

## Published in *Yorkshire Post*, September 14, 1999:

Is it a personal stereo? No Fear... this is science's answer to high anxiety

It is compact, stylish and could be mistaken for a personal stereo, but this little box of tricks plays no music – instead it conquers fear.

The Alpha-Stim sends a stream of electricity through the brain that re-tunes neurons wound up by stress and anxiety.

In minutes it can take the terror out of nightmarish job interviews, nail-biting exams or stomach-churning visits to the dentist.

It will also assist someone with a flying phobia to sit back and enjoy the flight, and alleviate depression and insomnia.

Officially launched in Britain today, the £197 device is already licensed as a medical treatment by the US Food and Drug Administration.

In clinical trials it has produced at least a 25 per cent improvement in up to 80 to 90 per cent of patients suffering from anxiety.

The Alpha-Stim is described as a “cranial electrotherapy stimulator”.

Housed in a slim blue and white plastic container small enough to fit in the hand, it has two electrodes that clip on to the earlobes.

There are two settings which will leave it switched on for 20 minutes or an hour. The effects last for between three and eight hours, but are cumulative, so over time it can be used less frequently. Nick O'Hare, managing director of the London-based medical equipment company Osbon Medical, which distributes the Alpha-Stim in Britain, thought the device could become a fashionable lifestyle accessory for stress-charged urban living.

“At first glance it looks just like a personal stereo,” he said. “You can slip it in your handbag or clip it on to a belt. It's not necessarily meant for people with extreme problems, although it will help them too. It's for anybody or everybody who wants to feel less of a stress victim.

“You can put it on at breakfast every day before going to work, or whenever you need it. The effect is hard to describe – you feel sort of light headed and ‘cleaner’.

“It gives you clarity and makes your thoughts more organised.”

Mr. O'Hare said he used the Alpha-Stim to overcome claustrophobic panic attacks while traveling on the London Tube. His wife uses it to overcome fear of flying.

The device has been developed from a prototype designed 17 years ago by American neurobiologist Dr. Daniel Kirsch that was the size of a suitcase.

# Fighting anxiety with electricity

## How it works

The Alpha-Stim treats anxiety by sending tiny electrical currents, similar to those found naturally in the body, through the brain.

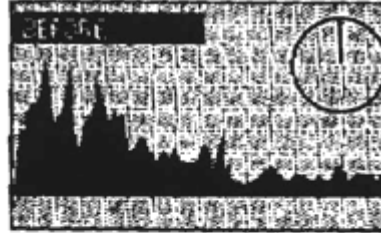
Alpha-Stim can be used for twenty minutes to an hour



Current is applied through clip electrodes attached to the earlobes

Users may feel a slight tingling sensation under the electrodes.

Brainwaves before treatment with Alpha-Stim



After a ten minute treatment brainwaves are much smoother



Source: Electromedical Products International Inc