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PRESS RELEASE

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EFT Tapping 'reduced my chronic pain'

EFT users welcome guidance from the medicines watchdog NICE that people with chronic 'primary' pain can benefit from psychological therapies.

People suffering with chronic pain conditions, such as fibromyalgia, are sharing their experience of using 'tapping' to reduce their pain. Tapping is a complementary health treatment, (officially called Emotional Freedom Techniques or EFT), which involves tapping with the fingertips on acupuncture points on the body. This sends messages to the part of the brain that controls stress.

These EFT testimonies come as new guidance is issued for doctors treating patients with primary pain. ('Primary' pain is defined as having an unknown cause. 'Secondary' pain has a specific cause, such as arthritis or osteoporosis.) The new guidelines, from the medicines watchdog NICE (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence), were published in early April and suggest patients with primary pain should avoid painkillers, as these often do not help and can be addictive. NICE advises the use of exercise programmes, acupuncture or psychological therapies such as Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT). However there are other psychological therapies too, such as EFT, and practitioners of EFT believe there is growing evidence that tapping can also reduce chronic pain.

Alison Heasleywood, from Berkshire, is among those who have found EFT helpful. She developed severe pain around a decade ago, during her twenties. She spent around five years on painkillers, and saw numerous specialists, but nothing helped. "I was at rock bottom, in a pain cloud all the time, and in a very dark place mentally. I was diagnosed with Central Sensitisation Syndrome and Fibromyalgia. A friend recommended I see an EFT therapist. I was sceptical at first, but within just a few sessions I was making huge progress. I went from not being able to exercise at all to feeling like I could walk a half marathon. Within 6 months I was off all painkillers. It was life changing for me. My therapist helped to unpeel the emotional layers that I think were connected to my pain. I now use EFT as a management tool and I tap regularly. I still get some pain but EFT helps me to deal with it.'

Alison's story rings true for Anne Marsh, based in Cornwall, who has also used EFT to manage pain from her fibromyalgia. She was diagnosed with the condition nine years ago. "I have pain throughout my whole body. It goes from a sharp pain to a deep intense pain. At its worst I can't even get out of bed. I have had problems with severe pain now for twenty years, including hip pain, while I was waiting for a hip replacement. I started using EFT, and quite simply, this has allowed me to carry on with my life. I really can't see how I would manage without it. If I am hurting, I tap. When I tap, the pain eases. I see my fingers as my painkillers. I use tapping twice a day as it's important that you

keep doing it. Tapping is like playing the piano – the more you do it the better it works. I decided I wanted to know more about EFT so I went on a training course in 2012 to become an EFT practitioner. EFT is so empowering, it can help everyone.”

An increasing body of academic research is now showing that EFT can help patients with chronic pain. A study in Sweden in 2008, led by Gunilla Brattberg, (see below), found significant improvement in pain levels in a group of 86 women with fibromyalgia who received EFT treatments. More recent research on using EFT to help chronic pain was carried out in 2016 by Dr Peta Stapleton, Associate Professor in Psychology at Bond University in Gold Coast, Australia. This research also reported a significant reduction in pain and psychological stress due to tapping. Dr Stapleton is currently involved with more research on the same issue, which used weekly online EFT sessions for six weeks in the autumn of 2020 with an international group of patients suffering chronic pain. Dr Stapleton says that early results from the study are encouraging. The full results are not yet published.

One of those taking part in Dr Stapleton’s latest study is Karen Iglehart from Maryland in the US. “I’ve had a history of pain on and off since 2005. I started using EFT in 2018, and by then I had started to consider myself a functional chronic pain patient. Pain was in the forefront of my thoughts most of the time and affected much of my activities. As a nurse and an acupuncturist, I had tried both conventional and alternative methods to manage the pain without sustained success. I stumbled across EFT and found it to be very effective in helping me manage pain. EFT not only addressed my physical sensation of pain but helped me identify the emotional stressors that can exacerbate pain. I was committed to tapping every day and following the instructions of the certified practitioners I was working with to ensure I used EFT properly and effectively. I found EFT to be so beneficial that I became a certified EFT practitioner because I want other people to benefit from it as I have. I am not completely free from pain all the time, but now I feel I can control it.”

EFT International, the professional body for the practice of EFT, has welcomed the new guidance from NICE, suggesting patients with chronic primary pain can benefit from psychological therapies. Chair Jacqui Footman, who is based in Devon, said, “Acupuncture and CBT were mentioned specifically in the guidance from NICE, but we believe EFT is another related therapy that can help. The evidence base for the use of EFT in treating chronic pain is growing all the time, and there is also plenty of anecdotal and practitioner-based evidence to support this. We do recommend that anyone seeking to use EFT to help with pain management does this with the support of a certified practitioner in order to get the maximum possible benefit.” EFTi is already working closely with NICE regarding the use of tapping to help other health conditions, including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Editors’ notes

1. Pictures attached: 1. Alison Heasleywood. 2. Hands doing tapping.
2. More information from www.eftinternational.org. Or EFTi Chair Jacqui Footman on 07933 998118
3. EFT International is a UK-registered Charity, number 1176538.
4. EFT was originally developed in the US by Gary Craig, in the 1990s.
5. 2008 study by Brattberg, G, Self-administered EFT (Emotional Freedom Techniques) in individuals with fibromyalgia: a randomized trial. *Integrative Medicine: A Clinician’s Journal*, August/September 2008.
6. 2016 study by Stapleton, P, Chatwin, H, Shepperd, L, & McSwan, J. The Lived Experience of Chronic Pain and the Impact of Brief Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) Group Therapy on Coping. *Energy Psychology: Theory, Research, and Treatment*.
7. In 2019, Dr Peta Stapleton was named Psychologist of the Year by the Australian Allied Health Awards.
8. EFT has also been found to be useful in the treatment of war veterans with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. In 2018, NICE recommended further investigation of the use of EFT for PTSD in adults. Ends



