

By Betsy B. Muller

I've just completed a fascinating study teaching 3 successful student athletes how to use EFT for sport and life.

Summary:

As few as 4 hours of training and in-office EFT intervention made a significant difference in standard measures of stress and anxiety experienced by three student athletes. All three students experienced decreases in their SA-45 scores (8-28% reduction), Beck Anxiety Inventory (10-71% decrease) and percentage of 3 minute HeartMath session in "low" coherence (32-92% reduction). All participants utilized EFT to assist with issues off the field and reported overall success in managing daily stress. Sports performance changes during the 4 week period were difficult to measure due to the off season and the relatively short time frame. Further monitoring of these athletes will continue at 3 month intervals to determine long-term benefits.

Introduction:

An investigation was initiated to determine if EFT could offer measurable benefits for student athletes within a very short period of time. Volunteers for the study were selected through a contest publicized via a press release to local newspapers. Three student athletes were selected based upon a written application including an essay about why they were interested in trying EFT. All participants agreed to come to my office for 4 weekly one-hour sessions using EFT. Participants were provided with handouts on the EFT procedure and a tapping point chart. EFT interventions were used during each session and the athletes were instructed to use EFT on their own between sessions.

Data Collection:

Each participant completed the SA-45, Beck Anxiety Inventory and a 3 minute assessment of Heart Rate Variability/Coherence using HeartMath's emWave PC. Measurements were taken prior to EFT intervention and at the end of the 4th in-office session.

The SA-45 is a well accepted test to measure 45 different problems or symptoms related to stress and anxiety. Each problem is rated on a scale of 1-5 *reflecting experience during the past 7 days*, including the current date. The lowest score possible is 45.

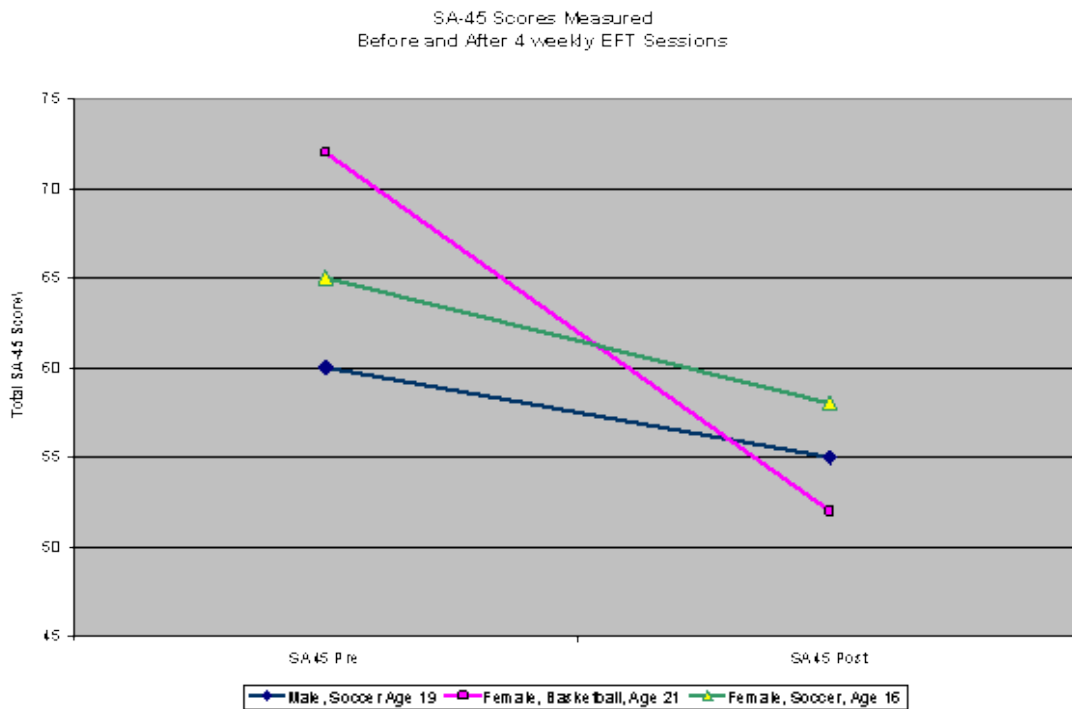
The Beck Anxiety Inventory is another well-accepted measurement tool listing 21 common symptoms of anxiety. Subjects indicate how much they have been bothered by each symptom *during the past month on a scale of 0 – 3. The lowest possible score is 0.*

HeartMath emWave PC is based on over 15 years of scientific research into the relationship between the psychophysiology of stress, emotions and the interactions of the heart and the brain. When the heart and brain are in synch, (high coherence), the body experiences health and resilience. High coherence is indicative of the ability to swiftly adapt to stress and return to a peaceful state. Low coherence conversely points to a reactive state where the subject is

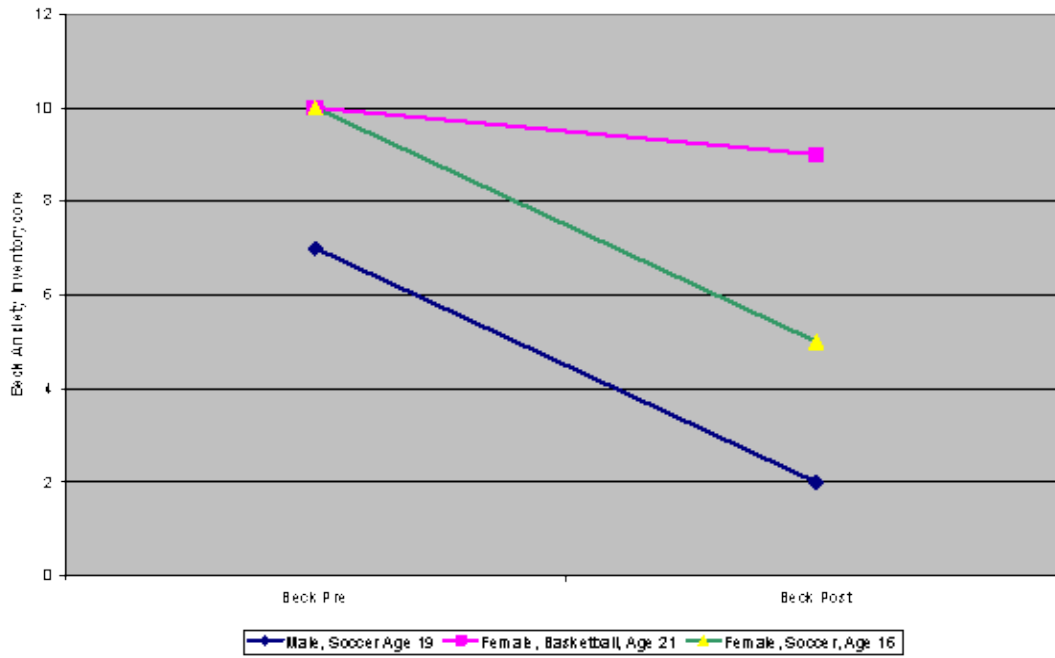
vulnerable to stress-induced wear and tear, including health problems. Each participant was measured for a 3-minute interval with the percentage of time measured as “low” coherence collected for comparison.

Feedback Questionnaires: Additionally, participants completed a questionnaire privately at home after their final session, which provided further comments on their experience with EFT and the benefits they felt were significant. Ongoing follow-up will continue at regular 3 month intervals to determine lasting effects of intervention for their lives as students and athletes.

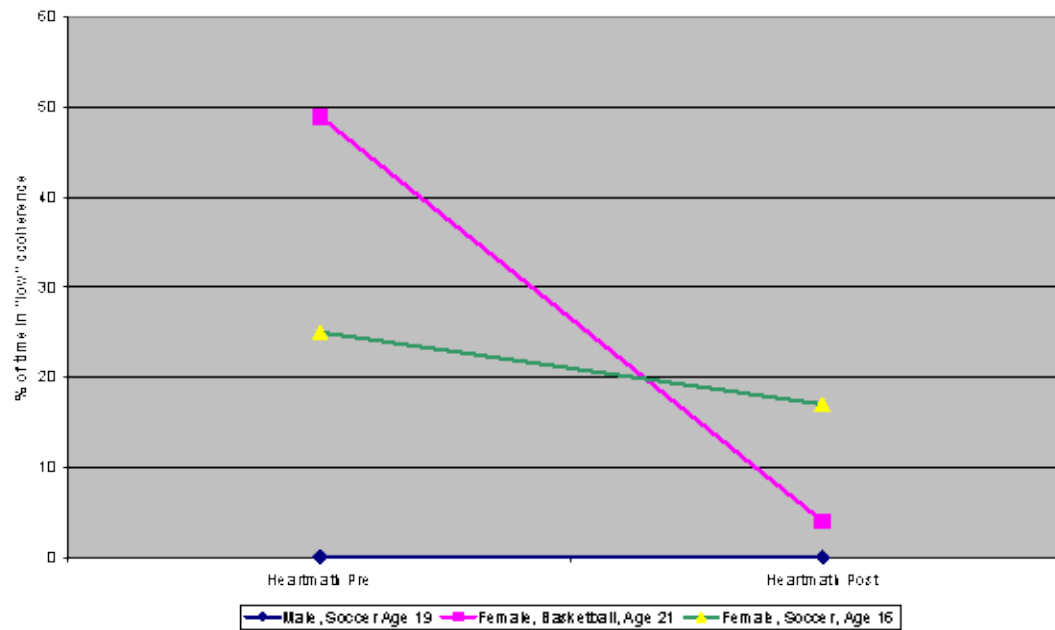
Data and Results:



Beck Anxiety Inventory Scores - Pre and Post 4 weekly EFT Sessions



HeartMath EMWave PC Coherence Measure Before and After 4 Weekly EFT Sessions



Student Profiles:

Student A

Male soccer player, Age 19, High School Senior enrolled to play Division 2 College Soccer in Fall 08.

Comments at Intake:

Doing well generally. Disappointment - High School team just lost the big championship game. He’s currently training to prepare for collegiate level. Concerned about workout soreness and moving up to a higher level of competitive play.

A’s Stated Goals for 4 Sessions:

- Learn to have more focus and stronger will-power
- Expect more of myself - confidence
- Be able to step and think before acting – problem solving

						3 min Heartmath		
SA-45			Beck Anxiety Inventory			% time in “Low” Coherence		
Pre	Post	% chg	Pre	Post	% chg	Pre	Post	% chg
60	55	-8%	7	2	-71%	0%	0%	NA

Practitioner Notes: During office sessions were able to reduce the distressful memory of losing the championship game from a 5 to a zero. EFT was also applied successfully for dealing with worries about college level competition, workout pain relief, finishing a final exam paper without procrastination and a dance performance competition (which won 1st place). Because the regular season was completed, ongoing follow-up will be needed to determine long-term sports benefits.

Student Comments after 4 Sessions:

“I have learned ways to help block out physical pain and also get rid of painful memories. I plan on repeating the techniques I have learned to enhance their effects”

Student B

Female basketball player, Age 21, finishing junior year of college

Comments at Intake:

Having difficulty on and off the court with decisions. Lacking confidence and doubts self. Breakup with boyfriend 3 weeks before first EFT session was devastating.

Client’s Stated Goals for 4 Sessions:

- To have better confidence in myself and my decisions

- Working through adversity
- Be in better touch with myself

						3 min Heartmath		
SA-45			Beck Anxiety Inventory			% time in Low Coherence		
Pre	Post	% chg	Pre	Post	% chg	Pre	Post	% chg
72	52	-28%	10	9	-10%	49	4	-92%

Practitioner Note: In-office sessions focused on past situations where she was hesitant or indecisive on the court. We used EFT with affirmations for summer workout goals and greater intensity. EFT was also applied to painful stress and memories associated with the recent breakup with the boyfriend.

At the end of the 4th session that Student B I discovered that she had been “cutting” both of her arms during the week prior to our work together. She had said nothing about this to me up until this point, and had worn long sleeves until her final session. When I asked about the obvious scars, she admitted it. The cuts appeared to be healing well and she is no longer cutting. She is convinced EFT helped this problem too even though we never worked on it specifically.

Student Comments after 4 Sessions:

“It has helped me a lot. I had my first summer league game ... and I found myself not questioning moves to the basket as much, and not being so hesitant. I think it has helped me with my peace of mind. It has helped me have a more positive attitude about workout-related things. Not only can this help with sports, but also with everything else in life. A lot of an athlete’s life affects their sport, so this will help.”

Student C

Female soccer player, Age 16, finishing sophomore year in High School

						3 min Heartmath		
SA-45			Beck Anxiety Inventory			% time in Low Coherence		
Pre	Post	% chg	Pre	Post	% chg	Pre	Post	% chg
65	58	-11%	10	5	-50%	25	17	-32%

Student C

Comments at Intake:

Recent death of best friend’s mother is a major source of stress. Having trouble concentrating. Says focus has been a problem.

Client’s Stated Goals for 4 Sessions:

- To be able to apply focusing techniques to school as well as soccer
- Give me confidence
- To be able to see myself as the top elite soccer player that I am

Practitioner Comments:

During the first weekly session it became very clear she was deeply distressed and distracted by the recent death of her best friend's mom. She disclosed a traumatic visual memory associated with watching the body being carried from the house and the youngest daughter screaming in grief. We quickly tapped the distress down to a zero and she asked if EFT might help her mother too, as this woman was her mother's good friend. Subsequent sessions included one of her coaches who was fascinated by the possibilities for EFT with the team. We worked on physical conditioning intensity, believing that she is "the best" at her position, soothing headaches and avoiding procrastination with study for her Spanish final. She responded very well and reported all areas of her life were improved through use of EFT. Summer leagues were just beginning at the time we ended the 4th session. Further monitoring will continue at regular intervals to determine long term results.

Student Comments after 4 Sessions:

"My work rate at practice after using EFT has gone way up. The thought of stopping for a break or wanting to quit doesn't even cross my mind when I use EFT. Today I had one of the hardest endurance practices I've had in a while and I was really feeling it, but then I tapped and it pushed me on the next run. This has been very beneficial to me."

"I would very much recommend EFT to student athletes ... I would tell them it is the best way to mentally prepare and push yourself. It helps you focus and be in "the zone"."