

Tapping away desire for those favorite foods and snacks

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Psychological acupuncture has been shown to be successful in reducing food cravings for up to six months in people who are overweight or obese.

The technique combines gentle tapping on pressure points while focussing on particular emotions and thoughts.

Psychologist Dr Peta Stapleton, an academic title holder in Griffith University's School of Medicine, said the technique was painless and easy to learn.

Her research also showed the impact on food cravings was almost immediate and long lasting. Food cravings significantly reduced after just four, two-hour sessions and were maintained at a six-month follow-up.

"Participants in the trial were surprised by how quickly the technique works - that it doesn't take a lot of time to eliminate food cravings they may have had for many years," Dr Stapleton said.

She said common cravings were for sweet carbohydrates such as cakes and chocolate or salty foods such as chips and savoury biscuits.

"Food cravings play a big role in people's [food consumption](#) and ultimately their body weight. If we can beat the cravings without the need for willpower or conscious control of behaviour, then weight loss is

also possible."

While the study did not show any significant impact on body weight or [body mass index](#) (BMI) after six months, the results of a 12-month follow-up are still being analysed.

Dr Stapleton, who specialises in the management of eating disorders, said some participants had actually forgotten they had a previous problem with food cravings until they were reminded at the six-month follow-up.

She said because the technique helps over-ride [emotional eating](#) at a subconscious level, it was more likely to be effective in the long-term.

Psychological acupuncture, also known as the emotional freedom technique (EFT), has also been used to manage clinical issues such as [post traumatic stress disorder](#), phobias and addictions.

The results of the study will be presented at the International Congress of Applied Psychology in Melbourne in July.

Provided by Research Australia

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