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Which Stress-Busting Gadgets Really Work

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By Laura Leu
 From [Health magazine](#)

Plenty of products claim to melt away stress, but are they just gimmicks? Our anxiety-riddled writer put five gadgets to the test, enlisting the help of Jacob Teitelbaum, MD, medical director of the Fibromyalgia and Fatigue Centers, a group of clinics that treat stress-related conditions, and author of *From Fatigued to*

Fantastic! Read on for the surprising results.



High-tech stress buster

StressEraser (\$179)

Monitors heart and breathing rates through biofeedback to help you control both and relieve anxiety.

Is the premise legit?

"Biofeedback is a proven way to relax—as are meditations where you focus on your breathing," Dr. Teitelbaum says.

Our tester says: "A sensor shows your heart and breathing rates with electronic waves, and the device tells you when to exhale deeply. After a week, I was much more likely to breathe my way out of anxiety flare-ups."

Bottom line: Worth it if you really have trouble calming yourself down.



Head tingler

Happy Company Head Trip (\$10)

Has copper prongs that act like tiny fingertips to give your noggin a (low-tech) rubdown.

Is the premise legit?

"People often carry a lot of their stress in the head and neck muscles. Scalp massages can help relax those muscles," Dr. Teitelbaum explains.

Our tester says: "While this is cheap and easy to use, it didn't provide anything close to the relaxation that a real massage would. And it definitely caused more hair snarls. They should include a free brush with the

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purchase!"
Bottom line: Skip it.

Back soother

Lumbar Extender (\$89.95)

Stretches your back to improve posture and flexibility; also offers back-pain relief.

Is the premise legit?

"Stretching is important. But be cautious with lumbar extenders when you have back pain, because they can cause the muscles to tighten up even more," Dr. Teitelbaum warns. "Pain is usually your body's way of saying, 'Don't do that.' So do gentle stretching that feels good, but stop if it's painful."

Our tester says: "Sure, it stretched out my back, but so does yoga."

Bottom line: Skip it.

Next: Uplifting alarm clock



Uplifting alarm clock

Philips Wake-up Light (\$169.99)

Wakes you by simulating a sunrise and playing nature sounds—thankfully, no crowing roosters.

Is the premise legit?

"Waking up gently from a light sleep is especially helpful for people who have Seasonal Affective Disorder," Dr. Teitelbaum says, "because the gradual light increases serotonin, the 'happiness molecule' in your brain."

Our tester says: "Even after only four hours of sleep, this woke me easy breezy. No more morning grogginess."

Bottom line: Worth it. It's pricey, but you will wake up happier.



Shiatsu massager

HoMedics Therapist Select Shiatsu Pillow (\$39.99)

Delivers a hard, heated Shiatsu massage to your neck, shoulders and back.

Is the premise legit?

"Warm heat and massage to the neck muscles can help the whole body relax," Dr. Teitelbaum notes.

Our tester says: "The pillow easily cranked out a pesky knot. I just wish you could turn down the pressure when needed. Still, for 40 bucks, it's a great deal if you just need some after-work spot-massages."

Bottom line: If you don't mind intense massages, you'll love this.

Next slideshow: [Spa Secrets: Sleep Great Naturally](#)

