

EFT Basics: A Step-by-Step Guide to the Tapping Protocol

Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT), often referred to as “tapping,” is a simple yet powerful method for reducing emotional and physical distress. By combining gentle tapping on specific points of the body with focused awareness, EFT helps calm the nervous system and shift how we experience challenging thoughts and feelings. The protocol outlined below offers a clear, step-by-step approach you can use anytime you feel overwhelmed, anxious, or stuck.

Overview

Here are the five basic steps you will be following.

1. Identify an issue that is causing you physical or emotional distress.
2. Focus on your issue and assess the intensity of your distress.
3. Craft a statement that accurately describes how you are feeling and add an affirmation of positive self-regard.
4. Tap on nine specific points while remaining focused on your issue.
5. Reassess the level of distress after a round of tapping, and repeat the tapping sequence if necessary.

EFT Points

Side of Hand (SH): In the middle of the fleshy part on the outside of the hand, between the top of the wrist bone and the base of the baby finger

Eyebrow (EB): At the beginning of the eyebrow, just above and to one side of the nose

Side of Eye (SE): On the bone bordering the outside corner of the eye

Under Eye (UE): On the bone under the eye, about an inch below the pupil

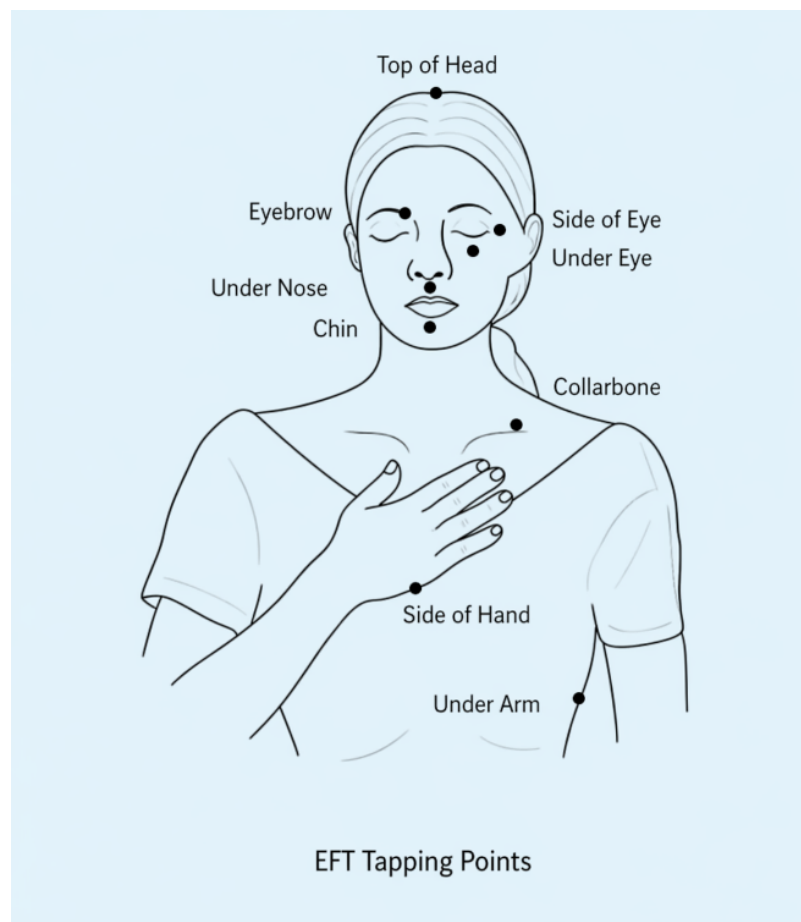
Under Nose (UN): On the small area between the bottom of the nose and the top of the upper lip

Chin (CH): Midway between the point of the chin and the lower lip

Collarbone (CB): The junction between the sternum (breastbone), collarbone, and first rib. Place your forefinger on the U-shaped notch at the top of the breastbone. Move down toward the naval about an inch and then go to the right or left one inch

Underarm (UA): On the side of the body, at a point even with the nipple (for men), or in the middle of the bra strap (for women)

Top of Head (H): On the top and center of the head. Tap in a circular motion around the crown of the head.



EFT Step-by-Step

Tune into a specific problem or issue you wish to treat.

Rate the intensity of your distress on a scale of zero to ten. This scale is known as *SUD*, or Subjective Units of Distress.

Tap the ***Side of the Hand*** (SH) 10 to 15 times while saying “*Even though I have this problem, I deeply and completely accept myself.*” Repeat this two more times, for a total of three iterations. This is called the Set-Up:

Tap each of the following points 10 to 15 times, while repeating the ***Reminder Phrase***, “this problem”: ***Eyebrow (EB)***, ***Side of Eye (SE)***, ***Under Eye (UE)***, ***Under Nose (UN)***, ***Chin (CH)***, ***Collarbone (CB)***, ***Underarm (UA)***, and ***Top of Head (H)***.

Take a deep breath. Rate the SUD level again. If your SUD level is zero to two, you may stop. If it is two or higher, repeat the revised Set-Up Phrase, “*Even though I still have some of this problem, I deeply and completely accept myself.*”

Tap all the points again, repeating the revised Reminder Phrase, “This remaining problem.”

Reassess the SUD level and repeat if necessary.

EFT to Reduce Stress

Here’s a simple EFT tapping sequence you can use when you’re feeling stressed or anxious. Keep it gentle and go at your own pace.

1. Tune In

Take a moment to notice what your stress feels like right now. Where do you feel it in your body? Tight chest, racing thoughts, tension in your shoulders?

Rate the intensity from 0–10.

2. Set-Up (Side of Hand / Karate Chop Point)

Tap the side of your hand while repeating this phrase three times:

“Even though I feel really stressed right now, I deeply and completely accept myself.”

Feel free to adjust the wording that resonates most with you. e.g., “this stress,” “this anxiety, overwhelm, worry” etc.

3. Tapping Sequence (about 5–10 taps on each point)

As you tap each point, gently repeat a reminder phrase like: “*this stress*” or “*feeling overwhelmed*.”

- Eyebrow: “This stress”
- Side of Eye: “All this tension”
- Under Eye: “Feeling overwhelmed”
- Under Nose: “So much to deal with”
- Chin: “I can feel it in my body”
- Collarbone: “This stress I’m carrying”
- Underarm: “It’s a lot right now”
- Top of Head: “All this stress”

4. Take a Breath

Pause, take a slow, deep breath.

5. Reassess

Check in again. Rate your stress from 0–10.
If it’s still above a 2 or 3, do another round.

6. Close

End with a breath and notice any shifts—physical, emotional, or mental, even if small.

You can repeat this anytime during the day. Even one or two minutes can help interrupt the stress response and bring your system back toward calm.

With practice, this straightforward process can become a reliable tool for navigating stress and restoring a sense of balance. Each round of tapping helps you

tune in more closely to your inner experience while gently releasing intensity at your own pace. Over time, many people find that EFT not only reduces immediate distress but also builds greater emotional resilience and self-compassion in everyday life.