

NEWS

Devices Purportedly Zap Anxiety, Depression

March 31, 2011 5:17 PM

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This Alpha-Stim device purportedly can help fend off depression and anxiety. (CBS)

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CHICAGO (CBS) — Are you depressed or anxious and just can't sleep? Believe it or not, electricity may be the remedy.

CBS 2's Mary Kay Kleist reports on an at-home treatment that [makes a difference](#) for some people.

Several times a week, Karen Parziale uses an "electro-therapy" device at home. She says it relieved her depression.

"I was very depressed. I had a personal relationship end after 8 years, and I just really wasn't myself," she says. "I sort of describe it as this: My world was black and white and now I sort of see color."

Michael Pietrzak uses the same device and says it has helped him with insomnia, irritability and anxiety.

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"I don't tighten up as much in the shoulders anymore," he says. "My face isn't gnarling up and I don't have those running and racing thoughts."

Clinical psychologist Sam Effarah says about 30 percent of his patients use these devices. He says if you have low- to mid-range anxiety, you would notice a change – feelings of relaxation — within minutes. After a few weeks, your brain waves are "fairly regulated."

"I have a lot of people who come in with racing thoughts," Effarah says. "I can't fall asleep, I can't stop thinking."

Here's how they work. Low voltage current is transmitted to the brain through clips that are attached to the ears or through dampened sponges applied to the temples.

The devices deliver about one-thousandth the power of hospital machines used for traditional electro-convulsive therapy. Some doctors are not convinced they're effective.

"There are some reports of people who experience relief from it, but there is no scientifically demonstrated, compelling scientific evidence that it is an effective treatment," psychiatrist Herbert Fox says.

Manufacturers say doctors are prescribing these devices for patients who have failed with traditional drug treatment or who are looking for alternatives. Pietrzak says he feels like a different person.

Alpha-Stim, the manufacturer of one of the devices on the market, says there have been 55 studies done on this therapy indicating nine of 10 people get some relief.

Some people have experienced a mild headache after using the device. A device costs \$600 to \$1,000 and is covered by some insurance.

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4 COMMENTS

Terry Urba

Either this device or one similar to this has been around for at least five or six years for use by people with depression, anxiety and pain associated with fibromyalgia and it has helped. The muscles (upper back near occipital area) are relaxed by the electrical pulses which results in less pain which then decreases the anxiety and depression.

April 1, 2011 at 3:32 am | Reply | Report comment

Jim Kearney

When you are in a state of anxiety, your muscles naturally contract. When you are relaxed, and the parasympathetic nervous system is engaged, the muscles relax. This same effect happens with meditation, or massage etc.

You are putting the cart before the horse, and thinking too mechanically.

Mind relaxed = muscles relaxed. Very simple. And our brains ARE electrical.

April 1, 2011 at 6:59 pm | Reply | Report comment

MOST POPULAR NEWS

★ Sheen's Show Fares A Little Better In Chicago

After Charlie Sheen's disastrous debut in Detroit this weekend, he seemed to please at least some fans here as he brought his loosely formatted show to the Chicago Theatre on Sunday.

★ Storms Could Rumble Through Later Sunday Night

Heavy rain, thunderstorms, large hail and even a tornado could rumble across northeast and northern Illinois Sunday night, according to the National Weather Service.

★ Man Parachuting Off High-Rise In Loop Arrested

A far southwest Ottawa man was arrested after parachuting off a skyscraper under construction early Sunday in the Loop.

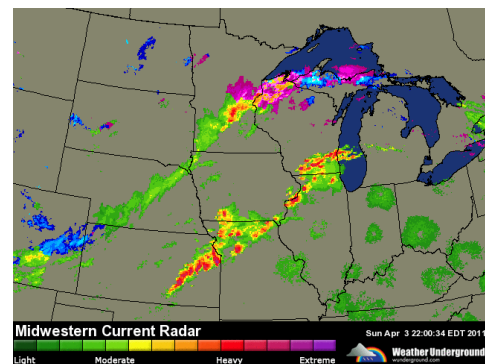
★ 4 Charged In Tax Return Scam

Four current or former employees of Quick Sam Tax Service in Gary, Ind. were indicted for preparing fraudulent tax returns over the past year.

★ Chicago Residents Report Possible UFO Sighting

Some residents on Chicago's Southwest Side reported seeing what appeared to be UFOs flying over the city Saturday night. Now, the "Unidentified Flying Objects" may have been identified.

WEATHER & RADAR



CONTESTS & PROMOTIONS

▶ Aurelio's Takin' It To The Edge Contest

Looking for a good pizza? Listen to Chris Rongey's Post Game Show every Sunday during the Southsiders' season for your chance to win a \$50 gift certificate to Aurelio's Pizza.

▶ The Beggars Pizza Giveaway!

Terry Urba

Doctors who are skeptical of this device are probably not involved much with pain management. Anxiety and depression do cause physical pain. Brain imageing has been used to show this. Some patients get results faster than others with the device. For some the changes are slower and subtle but changes do occur in the brain which bring relief. There isn't any pain connected with the actual use of the device. If a headache results it's a minor trade-off compared to the pain from anxiety or depression. Very good results can come from bio-feedback after this device is used.

April 1, 2011 at 4:13 am | [Reply](#) | [Report comment](#)

Richard Landis

I have used the Alpha-Stim SCS to deal with stress and insomnia due to high time-pressure job. When I used to put my head down on the pillow at night, that was the signal for "the committee" to wake up. All the thoughts of the day and planing for the next day kept me up. I was not able to meditate despite multiple attempts to be trained to quiet my mind. After 3 weeks with the SCS, my mind became silent 24 hours a day. I now fall asleep easily and stay asleep just using it 20 minutes, 3 times a week.

April 2, 2011 at 1:00 am | [Reply](#) | [Report comment](#)

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Don't Miss the Southsiders' Post Game Show with Chris Rongey all season long! After each game, one lucky caller will be selected to win a \$50 gift certificate to Beggar's Pizza!

▶ [Menards \\$1,000 Home Run Contest](#)

Have you been putting off your home improvement needs? Take action now by heading to your local Menards, where you can pick up all of your supplies and enter the Menards \$1,000 Home Run Contest!

▶ [Pepsi Max Chicago Wolves Giveaway](#)

Score eight Suite Tickets to the Chicago Wolves Game on April 9th and a Chicago Wolves Jersey from Pepsi Max! Zero Calories. Maximum Pepsi Taste.

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VIDEO NEWS

HOTTEST SPORTS STORIES

★ [Shaq Hurt 5 Minutes After Return](#)

Shaquille O'Neal lasted a little more than five minutes in his return for the Boston Celtics on Sunday before limping off the floor with a strained right calf.

★ [Ozzie: Triple Play Hung Everybody Out To Dry](#)

White Sox manager Ozzie Guillen didn't know what to do except check the TV replay and hope Cleveland had not turned a triple play.

★ [Marmol Blows Lead, Cubs Fall To Pirates](#)

The Chicago Cubs were left playing catch-up as the Pirates too the early lead. By the sixth inning, the Cubs had taken 4-3 lead. Carlos Marmol gave up two runs in the ninth, giving the Pirates the win.

★ [D'Backs-Rockies Snowed Out Day After 84-Degree Day](#)

The Colorado Rockies and Arizona Diamondbacks were postponed by a mix of rain and snow

Sunday after playing in an unseasonably warm 84 degrees the day before.

★ [White Sox Struggle As The Tribe Blocks A Sweep](#)


Scoring runs was no trouble for the White Sox as they opened their 2011 season against the Cleveland Indians. Sunday, as the Southsiders were going for a sweep, sending players across home plate was scarce. Chicago's only run was scored when Paul Konerko singled in the third to send Omar Vizquel across the plate.

TV SCHEDULE

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6:00 PM	CBS 2 News at 6:00PM
6:30 PM	Entertainment Tonight
7:00 PM	The Big Bang Theory
7:29 PM	Rules of Engagement
8:00 PM	2011 NCAA Basketball Tournament
10:30 PM	CBS 2 News at 10:00PM

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[Panic Disorder Treatment](#)

Successful Mental Health Treatment for Women Only, Self Pay Facility
BrookHavenRetreat.com/Mental-Health



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Storms Rumble Overnight



UFO Sightings Reported



Beer And Water For Lent



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