

# EFT for Cravings – Summary of EFT research specific to this topic

2022

## Type: Systematic Review

Church, D., Stapleton, P. B., Vasudevan, A., & O'Keefe, T. (2022). **Clinical EFT as an evidence-based practice for the treatment of psychological and physiological conditions: A systematic review.** *Frontiers in Psychology, 13*, Article 951451. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.951451>

## Abstract

**Background:** Since the turn of the century, Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) has come into widespread use in medical and psychological treatment settings. It is also used as self-help by tens of millions of people each year. Clinical EFT, the manualized form of the method, has been validated as an “evidence-based” practice using criteria published by the American Psychological Association (APA) Division 12 Task Force on Empirically Validated Therapies. Its three essential ingredients are exposure, cognitive framing, and acupressure.

**Objectives:** In 2013 we published a paper defining Clinical EFT and reviewing published research. It has been viewed or downloaded over 36,000 times, indicating widespread interest in this treatment modality. Here we update our findings based on subsequently published literature and propose directions for future research.

**Method:** We performed a systematic review of the literature to identify randomized controlled trials (RCTs) and meta-analyses. Retrieval of 4,167 results resulted in the identification of 56 RCTs (n = 2,013), 41 of which were published subsequent to our earlier review, as well as eight meta-analyses.

**Results:** RCTs have found EFT treatment to be effective for (a) psychological conditions such as anxiety, depression, phobias, and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD); (b) physiological issues such as pain, insomnia, and autoimmune conditions; (c) professional and sports performance; and (d) biological markers of stress. Meta-analyses evaluating the effect of EFT treatment have found it to be “moderate” to “large.” Successful independent replication studies have been carried out for anxiety, depression, PTSD, phobias, sports performance, and cortisol levels. We outline the next steps in EFT research. These include determining its impact on cancer, heart disease, diabetes, and cognitive impairment; analysis of the large-scale datasets made possible by mobile apps; and delivery through channels such as virtual practitioner sessions, artificial intelligence agents, online courses, apps, virtual reality platforms, and standardized group therapy.

**Conclusions:** Subsequent research has confirmed the conclusions of earlier studies. These find Clinical EFT to be efficacious for a range of psychological and physiological conditions. Comparatively few treatment sessions are required, treatment is effective whether delivered in person or virtually, and symptom improvements persist over time. Treatment is associated with measurable biological effects in the dimensions of gene expression, brain synchrony, hormonal synthesis, and a wide range of biomarkers. Clinical EFT is a stable and mature method with an extensive evidence base. Its use in

primary care settings as a safe, rapid, reliable, and effective treatment for both psychological and medical diagnoses continues to grow.

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### Type: Outcome Study

Church, D., Stapleton, P., & Raynor, D. (2022). **Skinny Genes' six-week, online, clinical Emotional Freedom Techniques program: Durable weight loss and improved psychological symptoms.** *Advances in Mind-Body Medicine*, 36(1), 13–21.

Direct link: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35476748/>

### Abstract

**Context:** With obesity a mounting global issue, efficacious treatments can make a contribution to both personal and public health. Prior clinical trials have demonstrated that an evidence-based method, Clinical Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT), can produce a durable weight reduction.

**Objective:** The study evaluated whether Skinny Genes, a six-week online program applying EFT to emotional eating, was associated with behavioral change and reductions in weight.

**Design:** A pre-post outcome study design evaluated the results of a convenience sample of participants enrolled in an online weight loss course.

**Participants:** Participants were recruited through EFT websites. Pre, post and follow-up measures were available for 72 participants and all analysis was performed on this sample.

**Intervention:** Participants used EFT to address cognitions, behaviors, and adverse experiences that could contribute to binge eating, intermittent dieting, and resistance to exercise.

**Outcome Measures:** Behaviors to restrain eating were measured using the Revised Restraint Scale (RRS); the association of food with reward using the Power of Food Scale (PFS); anxiety and depression using the Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS). Weight was measured pre and postintervention and at six-month follow-up.

**Results:** Postintervention, a 36.8% reduction in anxiety ( $P < .001$ ) and a 48.5% reduction in depression ( $P < .001$ ) were found. The perceived power of food decreased significantly as did restraint behaviors. Participants lost an average of 12.9 lbs during the six weeks of the program ( $P < .001$ ), and at follow-up, a further 2.6 lbs. All psychological gains were maintained ( $P < .001$ ).

**Conclusions:** The findings are consistent with those of other clinical trials studying the benefits of EFT for weight loss, demonstrating simultaneous reductions in both weight and psychological distress. The continued weight reduction found on follow-up was consistent with other EFT studies but counter to the pattern of weight regain noted in the literature. Addressing emotional issues using an online delivery format was associated with durable weight-loss maintenance as well as improved mental health. App-based and virtual programs such as Skinny Genes have the potential to bring effective therapies to underserved populations.

2020

Type: Outcome Study following on from RCT

Stapleton, P. B., Lilley-Hale, E., Mackintosh, G., & Sparenburg, E. (2020). **Online Delivery of Emotional Freedom Techniques for Food Cravings and Weight Management: 2-Year Follow-Up**. *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, 26(2), 98-106. <https://doi.org/10.1089/acm.2019.0309>

Direct link: <https://www.liebertpub.com/doi/10.1089/acm.2019.0309>

## Abstract

**Background:** Growing obesity rates are a problem worldwide. Several studies of emotional freedom techniques (EFT), a brief psychophysiologic technique, have indicated that it may be a promising addition to traditional weight loss interventions.

**Objective:** The current study evaluated food cravings, dietary restraint, subjective power of food, weight changes, and self-reported symptoms (e.g., somatic, anxious, and depressive) 2 years after an 8-week online self-directed EFT intervention with additional online support.

**Design:** Participants were initially randomly allocated to a treatment or waitlist group. The treatment group was instructed to self-pace through an online EFT treatment program made up of seven modules throughout the 8-week intervention period, and the waitlist was also completed at the end of this period.

**Results:** Analyses of the online EFT intervention program indicated significantly reduced scores for food cravings (-28.2%), power of food (-26.7%), depression (-12.3%), anxiety (-23.3%), and somatic symptoms (-10.6%) from pre to postintervention and from pre (baseline) until the 2-year follow-up and significantly improved scores for restraint (+13.4%). Further improvements were experienced for carbohydrates and fast food cravings between 6 months and 2 years. Body Mass Index and weight significantly decreased from pre- to 12 months follow-up although there were no differences at the 2-year point.

**Conclusions:** As an online intervention program, EFT was very effective in reducing food cravings, perceived power of food, psychological symptomatology, and improving dietary restraint and maintaining those improvements over a 2-year period. The addition of EFT to traditional weight loss interventions is timely and supported by this research.

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## Type: Review – Comparison of two RCTs

Stapleton, P., & Stewart, M. (2020). **Comparison of the effectiveness of two modalities of group delivery of Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) intervention for food cravings: Online versus in-person.** *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 8(2), 158-181.

doi:10.4236/jss.2020.82014.

Direct link: <https://www.scirp.org/journal/paperinformation?paperid=98546>

### Abstract

**Context:** Recent research has demonstrated the effectiveness of Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) in addressing overeating behaviours in obese and overweight individuals both in-person (Church & Brooks, 2010; Stapleton et al., 2011, 2012, 2016, 2017) and online (Church, Stapleton, Sheppard & Carter, 2018; Church, & Wilde, 2013).

**Objective & Method:** The aim of the present study was to determine whether an online EFT program was as efficacious as the in-person treatment. This was achieved by comparing data from a randomized clinical trial (RCT) for an in-person EFT intervention for weight management (Stapleton et al., 2016), with an equivalent online RCT. Each program targeted food cravings, the subjective power of food, dietary restraint, body mass index, weight, somatic symptomology, anxiety, and depression.

**Results:** Results indicate both modalities were comparable in efficacy and both groups experienced significant reductions from pre-intervention to post-intervention, with reductions remaining significant at follow-ups for food cravings, power of food, depression and weight, with minor differences observed at post-intervention or six-month follow-up for dietary restraint, somatic symptoms, anxiety, and body mass index. Follow-up analyses revealed a significant effect of depression, anxiety, and weight on attrition in the online treatment group.

**Conclusion:** Overall, the findings of the present study suggest that both modalities are equally efficacious in reducing overall levels of food cravings, the subjective power of food, levels of restraint, weight and BMI, as well as, lowering rates of anxiety, depression and somatic symptoms. There were some between groups' differences in the action of the treatment condition in effecting these changes, and the in-person group appeared to have achieved a slightly greater effect of weight loss, while the online group experienced greater effects for the treatment of somatic symptoms.

2019

**Type: Randomised Controlled Trial**

Stapleton, P., Roos, T., Mackintosh, G., Sparenburg, E., Sabot, D., & Carter, B. (2019). **Online delivery of Emotional Freedom Techniques in the treatment of food cravings and weight management: A randomised controlled trial.** *OBM Integrative and Complementary Medicine*, 4(4).

Direct link: <https://www.lidsen.com/journals/icm/icm-04-04-065>

**Abstract**

**Background:** The combination of dietary restraint and physical exercise as a recommended treatment for weight loss has had limited long-term success. One factor proposed as limiting weight management techniques efficacy is the failure to target psychological processes linked with overeating. Consistent with prior research that has identified the efficacy of emotional freedom techniques (EFT) in reducing food cravings and aiding weight loss, this pilot randomised controlled trial (RCT) examined the impact of online delivery of EFT intervention on food cravings and weight management.

**Methods:** Participants were randomly assigned to an eight-week online EFT intervention group or waitlist control group. The sample comprised primarily of women (96%) aged between 41 and 60 years. Of the treatment group, 65% consumed their craved foods daily and had an average Body Mass Index in the obese range (33.3). Outcome measures assessed included food cravings, dietary restraint, subjective power of food, weight, somatic (body sensation), anxiety, and depressive symptoms.

**Results:** Post-intervention analyses revealed significant reductions on all measures for participants in the EFT condition (n = 314) with Cohen's effect size values suggesting moderate to high practical significance for the online intervention. However, there were no significant differences for participants in the waitlist control group (n = 137). In this crossover study design, post-test waitlist data was then collapsed into the EFT treatment group data for follow-up analyses, which indicated treatment gains on all measures at 6-month (n = 216) and 12-month (n = 145) follow-up.

**Conclusions:** Findings constitute preliminary support for the utility of online EFT as an accessible tool to assist the management of food cravings and body weight.

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**Type: RCT (small sample pilot study, first fMRI study of EFT)**

Stapleton, P., Buchan, C., Mitchell, I., McGrath, Y., Gorton, P., & Carter, B. (2019). **An initial investigation of neural changes in overweight adults with food cravings after emotional freedom techniques.** *OBM Integrative and Complementary Medicine*, 4(14), 10-21926.

Direct link: <https://www.lidsen.com/journals/icm/icm-04-01-010>

**Abstract**

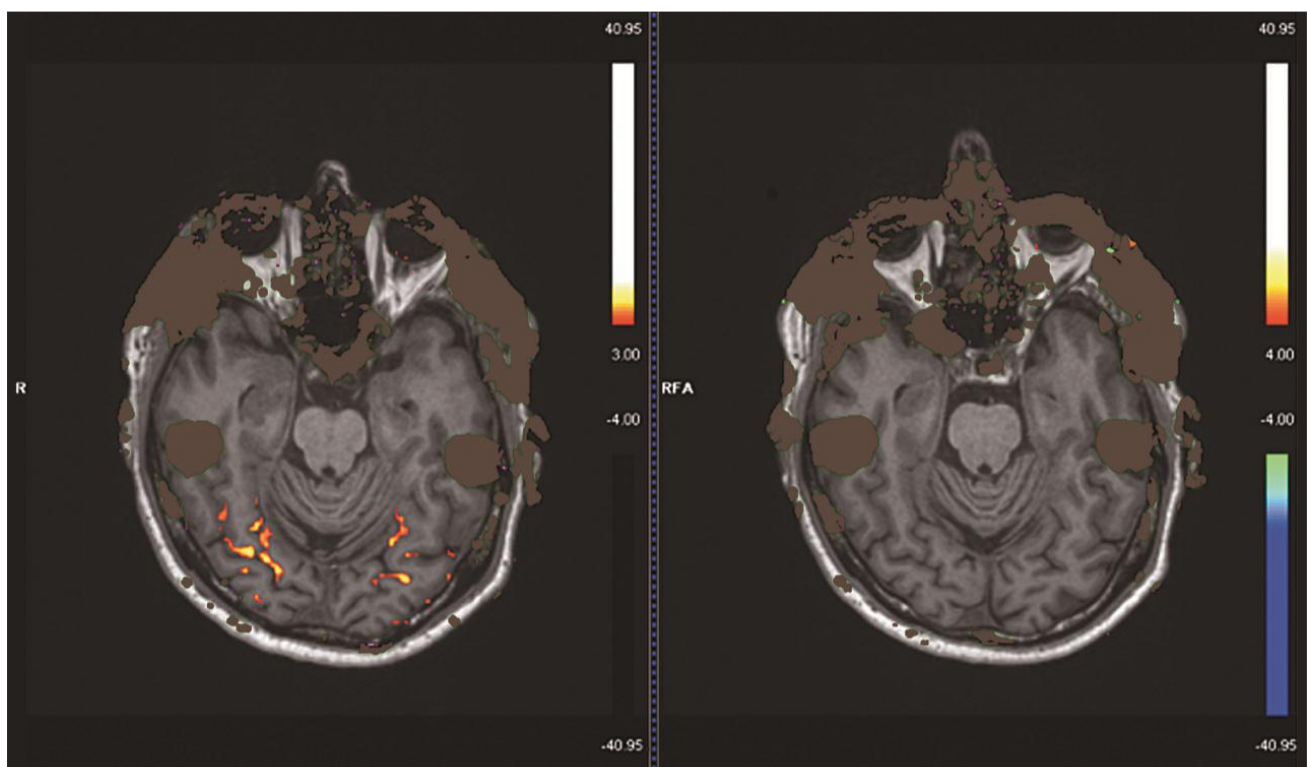
**Background:** This pilot randomised clinical trial investigated the effect of Clinical Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) on brain activation in response to food craving stimuli using

functional magnetic resonance imaging. EFT is a brief stress reduction technique which involves stating a cognitive statement with stimulation of acupuncture points with a tapping technique.

**Method:** Fifteen overweight/obese adults were allocated to a four-week group EFT treatment or control condition and completed a measure of food craving. Random repeating images of high-calorie food designed to engage parts of the brain were presented during the pre and post fMRI scans.

**Results:** The Group x Time interaction for food cravings were significant for the EFT group when compared to the controls. Participant mean scores decreased by 18% for the EFT group and 5% for the control group. Brain activity was mapped using fMRI measures, and there was relative deactivation in the Superior Temporal Gyrus and lateral orbito-frontal cortex for the EFT treatment group only. The control group however, showed continued activation in these areas.

**Conclusion:** The findings indicated EFT may decrease limbic region brain activity and reduce food related symptoms in overweight/obese individuals. This study also illuminates the neurological mechanisms at work behind the many successful outcome studies of EFT for weight loss. Recommendations for more comprehensive trials are discussed.



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

Note: the yellow, orange and red areas active on the pre scan are relatively deactivated in the post scan of the EFT group.

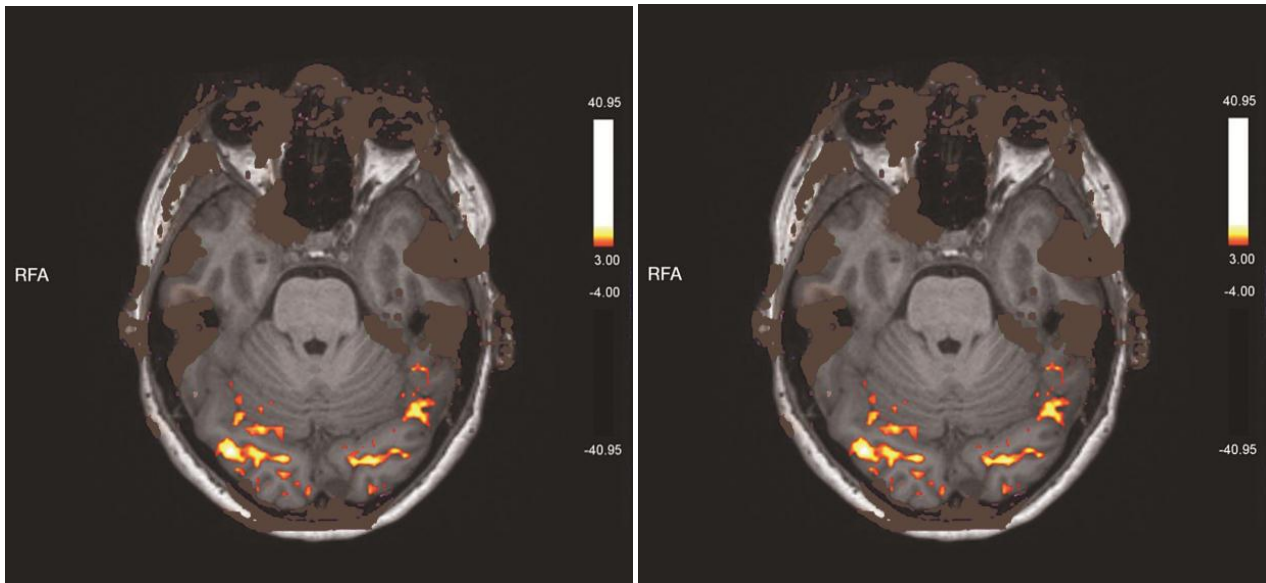


Figure 2 Control group example pre- and post-intervention fMRI scans.

Note: the yellow, orange and red areas active on the pre scan that are still relatively activated in the control group.

**2018**

**Type: Outcome Study**

Church, D., Stapleton, P., Sheppard, L., & Carter, B. (2018). **Naturally Thin You: Weight loss and psychological symptoms after a six-week online clinical EFT (emotional freedom techniques) course.** *Explore: The Journal of Science and Healing*, 14(2), 131-136.

doi:10.1016/j.explore.2017.10.009 Direct link:

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1550830717300964>

**Abstract**

**Background/objective:** Traditional methods of delivering therapeutic interventions have increasingly been supplemented by online courses. The current study investigated the effects of Clinical EFT (Emotional Freedom Techniques) in 76 participants enrolled in a six-week online course called Naturally Thin You. Weight, restraint, the power of food in the external environment, happiness, and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms were assessed before and after the course and at one-year follow-up.

**Method:** Participants received six live group teleclasses, access to online course materials and a private social media group, and a year of monthly support teleclasses. No particular diet was recommended; the course focused instead on controlling emotional eating and using EFT to treat the emotional triggers associated with food. Clinical EFT's Borrowing Benefits protocol, in which the group

facilitator works with a single participant while others simultaneously self-apply EFT, was used during the teleclasses.

**Results:** Repeated measures ANOVA compared scores pre- to 12-month follow-up, and significant improvements were found for body weight ( $p < .001$ ), depression symptoms ( $p = 0.010$ ), restraint ( $p = 0.025$ ), and the subjective power of food in the external environment ( $p = 0.018$ ). Weight decreased an average of 1lb/week during the course, and 2lb/month between pretest and one-year follow-up. On follow-up, no change was observed in PTSD symptoms measured by a brief civilian trauma checklist, or anxiety, and increases in happiness were non-significant. **The results indicate Clinical EFT's utility to address the influence of food in the external environment and assist weight loss, and to promote beneficial long-term change when delivered in an online format.**

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### Type: Comparative Outcome Study

Stapleton, P., & Chatwin, H. (2018). **Emotional Freedom Techniques for food cravings in overweight adults: A comparison of treatment length.** *OBM Integrative and Complementary Medicine*, 3(3).

Direct link: <https://www.lidsen.com/journals/icm/icm-03-03-014>

### Abstract

**Background:** Because patients vary in their response to treatment, including adherence, the effect of treatment length in the use of EFT on food cravings was examined by comparing retrospective data from two studies in order to ascertain if shorter programs are as effective. This may then impact treatment adherence and completion.

**Methods:** In study one, 96 overweight and obese adults were randomly allocated to a 4-week treatment for their food craving or waitlist condition. In study two, an 8-week EFT program for 47 adults, the same variables were measured as per study one. Participants were assessed for degree of food craving, perceived power of food, restraint capabilities and psychological symptoms at pre-, post-, 6- and 12-month follow-up.

**Results:** Outcomes indicated significant reductions in food cravings, subjective power of food, dietary restraint, Body Mass Index, and weight for both interventions. There were no significant differences between the intervention groups in terms of the effect size of outcomes for the variables measured, thus indicating that the 4-week EFT treatment could achieve the outcomes that the 8-week program did.

**Conclusions:** While the efficacy of EFT as an adjunct to standard dietary and exercise programs has been established through several clinical trials, it has not been clear as to the optimal length of program required to achieve successful results. This comparison of a brief 4-week (8-hour) program versus an 8-week (16-hour program) indicated significant reductions in all measures for both intervention lengths. Length of treatment may be important when considering adherence and motivation.

2017

**Type: Comparison Study – group CBT and group EFT**

Stapleton, P., Bannatyne, A., Chatwin, H., Urzi, K.-C., Porter, B., & Sheldon, T. (2017).

**Secondary psychological outcomes in a controlled trial of Emotional Freedom Techniques and cognitive behaviour therapy in the treatment of food cravings.** Complementary

Therapies in Clinical Practice, 28, 136-145. doi:10.1016/j.ctcp.2017.06.004

Direct link:

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1744388116301451?via%3Dihub>

### **Abstract**

**Objective:** Examining the effectiveness of psychological interventions in treating secondary psychological outcomes of obesity has become prioritized in recent times. The objective of the present study was to compare an eight-week Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) intervention program, in the treatment of food cravings and secondary psychological outcomes among overweight or obese adults (N = 83).

**Method:** A controlled non-inferiority trial was performed comparing group-delivered CBT to group-delivered EFT. Participants completed the Patient Health Questionnaire at pre- and post-intervention, and at six and 12-months follow-up.

**Results:** The CBT group did not report any significant changes in anxiety scores over time, but the decrease in depression symptoms pre-to post-intervention was significant and this was maintained at 6- and 12-months. Anxiety and depression scores significantly decreased from pre-to post-intervention for the EFT group and was maintained at 6- and 12-month follow-up. Somatoform scores significantly decreased from pre-intervention to all follow-up points for the CBT group, while the EFT group did not report any significant changes in somatoform symptoms. **Results also revealed that EFT is capable of producing reductions in anxiety and depression symptoms, and may be comparable to gold standard approaches such as CBT.**

**Conclusion:** The current study supports the hypothesis that psychological intervention is beneficial for treating psychological comorbidities of obesity and points to the role mental health issues may play in this area.

2016

**Type: Randomised Controlled Pilot Trial**

Stapleton, P., Chatwin, H., William, M., Hutton, A. Pain, A., Porter, B. & Sheldon, T. (2016).

**Emotional freedom techniques in the treatment of unhealthy eating behaviors and related psychological constructs in adolescents: A randomized controlled pilot trial.** *Explore, the Journal of Science and Healing*, 12(2), 113-122.

Direct

link: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1550830715002190?via%3Dihub>

**Abstract**

**Context:** In Australia and throughout much of the world, rates of obesity continue to climb as do the prevalence of eating disorders, particularly in adolescents. Psychological consequences of childhood obesity include low self-esteem, depression, body dissatisfaction, and social maladjustment (Young-Hyman et al., 2012).

**Objective and Intervention:** This feasibility study sought to examine the impact of a six-week Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) group treatment program upon eating behaviours, self-esteem, compassion, and psychological symptoms. Design: Forty-four students were randomly allocated to either the EFT group or the waitlist control group.

**Results:** Results revealed a delayed effect for both groups at post-intervention, with improved eating habits, self-esteem, and compassion at follow-up. Findings provide preliminary support for EFT as an effective treatment strategy for increasing healthy eating behaviours and improving associated weight-related psychopathology.

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**Type: Randomised Controlled Trial CBT and EFT**

Stapleton, P., Bannatyne, A., Porter, B., Urzi, K.C., & Sheldon, T. (2016). **Food for thought: A randomised controlled trial of emotional freedom techniques and cognitive behavioural therapy in the treatment of food cravings.** *Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being*, 8(2), 232—257. doi:10.1111/aphw.12070

Direct link: <https://iaap-journals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/aphw.12070>

**Abstract**

Addressing the internal determinants of dysfunctional eating behaviours (e.g., food cravings) in the prevention and treatment of obesity has been increasingly recognised. This study compared Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) to Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) for food cravings in adults who were overweight or obese (N = 83) in an 8-week intervention. Outcome data was collected at baseline, post-intervention, and at six and 12-months follow-up. Overall, EFT and CBT demonstrated comparable

efficacy in reducing food cravings, one's responsiveness to food in the environment (power of food), and dietary restraint, with Cohen's effect size values suggesting moderate to high practical significance for both interventions. Results also revealed both EFT and CBT are capable of producing treatment effects that are clinically meaningful, with reductions in food cravings, the power of food, and dietary restraint normalising to the scores of a non-clinical community sample. While reductions in BMI were not observed, the current study supports the suggestion psychological interventions are beneficial for food cravings and both CBT and EFT could serve as vital adjunct tools in a multidisciplinary approach to managing obesity.

**2013**

**Type: Discussion paper**

Stapleton, P. B., Porter, B., & Sheldon, T. (2013). **Quitting smoking: How to use Emotional Freedom Techniques**. *International Journal of Healing and Caring*, 13(1), 1-16.

<http://www.ijhc.org/2016/01/quitting-smoking-how-to-use-emotional-freedom-techniques-peta-stapleton-brett-porter-terri-sheldon/>

### **Abstract**

Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) have been gaining strength in the published literature as strategies to reduce arousal symptoms such as anxiety. EFT falls under the umbrella of energy psychology techniques which combine physical or somatic processes with cognitive focus in order to reduce psychological distress. This article discusses the practical application of EFT to smoking cessation, and the associated physical and psychological concerns that can be addressed.

### **Conclusions**

Smoking is an important cause of global illnesses and mortality, and the health consequences that abound will continue to affect individuals at a world-wide level unless more effective preventive and therapeutic interventions are actioned. Energy psychology strategies, specifically EFT, are demonstrating effectiveness with a range of psychological conditions and traumas (Feinstein, 2010, 2012; Stapleton, Sheldon, & Porter, 2012; Wells, Polglase, Andrews, Carrington, & Baker, 2003), and because they can be self-applied, may be a fundamental adjunct in the process of quitting cigarettes. This overview of an eight-hour program may be of use at a clinical level, and highlights the major aspects which need to be addressed for effective smoking cessation.

Clients frequently present with a strong belief and fear, usually from their own experience using willpower or self-control/self-regulation, about how uncomfortable they will be if they do not smoke. This discomfort is associated with their familiar craving to smoke and an established habit and history of smoking. Because of this they do not readily imagine a future in which they would not have the desire to smoke. Their past and present experience of craving to smoke is dominant in formulating their expectation that they will always want to smoke.

EFT as a strategy for the many aspects associated with cigarette smoking, shows promise and usefulness. Applied in a group setting or individually, EFT may assist smokers to decrease the urge and cravings associated with their habit, as well as address underlying concerns related to their patterns.

## Type: Pilot Study

Church, D., & Brooks, A. J. (2013). **The effect of EFT (Emotional Freedom Techniques) on psychological symptoms in addiction treatment: A pilot study.** *Journal of Scientific Research and Reports*, 2(2). Direct

link: <https://journaljsrr.com/index.php/JSRR/article/view/1443>

### Abstract

**Objectives:** Studies have found a frequent co-occurrence of psychological symptoms such as anxiety and depression with addiction. This pilot study examined the effect of EFT (Emotional Freedom Techniques), a widely practiced form of energy psychology, on 39 adults self-identified with addiction issues attending an EFT weekend workshop targeting addiction.

**Measures:** Subjects completed the SA-45, a well-validated questionnaire measuring psychological distress. It has two global scales assessing intensity and breadth of psychological symptoms and 9 symptom subscales including anxiety and depression. The SA-45 was administered before and after the workshop. Twenty-eight participants completed a 90-day follow-up.

**Results:** A statistically significant decrease was observed in the two global scales and all but one of the SA-45 subscales after the workshop, indicating a reduction in psychological distress (positive symptom total -38%,  $P < .000$ ). Improvements on intensity and breadth of psychological symptoms, and anxiety and obsessive-compulsive subscales were maintained at the 90-day follow-up ( $P < .001$ ).

**Conclusion:** These findings are consistent with those noted in studies of other populations, and suggest that EFT may be an effective adjunct to addiction treatment by reducing the severity of general psychological distress. Limitations of this study include a small sample size, lack of a control or comparison group, and attrition between primary and follow-up data points.

2012

**Type: Randomised Controlled Trial EFT and Waitlist**

Stapleton, P., Sheldon, T., Porter, B., Whitty, J. (2011). **A randomized clinical trial of a meridian-based intervention for food cravings with six month follow-up.** Behavior Change, 28(1), 1-16. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1375/bech.28.1.1>

Direct link: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/behaviour-change/article/abs/randomised-clinical-trial-of-a-meridianbased-intervention-for-food-cravings-with-sixmonth-followup/43AAB7C9CE0F1581C2E9279C52AE7008>

**Abstract**

**Objectives:** This randomised, clinical trial tested whether The Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) reduced food cravings.

**Measures:** This study involved 96 overweight or obese adults who were allocated to the EFT treatment or 4-week waitlist condition. Degree of food craving, perceived power of food, restraint capabilities and psychological symptoms were assessed pre- and post- a 4-week treatment program (mixed method ANOVA comparative analysis), and at 6-month follow-up (repeated measure ANOVA with group data collapsed).

**Results:** EFT was associated with a significantly greater improvement in food cravings, the subjective power of food and craving restraint than waitlist from pre- to immediately post-test ( $p < .05$ ). Across collapsed groups, an improvement in food cravings and the subjective power of food after active EFT treatment was maintained at 6 months, and a delayed effect was seen for craving restraint. Although there was a significant reduction in measures of psychological distress immediately after treatment ( $p < .05$ ), there was no between-group difference.

**Conclusion:** These findings are consistent with the hypothesis that EFT can have an immediate effect on reducing food cravings and can result in maintaining reduced cravings over time.

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**Type: Randomised Controlled Trial EFT and Waitlist**

Stapleton, P., Sheldon, T., & Porter, B. (2012). **Clinical benefits of Emotional Freedom Techniques on food cravings at 12-months follow-up: A randomized controlled trial.** Energy Psychology: Theory, Research, and Treatment, 4(1), 13-24. Direct link: <https://energypsychologyjournal.org/abstracts/abstracts-volume-4-number-1-may-2012/stapleton/>

**Abstract**

This randomized, single-blind, crossover trial tested whether participants who used Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) maintained reduced food cravings after 12-months and updates previously reported

6-month findings. Ninety-six overweight/obese adults were allocated to a 4-week EFT treatment or waitlist condition. Degree of food craving, perceived power of food, restraint capabilities, and psychological symptoms were assessed pre- and posttest and at 12-month follow-up for collapsed groups. Significant improvements occurred in weight, body mass index, food cravings, subjective power of food, craving restraint, and psychological coping for EFT participants from pretest to 12 months ( $p < .05$ ). It appears EFT can result in participants maintaining reduced cravings over time and affect weight and BMI in overweight and obese individuals.

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### Type: Discussion Paper

Stapleton, P., Sheldon, T., & Porter, B. (2012). **Practical application of Emotional Freedom Techniques for food cravings**. *Wholistic Healing Publications*, 12(3) International Journal of Healing and Caring, 12(3), 1-8. <http://www.ijhc.org/2012/09/practical-application-of-emotional-freedom-techniques-for-food-cravings/>

### Abstract

Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) has been shown to have a lasting effect on food cravings, power over food and restraint ability, and ultimately results in weight loss. This paper discusses the approach utilized in a recent food craving clinical treatment trial (Stapleton, Sheldon, & Porter, 2012; Stapleton, Sheldon, Porter, & Whitty, 2011), and highlights the case of a single participant. Sessions are described in detail and specific recommendations are made for the application of EFT to food cravings in overweight and obese individuals.

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With thanks to <https://www.evidencebasedeft.com/cravingsaddictionsweightloss>

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