

**A Randomised Clinical Trial of a Meridian-Based Intervention for Food Cravings:  
Treatment versus Waitlist**

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

## **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.