



Free at last

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Many people with a weight problem would agree that food is often not the real problem: overeating and eating the wrong foods are merely a symptom of deeper emotional issues.

We literally try to 'stuff down' our feelings with food, but unfortunately trying to negate or tranquillise our feelings by eating more never works. Many of us can relate to this!

We're also aware that emotions cause physical reactions: when we are angry our stomach tightens, our blood pressure rises and the veins on our neck stand out.

In fact, most doctors now agree that stress contributes to disease, which leads to the intriguing question: if we can clear emotional

issues and negate the stress that they cause, then why shouldn't physical healing result?

The Chinese have believed for centuries that the body can heal itself if the energies are allowed to flow freely. Emotional issues and past traumas are 'held' in the body, causing pent up anger, grief, guilt and shame.

Our emotional issues and triggers often stem from childhood, although emotional eating can also be triggered by a traumatic past event or a bad experience. Without realising it, many of us still subconsciously believe negative things that we have been told in the past.

Sometimes we are driven to overeat

because our subconscious mind is trying to 'take us back' to a time in our lives when we felt safe and loved. As adults we have many responsibilities and stressors and it is no surprise that our subconscious mind (whose job it is to protect us) tries to take us back to less stressful times in childhood, when we were content and free from responsibilities.

Many of us feel guilty, lonely, empty, bored, nervous, anxious and afraid because we have 'emotional blocks' from the past that need to be cleared in order for us to shift the excess weight that we have been carrying needlessly.

If we don't clear these blocks, emotional eating will just keep on tripping us up and

Revealed: the secrets of a therapy that claims to get to the root of weight problems and promises freedom from diets.

sabotaging our efforts time and time again. It isn't our fault that we crave certain foods or overeat and we certainly shouldn't feel guilty as the 'emotional pull' and compulsion to eat is so strong that it's impossible to ignore.

One approach that is already proving successful in treating people with weight and other stress-related problems is emotional freedom technique or EFT.

Described as 'a form of acupuncture for the emotions, without the needles' (see panel, top right), EFT has been used to combat food cravings and many other emotionally driven problems such as drinking too much, smoking, fears and phobias.

Doctors and psychotherapists are now also using EFT worldwide, including in some areas of the NHS here in the UK.

'EFT is a highly effective method for relieving anxiety, stress, emotional trauma, addictive cravings and many forms of distress,'

EFT: What's it all about?

Emotional freedom technique (EFT), also known as tapping, can be described as a form of acupuncture for the emotions without the needles, as it utilises the same energy points (meridians) used in traditional acupuncture to treat both physical and emotional issues.

Instead of using needles, you simply tap yourself repeatedly on specific energy points on your upper body, while at the same time 'tuning in' to your emotional block by repeating specific phrases that you and your EFT practitioner decide are most relevant to help you.

Repeating the tapping at the same time as the phrases is key, because it clears the 'energy disruption' or 'emotional block' from your body's energy system, thus restoring your mind and body's state of balance and equilibrium, which is essential for optimal health and the healing of physical ailments and emotional issues.

Yes, it may sound strange but it works!

says Dr Phil Mollon PhD, consultant clinical psychologist and psychotherapist at the Lister Hospital, Stevenage. 'It can be combined with other more traditional approaches. We do not fully understand how and why this and other "energy psychology" methods work, but there is increasing evidence that they can achieve results far beyond those of purely talk-based approaches.'

As well as helping to control emotional eating, EFT can also be used to treat a wide variety of conditions including post-traumatic stress disorder, multiple sclerosis, insomnia, migraine, loss of libido, chronic fatigue syndrome, diverticulitis and even diabetes.

When treating people with diabetes, EFT practitioners look for unresolved emotional issues, such as anger, anxiety, fear, guilt, or trauma and/or a disrupted flow of the body's subtle energies.

It is these emotional issues that we find can materially contribute to many diseases, and once these issues are properly resolved, which is what EFT does best, the physical symptoms of diabetes tend to improve – sometimes significantly. That's not to say you should

throw away your medication and you must always be monitored by your diabetes nurse or GP, but EFT really can make a difference.

'EFT and a healthy diet have helped me enormously,' says Gary Cottey from London, who has type 2 diabetes. 'I've now lost almost 8 stone and feel back in control.'

EFT is also a fantastic mood- and confidence-booster, clearing any negative thoughts and wrong beliefs you may have had for years. Receiving a diabetes diagnosis can be a very distressing and worrying time, but it really shouldn't be. It is possible to turn this around and look on it as a new beginning, a fresh start and a good reason to get fit, eat well and grab some extra 'me time'.

Paul McArdle, diabetes specialist dietitian with the NHS, has used EFT himself to cure his fear of flying. 'Many people who have battled with their weight for years have emotional issues linked to this,' he says. 'That's why "dieting" doesn't work. Any therapy that helps you to overcome these emotional barriers to weight loss is a bonus.' ■

Find out more

Carey Mann is an EFT practitioner and expert adviser at the health and diet advice website Diet Freedom, which recommends a



natural low GL (glycaemic load) diet for people with diabetes and is featured on the charity Diabetes UK's website.

Visit www.dietfreedom.co.uk to book a 'one to one' EFT phone consultation with Carey; the cost is £70 for one hour including the price of the call (or £60 for Diet Freedom members). Carey also runs training days and courses on EFT; email carey@dietfreedom.co.uk for more details.

Diet Freedom/Sweet reader offer: Receive a 30 per cent discount on Diet Freedom membership by entering the code 'Sweet' when you join online: you will pay only £20.79 instead of £29.70 for three months' membership.