



Quell

\$249, quellrelief.com

It's a wearable band that uses an intensive form of transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS) to relieve chronic pain. The pulses prompt your body to release natural opioids. Therapy sessions last up to an hour.

THE TESTER A late-50s weekend and weekday warrior, with all the aches and pains you'd expect from that age and activity level.

THE VERDICT "Let's just admit straight off that if you have a sore neck, it's plain weird to strap a band around your calf and call it a cure. But that's where a concentration of nerves sits, apparently making it an ideal location for Quell to shoot electrical pulses into your nervous system."

"Once I began electrocuting my calf, I noticed a few things: I felt a little loopy, for one. But that's expected—Quell's pulses are twice as powerful as those from other TENS products. As my tolerance grew, I began to raise the intensity level through the Quell app, until eventually my pain diminished from 6 out of 10 to 4.5. Sensation of pain is subjective, so it could all be in my head instead of opioids in my spinal column. But if this thing is quackery, I don't want to know. I'm enjoying the pain-reducing delusion."

LUMO LIFT

\$80, lumobodytech.com

Lumo Lift is a posture tracker that clips to your shirt near your collarbone. During coaching sessions the device gently vibrates if it senses slouching.

THE TESTER A commuter with an hour-plus drive who tends to slouch behind the wheel and at work.

THE VERDICT "I couldn't get anything past the posture police: Even slouching on the toilet set the device into a frenzy. But after noticing how frequent the zaps were while I was seated, I made an effort to keep my shoulders back or use my standing desk. When the app said my posture was 'Great!' all week—sans coaching—I sat taller, and prouder too."



Viberec

\$300, reflexionic.com

Not your typical vibrator: It sends vibrations through the head of your penis to stimulate the nerve receptors along the prostate. This causes a boost in nitric oxide, which helps dilate pole-raising blood vessels.

THE TESTER A prostate cancer survivor who has struggled to rise to the occasion ever since he had his gland removed nine years ago.

THE VERDICT "For years I've been asking my urologist, Dr. Judd Moul, if any new ED treatment options were available besides popping the blue pill and using a painful vacuum pump. Then one day he recommended what sounded like vibrating salad tongs. 'It's not uncomfortable, it's easy to use, and it's actually fun,' Dr. Moul promised. The first time I tried Viberec, the vibrations were so subtle that I didn't think it would work. But my doubts lasted about three minutes—the time it took me to get hard. And a year later, still no complaints." (Turn to page 82 to find out how to protect your own erections.)



Muse headband

\$299, choosemuse.com

The Muse headband uses EEG neurofeedback to track your brain's electrical activity. When worn and used with its app, Muse trains your brain to manage stress through three- to 20-minute meditation drills.

THE TESTER A new parent who can't manage to relax at the end of the day.

THE VERDICT "Once the baby was asleep, I donned the headband and turned on the app. As I listened to waves gently crashing, it told me to focus on my breathing. Soon I started to think that I could've been using this time to catch up on some work. The seven EEG sensors on the headband quickly picked up on the change in brain activity, and my soundtrack changed from serene surf to thunderheads on the horizon. But once I refocused on my breathing, the waves immediately came lapping back. Muse made me realize how quickly I let stressful thoughts take over my mind—and just how easy shutting them out can be."



FIT FOR BATTLE

Time to get something off your chest—that old heart rate monitor. The Surge, Fitbit's first watch, has a built-in HR sensor, so a glance at your wrist can tell you how hard you're working. Plus, the watch plays music, receives texts, and has GPS and caller ID. \$250, fitbit.com/surge



MARC PRO

\$650, marcpro.com

Marc Pro is a stimulation device designed to speed recovery by emitting a mild electrical current that causes muscle contractions. "This pumping action brings bloodflow—nutrients, protein, and oxygen—into the muscles and clears away waste from exercise," says orthopedic surgeon Nicholas DiNubile, M.D., author of the *FrameWork* book series.

THE TESTER An endurance athlete who wants to recover faster while training for a half marathon.

THE VERDICT "Dr. DiNubile says the Marc Pro works best when your muscles are relaxed, so after my workouts I sat and shocked myself as I watched TV. Within a month, I began to feel fresher and faster during runs. Now I have an excuse to cool down on the couch."



Spire

\$150, spire.io

The pebble-shaped sensor clips to your waistband, where it tracks every breath that enters and exits your lungs. The app analyzes the movement of your diaphragm to determine if you are tense, focused, or calm.

THE TESTER A 20-something with ADHD who turns to digital distractions when anxiety hits at work.

THE VERDICT "The idea of using more technology to tone down my anxiety seemed like a dumb move. And did I really need an app to tell me how to breathe properly? Apparently, yes. The app alerts always came at times when I was most in need of a timeout. One notification ('You seem tense. Take a deep breath.') was enough to snap me out of a 3 p.m. slump and power through the afternoon. Eventually I didn't need Spire's nudging: I began to opt for outdoor strolls to tame my tension instead of falling into the Facebook rabbit hole. Judging from my completed to-do lists, it pays off to take a breather."



Night Shift

\$349, patient.b-alert.com

When this prescription-only device senses that you're sleeping on your back, it starts to vibrate—and slowly ramps up the intensity until you move. Lying faceup causes the tissue that hangs in the back of your throat (a.k.a. the soft palate) to block your windpipe, which leads to snoring.

THE TESTERS A 30-year-old who habitually snores (and his increasingly annoyed light sleeper of a wife).

THE VERDICT "My doc says I don't have sleep apnea, and I've tried everything to stop snoring—including the ol' *MH* tennis-ball-behind-your-back-tip. So I was wary of the Night Shift, especially since it resembled a dog collar. But it didn't take long to start training me. I'd roll onto my back, triggering the sensor to vibrate, which would make me turn onto my side to shut it up. By the fourth night I'd become an unassisted side sleeper and, to my wife's delight, a former snorer. I did feel silly wearing it, though. 'It makes you look like you're into weird sex stuff,' she said. Sadly, that was not an invitation."



THEY GOT IT RIGHT

HOW THE SWEDES SAVE LIVES

If only blood were like beer: Guys might buy an IPA for a stranger, but few are as generous with a pint of A positive. The American Red Cross estimates that just 3 percent of men who are eligible to donate actually do. Maybe we should follow Sweden's lead: A blood bank there now sends donors a thank-you text that notifies them once the blood enters someone's vein. There's already been an increase in returning donors, and more blood banks are expected to follow suit. Scott Halpern, M.D., Ph.D., a bioethicist at the University of Pennsylvania, says knowing that your blood is helping someone gives you tangible evidence that the donation was worthwhile. Need an incentive? Sign a financial contract on stick.com; if you don't donate the red stuff, you'll have to give some green instead. —MELISSA ROMERO