



WELLBEING

## stress, success

peak personal performance  
an app-happy belt clip that  
affects your body and mind

MARK stranger hands me a small stone. "Touch  
s. "Press on it. It's a little soft." I do what I'm  
t membrane is super-sensitive," he tells me. It  
ind of spongy. "There are four sensors in there.  
now you."

ry intimate. But that's the point. This is Spire, an  
g little gizmo that aims to connect you to, well,  
ipped to your belt, it measures your abdominal  
e, working with an app to help you become calm,  
sed. The app displays a waveform that reflects  
hing and hence your state of mind – erratic and  
u're tense, slow and smooth when you're not.  
ns can be set to make Spire buzz if you haven't  
ep breath for, say, 20 minutes or even to let you  
you've been wonderfully calm for the last half  
ife is just great. You can then act accordingly by  
t breath or going to the app and picking a short  
exercise or guided meditation.

you feel stressed your breathing changes,"  
mentor, Dr Neema Moraveji, explains to GQ. "But  
ou can control it, it's a way into the brain, body  
us system." Being able to regulate our breath-  
us, he says, to be more productive.  
rted in Asia. In 2000, after studying computer  
s an undergrad at the University Of Maryland,

Moraveji took a year off to travel, ending up on a medi-  
tation course in India, which taught him to focus on his  
breathing. He found it a revelation and decided to study  
further, doing a PhD in augmented self-regulation at  
Stanford University, exploring how technology could  
improve our state of mind, and there he set up a lab called  
Calming Technology, which was where Spire was born.

There's much talk of mindfulness in the Spire camp.  
Moraveji mentions it a few times during our meeting. On  
the packaging, Spire promotes itself as a "mindfulness  
and activity tracker". It's omnipresent on Spire's Twitter  
account ("Start Monday with a mindfulness cup of coffee/  
tea. Focus on the taste and the warmth of the drink. Stay  
present and enjoy!"). Mindfulness has become something  
of a catch-all buzzword, and with many businesses profit-  
ing from it, there's a definite whiff of snake oil in the air.

### Three more wellness wearables



#### Being

A wristband that tracks  
your movement, maps  
your mood, teaches you  
to manage stress and  
monitors sleep, helping  
you to be more efficient.  
[zensorium.com/being](http://zensorium.com/being)



#### Meaning To Pause

This bracelet is more  
low-tech than your  
average wearable – it  
vibrates every 60 or 90  
minutes, prompting you  
to focus your thoughts.  
[meaningtopause.com](http://meaningtopause.com)



#### WellBe

This one monitors your  
heart rate, telling you  
what's triggering your  
stress, and gives you  
personalised meditation  
tips. [indiegogo.com/  
projects/the-wellbe](http://indiegogo.com/projects/the-wellbe)

Cynicism is brewing over what  
is legitimate and what is simply  
marketing. How does Moraveji  
feel about that?

"I'm glad you asked," he  
says. "On the box it says  
mindfulness – that's how  
some people are talking about  
it, so we used it. I agree that  
it's become this kitchen sink  
thing in that anything about  
how you feel is 'mindfulness'.  
A lot of businesses can make  
it seem complex. I called my  
lab Calming Technology not  
Mindful Technology. But the  
word mindfulness is useful."

Spire has certainly had good  
feedback. The app shows you  
how calm, tense or focused  
you've been over days or weeks  
and, working in conjunction  
with your phone's calendar,  
enables you to figure out what  
you were doing or even who  
you were with that changed  
your state of mind. Users have  
written in to say how they've  
rearranged their schedules  
accordingly, helping them to  
become more productive.

Moraveji has heard "very  
emotional stories" from people  
who have used Spire to control  
their feelings, and as a result  
have stopped taking medica-  
tion for panic attacks. He's  
heard from sufferers of PTSD  
who have used Spire and,  
due to altering their breath-  
ing habits, are now unafraid  
of social situations. "It's part  
of our birthright," he says,  
"to have agency over these  
things." Alex Godfrey **£119.95**.  
At Apple Store. [apple.com](http://apple.com). For  
more information, visit [spire.io](http://spire.io)



For an intensive guide  
to all things rugby,  
check out the website of  
Wasps and England star  
player James Haskell.  
[jameshaskell.com](http://jameshaskell.com)

Photographs: Jody Todd; Ben Riggott; Grooming: Chloe Botting  
using Klavi's Model: Alex Nicholl at W Model Management