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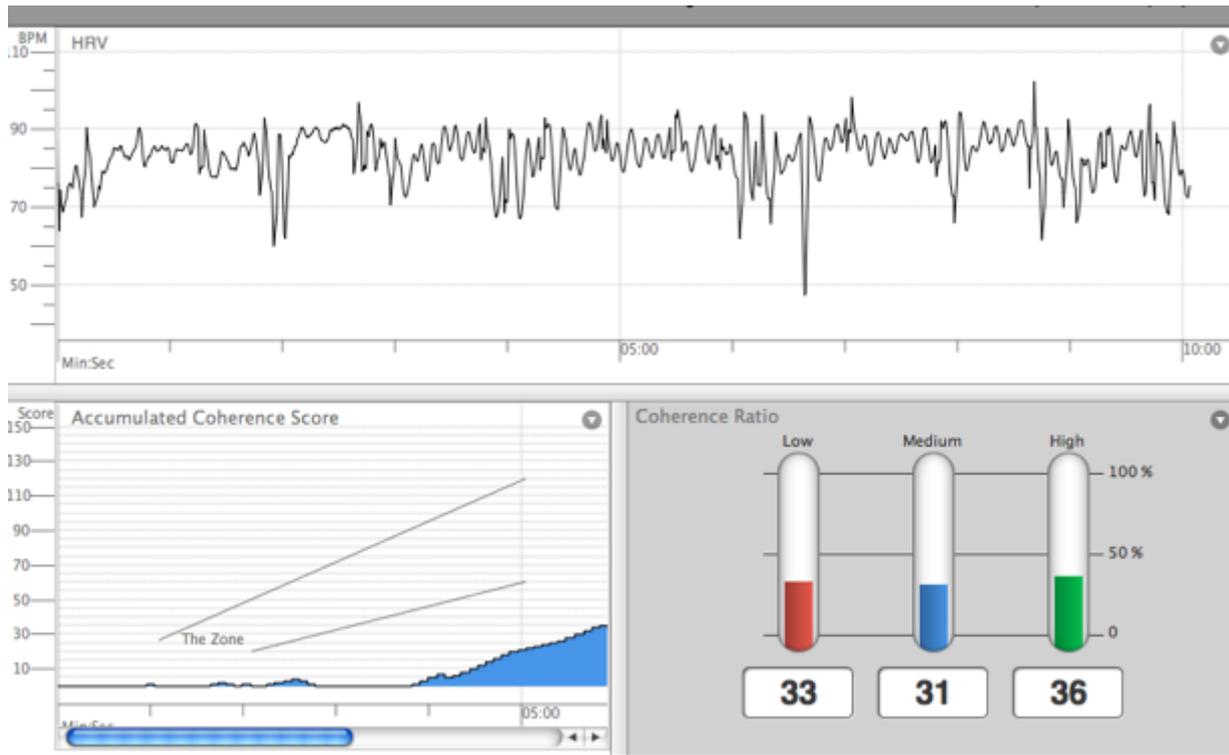
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Help Manage Stress and Anxiety With emWave2

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The emWave2 software. Image: HeartMath

The more I talk to women, especially geeky women, the more I realize that anxiety and panic attacks, in various forms, are a very common experience, and I'm no exception. Some people have social anxiety. Some have anxiety related to their health. Some have a more generalized anxiety. Some get a panic attack out of nowhere, whereas some are triggered by certain events. There are many ways to combat these often debilitating conditions, including using meditation, medication, diet, exercise, therapy, and a variety of other methods.

Through anxiety we are unintentionally using our minds for bad, causing ourselves mental and often physical anguish. But we can also use our minds for good. One way to do that is to use some type of feedback as a form of help. Many years ago I learned about a device called the emWave handheld. It appealed to me, but I wasn't sure about spending the money without having any first-hand experience with it. Fast forward to 2012 and I got the opportunity to try a unit for review.

The [emWave2](#) is a portable heart rhythm feedback device to help you calm down, combat stress, or fight panic attacks. It can help you achieve certain goals such as relaxation, or awareness of your heart rate and breathing. This is based on what they call "the coherence breakthrough" which seems to just be an awareness of what is going on with your body.

The device also comes with software that gives information on the science behind how it works, and on how to use it. It comes with a Practice Plan to help you get the most out of the device over time. There is also a free webinar to help you learn everything you need to know. It takes a few minutes to learn how to use the device, and how to use it to control your breathing and your body, but it is worth it.



The emWave2 device. Image: HeartMath®

When I got the unit, I started with the Quick Start Guide. I installed the software, and attached the emWave2 unit to the computer using the included USB cord. This also charges the unit. You can use the device either on its own, allowing for portability, or attached to the computer, where you can use the included program to store your session data. It is easiest to use the emWave2 on the go. It's about the size of a very, very thick credit card, so it can fit in your pocket or any bag.

The emWave2 device is very easy to use. Just put your thumb on the sensor (or use the included ear sensor) and breathe along with the moving lights. As you relax, the device measures your heart rate and the red light changes to blue and then to green. When blue or green, the device starts piling up marks showing you that you're remaining relaxed and calm and aware of your breathing. They are taken away if you go back into the red zone. With very little practice, I was able to keep the unit in the green zone most of the time.

The device has different settings for the challenge level, display brightness, and sound level, which you can change depending on your needs at the time. You can use the included software to track a lot of data, so if you're a data geek, this is a great way to get more out of the device. Doing well with the unit over time will give you a higher score. There are also some built-in games and activities, as well as plenty of videos on how to use the device and the science behind why and how it works. But even if you aren't interested in this information, the emWave2 device helps you practice your breathing and awareness, both of which can help you relax. Done on a regular basis, you are likely to notice less stress and anxiety.

The more you use the emWave2 device, the more you will be used to practicing your breathing. I noticed that just a short session with it can calm you, and using it over longer periods can have even more substantial benefits. If you're anything like me, when I am having anxiety, it helps to have something to focus on, both visually and mentally.

Even if you don't suffer from panic attacks or anxiety, with our hectic, fast-paced lives, anyone could benefit from a short breather (literally) now and then.

[The emWave2 device retails for \\$229.](#) I recommend it to anyone who is looking for a way to be more aware of their breathing and heart rate, has panic or anxiety issues, or finds themselves under a lot of stress.

Note: I received the loan of an emWave2 device for review purposes.

Disclaimer: I'm not a doctor, so if you have any questions about the emWave2 unit, please ask your doctor or [visit the emWave website](#). The website contains plenty of information and videos that help you get the most out of the device.



Jenny Williams is a senior editor at GeekMom, core contributor at GeekDad, and homeschooling mom of two awesome kids. She also revels in her geeky interests, friends, and family.

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