P., Banton, S., Blickheuser, K., & Church, D. (2018). *Journal of Evidence Based Integrative Medicine*.

www.mindheartconnect.com

Is There Any Real Evidence to Support EFT?

EFT has been researched in more than 10 countries, by more than 60 investigators, whose results have been published in more than 20 different peer-reviewed journals. The gold standard of scientific research is referred to as a meta-analysis. This is in essence a “study of the studies” performed on a specific topic. At the writing of this article, there are currently five meta-analyses published in peer-reviewed

journals demonstrating effectiveness for EFT usage for depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder. In addition, there are over 50 published randomized controlled trials that have studied and demonstrated effectiveness for EFT.

The results of these studies have been published in more than 15 different peer-reviewed journals, including the Journal of Clinical Psychology, the Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease and the APA journals Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training and Review of General Psychology. While questions about mechanism remain – specifically how these techniques work – a robust and growing body of research continues to document their efficacy. (5)

Conditions that have been studied include: general anxiety, test anxiety, phobias, obsessive-compulsion disorder, PTSD, general trauma, stress, depression, addiction, pain including fibromyalgia syndrome, tension headaches, frozen shoulder, psoriasis, insomnia, seizure disorders, sports/athletic performance, learning disabilities/educational challenges, epigenetic and physiological functioning and general psychological functioning. (6)

The demographics of people who have been studied using EFT include: college students, veterans, pain patients, overweight adults, hospital patients, athletes, health-care workers, gifted students, chemotherapy patients and phobia sufferers. (6)

When and How did EFT Begin?

EFT first began in the late 1990s when the founder, Gary Craig, created a popular website where he made EFT available to laypeople via low-cost videos. He had been a student of a psychologist, Dr. Roger Callahan, PhD who had patented his mind-body tapping process called Thought Field Therapy (TFT). Dr. Callahan in turn had studied and integrated the work of Dr. George Goodheart, DC and Dr. John Diamond, PhD, each of whom had discovered that verbally focusing on a problem or issue (emotional or physical) – while manually stimulating acupuncture points – could bring surprising relief in their patients – particularly with regard to fears, phobias and physical responses to stress. Craig was able to synthesize the process into a more simplified format involving fewer tapping points and with less complexity. A Stanford trained engineer and Master of NLP (Neurolinguistic Programming), Craig added key NLP concepts, and called it EFT or Emotional Freedom Techniques. (7)

Is EFT a Widely Accepted Approach?

Since its inception EFT has continued to grow and flourish. It has been highlighted in a wide range of popular media platforms ranging from TED talks, to television news stations around the world, health reports in newspapers, magazines and even a [new film on the science of EFT tapping](#). (8) (9)

It is being observed that the acceptance of EFT is being seen on many levels internationally. For example school districts in multiple countries are bringing tapping into classroom settings to teach children self-regulation tools. An increasing number of EFT programs are being offered at universities, including recently at a medical school in France. A significantly higher percentage of enrollees in EFT certification programs are entering from the professions of licensed health care, i.e. social workers, counselors, nurses, physicians, psychologists, nurses and more.

Recent milestones include: In December, 2018, an arm of the UK government, NICE (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence) has acknowledged that EFT research met their inclusion criteria for PTSD treatment. The review suggests that CSACTs could possibly provide EFT as a treatment choice for military combat trauma.

In 2017, the [U.S. Veterans Administration added EFT to List 2](#), approving it as a “generally safe therapy.”

In 2017, Kaiser Permanente, one of the largest hospital systems in the US, which serves more than 10 million patients each year, had its peer-reviewed publication, [The Permanente Journal](#), publish practice guidelines for using Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) with patients diagnosed with PTSD (Church, Stern et al., 2017). They recommend 5 hour long EFT sessions for those at risk for PTSD, and 10 sessions for those with full-blown symptoms.

“The Answers to All Your EFT Questions” on the Kryss Castle Podcast

<https://www.efttappingtraining.com/wp-content/uploads/Kryss-Castle-Interview.mp3>

Summary

EFT continues to demonstrate itself as a rapid and effective way to provide relief for a wide variety of issues that revolve around a person’s sense of well-being. Of course while more research needs to continue to be done to better understand its mechanisms and parameters for best practices, it is certainly an option worth considering within the field of therapeutic interventions. While some debate its current status as having achieved the nomenclature as an “evidence based” modality, it cannot be argued that it has reached the level of “evidence-supported.” Of course while no single intervention works for everyone, the consideration of EFT is certainly warranted for a wide number of issues. In addition, research has shown 99% of the EFT studies demonstrate its effectiveness with no documented side effects. So as the founder of EFT said, Why not try it?

References and Resources

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The authors, Craig Weiner, DC and Alina Frank are directors of the EFT Tapping Training Institute (<https://www.efttappingtraining.com>). They have been EFT trainers in conjunction with multiple international EFT training organizations, are producers of the film, the [Science of Tapping](#), and have authored multiple articles, chapters and books on EFT.

The original article appeared at and may be linked to/ referenced at:

<https://www.efttappingtraining.com/what-is-eft/>