

# BREAK GLASS TO SORT LIFE

Could your phone be your secret PA, trainer, dating guru and accountant?  
**Nikki Bayley** investigates

**W**hen I found myself writing a to-do list on the back of an unopened bank statement, I knew things had to change. My dating life was in a slump, the only exercise my gym kit got was being carried around in my backpack, and my personal 'organiser' was a stack of curled-up-at-the-end Post-it notes. The more I thought about it, the more stressed I got. Seeking answers I turned, of course, to my trusty iPhone. The latest consumer research from Nielsen has revealed that women spend more time than men on apps, logging more than five hours more a month on their tablets and two on their phones. So could the answer to all my problems literally be in my back pocket? I searched out five free apps and put them to the test for a week. But did they do the trick?

## MY TECHNO TOOLKIT



### Money Dashboard\*

"Clear and simple graphs tell you how to manage your finances without making you work hard to understand."



### Stress Tracker

"A perfect tool to help you take charge of your emotional, mental and physical health."



### Twine

"The first gender-balanced flirting and dating app. It's completely anonymous until you reveal yourself."



### Johnson & Johnson 7 Minute Workout

"Designed to be easy, fun and effective, you can do this workout anywhere."



### EasilyDo

"A smart, all-in-one virtual assistant app that makes you more productive AND more connected." ►

## G (TECH) SUPPORT

### MONDAY

**7 Minute Workout** First workout is stuff of nightmares. Am scarlet-faced three minutes in and defeated by complicated 'Grasshopper Push-Up'. Thought exercises would be explained.

**EasilyDo** I'm excited by the promise of this, but setting it up takes ages. Feels clogged up with alerts to sort duplicate email contacts. Annoying.

**Stress Tracker** Simple sign-up and lots of advice to access. You mark your stress level, log emoticon moods, write up how you feel and choose your stress source. Relaxing displacement.

**Money Dashboard** Money management is my kryptonite. Warily tap in bank details and then start to play around with budget settings. This is fun. But I want to spend money to see if it works. Anything you buy with a card linked to the app gets automatically categorised as household, bills, etc. Buy a coffee. Ooh. It's there.

**Twine** I sit down with a glass of wine to set it up. Within five minutes it's 'searching locally for a gentleman'. Oh. 'Couldn't find anyone nearby.' So I go global, which is how I end up chatting with Fer in Harford, USA.

### WEDNESDAY

**7 Minute Workout** Dial down to lowest setting. Still asking me to do impossible exercises.

**EasilyDo** At dinner with mate Anya and app keeps 'dinging'. I turn off the alert sound. "Oh, I've done all that," I lie.

**Stress Tracker** In bed and realise I forgot to record any stress. Immediately stressed out. Log stress about logging stress. Feel better.

**Money Dashboard** I have set up a savings direct debit after being shamed into it by funky graphics. LOVE this.

### SATURDAY

**7 Minute Workout** Bespoke exercise plan FTW!

**EasilyDo** 18 alerts - where to even start? Feel so stressed - need to look at stress app's meditation tips.

**Stress Tracker** More app stress. Discover 'relaxation' and 'rage control' advice only come with the paid-for app. Not relaxing.



**Money Dashboard** All my Direct Debits came out yesterday and the app logged the lot. I can now see how much I have to spend for the month. Coincidentally staying in tonight.

**Twine** Stop rejecting men because of their interest in Zzzz sports and chat to Dan in Manchester. I ask if he wants to 'unlock' my profile. He unlocks his. I wish I had stayed picky.



### TUESDAY

**EasilyDo** Today I've experienced 'never missing anything'. I get alerts all the time supposedly 'organising' me - but actually driving me nuts. Ding!

Commuter time one minute. Ding! Noteworthy Facebook post. Ding! Argh, shut up.

**Stress Tracker** Major stress is idiot dinging app. Read Personal Stress section to see if any app-stress advice in there. Huh. It tells me that 'loss of self-esteem is

a persistent theme in art' and that *Rocky* is an example of 'deep satisfaction from following your dreams.' Would love to punch app designer. **Money Dashboard** Probably need to stop buying things just to see if they register on the app, but it's so cool. **Twine** Fer messages me, we chat. I look for new 'gentlemen' closer to home. Hmm, interests: golf. Reject. McDonald's. Reject. Ah, can no longer pick. Punishment for being too picky?

"See amazing boots. Want boots so much! Look at Money Dashboard app... walk away"



**THURSDAY** **7 Minute Workout** Go through exercises and work out, which I can actually do. Feels good.

**EasilyDo** Now-silent app is delusional. Claims it's saved me 48 minutes this week. HOW?

**Money Dashboard** See amazing boots. Want boots so much! Look at app, realise have spent almost a whole circle-y thing on clothes this month.

Walk away. Eat ice cream.

**Twine** I look at the pre-selected chat-up lines: "How often do you visit Google?" Seriously? Even I wouldn't talk to me if I said that.

### FRIDAY

**7 Minute Workout** Actually look forward to doing my workout, love that it's only seven minutes long.

**Stress Tracker** So useful to write down feelings in the moment. Going to party and know an ex will be there. Handled it well as I felt I'd already processed emotion.

**Money Dashboard** Realise I had not entered ice cream as it was a cash transaction. Do so. Mood? Smug.

**Twine** Nope, still not finding guys near me (or non-scary guys an hour away). Chat to Brad in Hawaii. Who knows - maybe I could find a holiday romance?



## VERDICT

### SUNDAY

**7 Minute Workout** I'm keeping this app. I like that it's taught me new exercises, but hated how unfit it made me feel at first. Turns out it's easy to be unmotivated, even in seven minutes.

**Twine** The idea is OK in principle, but let's be honest, we're all shallow about looks online.

**EasilyDo** Can't bear it; 19 alerts a day! Deleting this.

**Stress Tracker** Review week of stress diary. 50% is work, but I bet 90% of that was my organiser app. Getting into good habits: analysing emotions instead of bottling them up. Calming.

**Money Dashboard** Astonished. Really? All I needed to get interested in budgeting was fancy infographics? I'm amazed at how financially sorted I feel after just one week. ©

