

Emotional Freedom Technique:

Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) is most often used as a means of handling negative emotions, but it can be very helpful in dealing with pain as well. EFT combines acupuncture with verbal affirmations to change your emotional state. I will summarize the basic procedure here and most people will do quite well just using the basics, but you can also download a free full-length manual on this method, as well as get information on seminars and advanced instruction by going to www.emofree.com.

As I said, Emotional Freedom Technique uses acupuncture stimulation along with verbal affirmations to change the “emotional charge” or intensity of a physical pain, craving, habit, phobia, or traumatic event. The starting point of the procedure is to identify whatever it is you want to change, and then verbalize it in the form of a self-accepting affirmation while tapping a series of points.

For example, let’s say you are experiencing sciatica. For the purposes of doing Emotional Freedom Technique, you will always use the structure of “Even though I [insert undesirable symptom, behavior, or emotion here], I deeply and completely accept myself.” So, using the example of sciatica, you would say, “Even though I am having sciatica, I deeply and completely accept myself.

In the case of pain and other symptoms, you may be able to associate a certain emotional event or stressful situation to the onset of the symptoms. In fact, sometimes simply noticing the words we use can clue us in on emotional issues that may be triggering physical symptoms.

Even though most cases of sciatica are related to objective disc injuries, you might be surprised at how much of a role emotional issues can play. For instance, if you are unhappy at work and think your boss is a “pain in the butt”, you may very well have an injury while at work that produces sciatica (which is literally a pain in the butt!). Dealing with the emotional issues can bring a surprising amount of pain relief in some cases.

Although other techniques for using affirmations may recommend phrasing your affirmations in terms of the way you want things to be (such as, “I feel healthy and pain-free!”), this is not how they are used with Emotional Freedom Technique. So, as another example, let’s say that you recognize that emotional issues from dealing with your boss may be participating in your physical symptoms, you could use the affirmation, “Even though I feel like my boss is a pain in the butt, I deeply and completely accept myself.”

Whatever the affirmation for your specific issue, you repeat it out loud as you tap a series of acupressure points. The sequence and location of the points is shown below. For each point, you’ll tap it 7 or 8 times with a finger tip as you repeat the affirmation out loud. Tap the points in the number sequence shown, starting at point 1 above the eye and working through to point 13 (if you download the full manual from the Emotional Freedom Technique website, you’ll see that I have added one finger point – this point is optional).

It usually does not matter whether you do points on the left or right side of the body, but I find it usually works better to stick to one side, rather than doing some points on the left and some on the right. You may find that tapping the points on the side of pain works the best.

Points For Emotional Freedom Technique:

(The points are illustrated on the next page, indicated as red dots)

1. Over Eye
2. Outside Corner Of Eye
3. Under Eye
4. Between Nose And Upper Lip
5. Between Lower Lip And Chin
6. Just Below Where Collar Bone Joins Breastbone
7. Center Of Arm Pit
8. Outer Edge Of Base Of Thumb Nail
9. Outer Edge (Thumb Side) Of Base Of Index Finger Nail
10. Outer Edge (Thumb Side) Of Base Of Middle Finger Nail
11. Outer Edge (Thumb Side) Of Base Of Ring Finger Nail
12. Outer Edge (Thumb Side) Of Base Of Little ("Pinky") Finger Nail
13. "Karate Chop" Point On Outer Edge Of Hand Midway Between Little Finger and Wrist



After you have tapped on the series of points while repeating the affirmation, the next step is to activate various brain centers while tapping on what I'll call the "special point" point on the back of the hand, on a line directly between the ring finger and little finger, midway between the base of the fingers and the wrist (as shown by the blue circle in the picture above).

As you tap on the “special point”, you’ll go through a series of steps as follows:

1. Open your eyes.
2. Close your eyes.
3. Open your eyes and, without moving your head, look down and left with your eyes.
4. Open your eyes and, without moving your head, look down and right with your eyes.
5. Circle (“roll”) your eyes clockwise.
6. Circle (“roll”) your eyes counter-clockwise.
7. Hum a tune for a few seconds (any familiar tune will work, such as the “Happy Birthday” song).
8. Count out loud from one to five (“one, two, three, four, five”).
9. Hum a tune again for a few seconds.

Once you have completed these procedures while tapping the “special point”, there’s one more step.

Once again, you will tap 7 or 8 times on each of the 13 points done in the initial step, this time while repeating just the phrase that describes the undesirable habit, behavior, or emotion. For example, if your affirmation in the first step of the procedure was, “Even though I have sciatica, I deeply and completely accept myself.”, this time through you will repeat just the phrase, “sciatica” while you tap the points. Here is the illustration of the points again for your convenience:



After one time through the entire procedure, most people will have significant improvement in the symptoms, habit, behavior, or emotion they wish to change. If there is no improvement, you may want to think about underlying issues that are related to the problem you wish to address. For example, if your pain started shortly after a major fight with your wife about your finances, you might switch from a symptom-focused affirmation like “Even though I have sciatica...” to “Even though I disagree with my wife about our finances...”.

If there is some, but not 100% improvement, the procedure can be repeated with a variation in the affirmation used in the initial step and the phrase used in the final step. For repeats of the procedure, there is an acknowledgement of the prior issue being somewhat improved. For example, if the first time through the procedure your affirmation was, “Even though I have sciatica, I deeply and completely accept myself.”, your affirmation for the first step each time you repeat the procedure will be, “Even though I **still have some remaining sciatica**, I deeply and completely accept myself.”. And for the final step of the procedure for the repeats, the phrase would change from “sciatica” to “remaining sciatica”. Otherwise, the procedure for repeats is the same as when you do it the first time for a given issue.

In some cases, you may need to get more specific with your affirmation to help with the problem you are experiencing. For instance, if you are having problems with left buttock pain, it may be more effective to say, “Even though I have pain in my left buttock...” than to say “Even though I have sciatica...”. The more specific you can be and the more you can deal with any possible emotional triggers for your pain, the more effective EFT will be.