

Alternative 'tapping' therapy could be used by the NHS to treat anxiety and depression

- The treatment involves tapping acupressure points on the head and hands
- The researchers believe it should now be used by the NHS
- Tapping could also be used to boost performance in pressurised situations
- Once the technique has been learnt, patients can treat themselves at home, whenever they need it

By [Emma Innes](#)

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The technique, which the NHS could soon start using to treat mental health problems, involves tapping acupressure points on the head and hands

Experts are calling on the NHS to start using a new self-help technique, called tapping, after its

effectiveness in treating a number of conditions was proved.

The technique, which involves tapping acupressure points on the head and hands, is showing promise as an effective form of therapy for anxiety, depression and anger.

It is also known as the emotional freedom technique (EFT).

Researchers at Staffordshire University are leading research into the effectiveness of EFT in the UK.

Professor Tony Stewart, who led a trial of the treatment in the Birmingham area, said: 'EFT is a new and emerging therapy that can be used to treat a wide variety of conditions.

'Patients gently tap with their fingertips on acupressure points, mainly on the head and hands, and relate this to the voicing of specific statements.

'A growing number of studies suggest EFT is an effective and safe treatment, and with the predicted sharp increase in the demand for mental health services – and a corresponding decrease in NHS resources - we feel that the use of EFT should now be extended.'

The researchers studied 39 patients during the trial and say that most improved significantly as a result of the treatment.

Dr Ian Walton, GP and mental health lead for Sandwell and West Birmingham Clinical Commissioning Group, said: 'The effective use of EFT demonstrated in this study has not only influenced counsellors and therapists in Sandwell to be trained to use this method of treatment, but also local mental health charities are seeing the value in being trained to use EFT in the work that they do.'

Mark Willets, 39, was first referred to Professor Stewart with depression in 2012 after it started to impact on his family life.

He said: 'I would describe the impact of these sessions like emotional first aid, it would allow me to refocus when I found myself hitting a bad patch and it brought me back into rational thinking.

'I would say it created a cognitive shift and allowed me to gain a better perspective on the things I had achieved and really helped me to see more clearly and become calm and rational.'

The researchers say that one of the key benefits of EFT is that, once learnt, it can be easily self-administered meaning patients can use it on themselves for any issue, whenever it is required.



Dutch pole vaulter Rens Blom believes tapping was responsible for his surprise victory in the 2005 World Athletics Championships

WHAT IS TAPPING?

Tapping or the Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) is a new alternative therapy.

It is a form of acupressure, based on the same energy points used in traditional acupuncture to treat physical and emotional ailments.

Instead of using needles, tapping with the fingertips is used to input kinetic energy onto specific meridians on the head and chest while a person thinks about their specific problem and voices positive affirmations.

This combination of tapping and voicing is supposed to clear the 'emotional block' from a person's 'bioenergy system' and restores balance in the body.

A further study using Staffordshire University students has provided evidence that EFT could also boost performance in pressurised conditions.

Some 100 students were approached randomly to either receive an inspirational lecture or an EFT session ahead of giving a marked presentation.

The 50 students who received the EFT remained calmer and achieved higher results.

On average, it has been determined that just over five sessions are required to treat clients. This compares well with other therapies such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), where between six and 20 sessions may be required, depending on the condition and severity.

Dr Liz Boath, Associate Professor in the School of Social Work, Allied and Public Health at Staffordshire University, said: 'Both clinical and statistical significance have been demonstrated through our studies, the findings of which have been presented at three NHS conferences.

'Our view is that all new therapies and treatments start with little or no evidence, and further good quality studies into EFT would confirm its effectiveness, safety and potential within the NHS.

'It may be a bridge too far for now, but we also feel that EFT could be delivered within communities to provide fast access to mental health services.'

The research was published in the Journal of Psychological Therapies in Primary Care.



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[Peter](#), Kingston, 2 days ago

For anyone who's interested, there is a simplified but more effective version of EFT now called "FasterEFT". There are hundreds of vids on youtube worth watching, and some of the cases are just extraordinary...

[3](#)
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[Peter](#), Kingston, 2 days ago

To get an idea what EFT can do, use this as a search string on Youtube: "731 I had severe back pain, bed ridden, taking 180 pills a day".

[3](#)
[6](#)

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[Donal](#), Cork, Ireland, 2 days ago

Those big pharmacy companies will make sure this treatment will never come into play. They'll just bribe everyone, the doctors, the boards.

2
21

[Click to rate](#)

[Saltire Sue](#), Edinburgh, United Kingdom, 2 days ago

They can't stop it really. It's out there and has been for a number of years. Anyone can learn it from the internet! You don't need a prescription.

1
15

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[Masha Bennett](#), Manchester, United Kingdom, 2 days ago

More and more medical and mental health professionals are on board with EFT - some from personal experience and others seeing their patients improve with it where other treatments failed or had limited benefits. So it is only a matter of time before some bigger scale controlled randomised trials are conducted and I have no doubt that these will confirm the outcomes of the smaller studies.

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10

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[Anna](#), kent uk, 2 days ago

When I first tried tapping I thought 'what rubbish' but it works, it really does. I recommend it to anyone who feels worried or stressed.

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[Peter](#), Kingston, 2 days ago

Yep, and also phobias, smoking or other addictions, new or old traumas, grief, pain, headaches etc. Google or youtube Robert Smith & FasterEFT.

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5

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[Coatd](#), Durham, 2 days ago

This was taught to me over 10 years ago

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18

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[Joy](#), London, United Kingdom, 2 days ago

My friend is an EFT practitioner & taught EFT to me. Surprisingly enough - it does work! Tried & proven! Why does it work? Is it scientific or a placebo? All I know, it has worked for me & other people I personally know.

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23

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[Saltire Sue](#), Edinburgh, United Kingdom, 2 days ago

The article states it is proven to work, therefore it's not the placebo effect.

2
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[Masha Bennett](#), Manchester, United Kingdom, 2 days ago

I am a registered psychotherapist working both in NHS and in private practice and I wouldn't be without EFT. I also use a wide range of well-researched conventional approaches, including cognitive behavioural therapy, EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing) and from 10 years of clinical experience I have no doubt that EFT greatly enhances the effectiveness on my work and that of my many colleagues. I have used it with some thousands of clients in contexts ranging from prisons, addiction treatment services, mental health services, schools, in developing counties recovering from war and conflict, and have seen this simple tool transform many, many lives.

4
26

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[Sherry](#), Canterbury, United Kingdom, 2 days ago

The only thing a Tap on the head is good for is water on the brain.

24
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[Click to rate](#)

[Karen Hills](#), Staffordshire, United Kingdom, 2 days ago

Do not knock it until you try it! It really works. I have had lots of emotional issues from past memories and I am a new person from doing this over a period of time so unless you are doing it yourself don't judge!

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8

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[Jan](#), London, United Kingdom, 3 days ago

I HAVE BEEN TAPPING TO REGROW HAIR..its advised by chinese acupuncturists but so far..no luck!!!!

15
4

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[judgenot](#), Manchester, 3 days ago

anybody else find her annoying? . .

9
4

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[ElecEng](#), Dubai UAE, 3 days ago