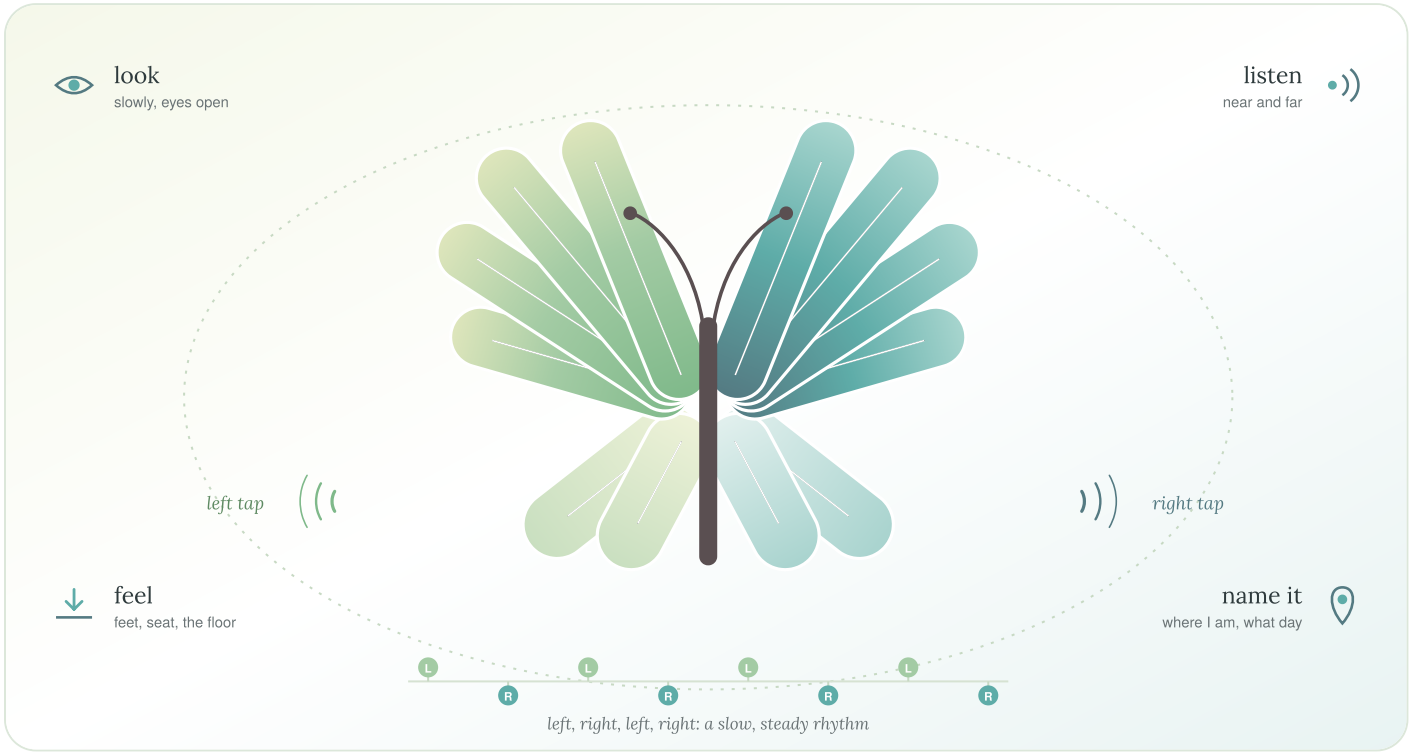
The Butterfly Hug

BILATERAL TAPPING & ORIENTING

Slow alternating taps, left and right, while attention returns to the present

The Butterfly Hug was developed by Lucina Artigas while supporting survivors of Hurricane Pauline in Mexico, and is used within EMDR therapy as a way to self-administer alternating, left–right stimulation (Artigas & Jarero, 2014). This sheet uses it more simply: as a grounding tool, pairing a slow, rhythmic tap with noticing where you are now.



Crossed hands become the wings and hooked thumbs the body. Each tap alternates sides while attention moves outward to the room.

01 How to do it

about one minute, eyes open

1 Settle

Sit or stand comfortably with your feet on the floor. Keep your eyes open.

2 Cross your arms

Cross your arms over your chest and rest your fingertips just below your collarbones, fingers pointing up. Hook your thumbs together: the butterfly's body.

3 Tap, left then right

Tap one hand, then the other, like slowly moving wings. Keep a steady, unhurried rhythm.

4 Orient while you tap

Let your eyes move around the room. Silently name what you see and hear, where you are, and what day it is.

5 Let the breath be easy

Breathe naturally. You might let the out-breath be a little slower; there is no need to breathe deeply.

6 Pause and notice

After about 30 to 60 seconds, stop. Rest your hands and notice what has changed, even slightly. Repeat if it helps.

Adapting it

tick what suits you

- ○ Tap your knees or thighs instead
- ○ Tap your upper arms
- ○ Alternate pressing your feet into the floor
- ○ Slow the rhythm right down
- ○ Tap more lightly
- ○ Keep it small and discreet in public
- ○ Hum or count quietly
- ○

KEEP IT IN THE PRESENT

In EMDR therapy, alternating stimulation is paired with recalling difficult memories, with a trained therapist guiding the pace. On your own, keep your attention on the here and now.

If memories or strong images start to surface, stop tapping, open your eyes wide, look around, and name what you see.

IT ISN'T FOR EVERYONE

Some people find touch, crossed arms or a focus on the body uncomfortable. That is common. Try tapping your knees instead, or choose a different grounding tool.

If it makes you feel worse, more distant or more agitated, stop.

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02 Words to orient with

say them silently, in time with the taps

Right now I can see _____ *I can hear* _____

I can feel _____ *I am in* _____

Today is _____ *In this moment, I am* _____

03 When I might use it

tick a few, add your own

- ○ When I feel unsettled or on edge
- ○ After a difficult conversation
- ○ Before sleep
- ○ When a memory pulls at me
- ○ Waiting for an appointment
- ○ When my mind is racing
- ○ With my therapist's guidance
- ○ _____

04 My tapping log

a few seconds after each try

WHEN	WHAT WAS HAPPENING how unsettled: 0 calm, 10 very	BEFORE 0–10	AFTER 0–10	WHAT I NOTICED	HELPFUL?
		___	___		○ yes ○ a little ○ no
		___	___		○ yes ○ a little ○ no
		___	___		○ yes ○ a little ○ no
		___	___		○ yes ○ a little ○ no
		___	___		○ yes ○ a little ○ no
		___	___		○ yes ○ a little ○ no

05 My version

what works best for me

Hand position

_____

_____

Pace and length

_____

_____

What I look at or say

_____

_____

06 What changed

after a few tries

What changed, even a little, when I tapped and looked around?
in my body, breathing, thoughts or attention

_____

_____

_____

_____

To remember, or to bring to a session
if you are working with someone

_____

_____

_____

WHAT THE RESEARCH SUGGESTS

The Butterfly Hug was designed as self-administered bilateral stimulation within EMDR protocols (Artigas & Jarero, 2014; Shapiro, 2018). Research on the added value of bilateral stimulation has mostly studied eye movements, and a meta-analysis suggested a moderate added effect when processing emotional memories (Lee & Cuijpers, 2013). Whether tapping on its own adds anything specific is less clear and still debated. Used as a grounding tool, its value may come largely from slowing down, rhythm and orienting to the present (Najavits, 2002).

SOURCES

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