

**A Randomised Clinical Trial of a Meridian-Based Intervention for Food Cravings with
Six Month Follow-up**

Peta Stapleton BA, PGDipPsy, PhD
Senior Lecturer, School of Medicine
Griffith University

Terri Sheldon, BA (Hons)
The Lakeside Rooms, Robina, Qld

Brett Porter, Assoc Dip. WR & W
The Lakeside Rooms, Robina, Qld

Jennifer Whitty PhD
Lecturer, School of Medicine
Griffith University

All correspondence is to go to Dr Peta Stapleton, PO BOX 123 Robina DC, 4226. Email:
peta@slimminds.com

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Abstract

Objective: Food craving was hypothesised to be an important intervening causal variable in the development of obesity. This randomised, single-blind, clinical trial tested whether The Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) reduced food cravings in participants under laboratory-controlled conditions.

Method: Study involved ninety-six overweight or obese adults who were allocated to the EFT treatment or 4-week waitlist condition. The waitlist condition received treatment after completion of the test period. Degree of food craving, perceived power of food, restraint capabilities and psychological symptoms were assessed pre- and post- a four week EFT 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 ($p < 0.05$). Across collapsed groups, an improvement in food cravings and the subjective power of food after treatment was maintained at 6-months and a delayed effect was seen for restraint. Although there was a significant reduction in measures of psychological distress immediately after treatment ($p < 0.05$), there was no between group difference and significance was not maintained at 6-months. There was no difference in weight or body mass index across all time points, but this may change with longer treatment programs.

Conclusion: EFT can have an immediate effect on reducing food cravings, result in maintaining reduced cravings over time and this addition to weight loss/dietary programs may result in assisting people to achieve and maintain reduced food cravings.

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