

Butterfly Hug Script

Written for EMDR therapists and trauma-informed coaches who want the wording as well as the technique. Five minutes of self-administered bilateral tapping as Lucina Artigas taught it, at roughly one tap a second, stopped while it is still comfortable rather than run to a target number — which is the instruction most versions leave out.

5 min · 5 segments

01. Setting up the hands

1 min

[Demonstrate with your own hands while you read — most people copy the crossed position more easily than they picture it. If crossing the arms over the chest feels exposing for this client, offer tapping on the thighs or the tops of the knees instead and adjust the wording as you go.]

Sit however you are comfortable. You can keep your eyes open or let them close, whichever is easier right now. There is nothing here to get right. *[pause for 5 seconds]*

Cross your arms over your chest, so your right hand rests near your left shoulder and your left hand rests near your right shoulder. Your fingers can point up towards your collarbones. Some people call this shape a butterfly, with your hands as the wings. *[pause for 10 seconds]*

Let your shoulders drop. Your hands do not need to press. They are just resting where they have landed. *[pause for 10 seconds]*

02. Finding the pace

1 min

[Set the tempo with your voice — say 'and, and, and' once or twice at about one tap a second, then let them take it over. Tapping too fast is the common error; if their hands speed up, slow your own speech rather than correcting them directly.]

Now tap one hand, then the other. Left, then right. Slowly, about one tap each second, more like a slow heartbeat than a drum roll. *[pause for 15 seconds]*

Keep it gentle. This is a light tap, not a pat and not a squeeze. If it makes any sound at all, it should be a quiet one. *[pause for 15 seconds]*

Let your breathing do whatever it wants to do while you tap. You do not need to slow it down or count it. *[pause for 15 seconds]*

03. Tapping and letting things pass

1 min 30

[This is the longest stretch of silence in the script. Stay visibly present with your own eyes soft and available, so that if they open theirs you are there. Watch the face and hands rather than the clock: quickening breath, gripping fingers, or tapping getting faster are your cues to move on early.]

Keep going at that slow pace, and let your attention rest on the tapping itself. The feel of one hand meeting your chest, then the other. *[pause for 30 seconds]*

Things may drift through while you tap. Pictures, words, a sensation somewhere. You do not need to follow any of it and you do not need to push it away. Let it go past, like scenery from a train, and keep tapping. *[pause for 30 seconds]*

If at any point you would rather stop, stop. Slowing your hands or letting them rest is always allowed. *[pause for 25 seconds]*

04. Checking in

45 sec

[Ask, then wait. If the client reports more activation rather than less — agitation rising, an image getting stronger, distress climbing — stop the tapping, leave the exercise, and orient instead: feet on the floor, eyes open, name a few objects in the room, your voice steady and ordinary. Do not push through with more bilateral stimulation, and note what happened for the session review.]

Let your hands come to a stop, and rest them wherever they land. *[pause for 5 seconds]*

Notice what is here now. Not what you think should be here, just what is. Anything in your body that is different from when we started, and anything that is the same. *[pause for 20 seconds]*

If you want to say it out loud, you can. If you would rather keep it to yourself, that is fine too. *[pause for 15 seconds]*

05. Stopping while it is still comfortable

45 sec

[Say the line about stopping early as though it matters, because it is the instruction that makes this safe to use between sessions. Resist adding a second round because the first one went well — leaving on a comfortable note is what makes a client willing to use it alone.]

We are going to leave it there, while it is still comfortable. That is deliberate. This is meant to be short, something you come back to, rather than something you push through. *[pause for 10 seconds]*

If you use it on your own, the same rules hold. Slow taps. Gentle hands. And you stop while it still feels alright, rather than waiting for a reason to stop. *[pause for 15 seconds]*

Let your eyes come fully open if they have been closed. Look around, and take your time coming back to the room. Your hands know how to do this now.

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