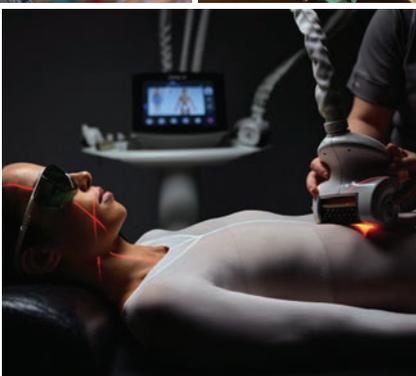




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The Future of Wellness 2026 TRENDS



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GLOBAL WELLNESS TRENDS REPORT

The Future of Wellness: 2026 Trends



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PREFACE

The Future of Wellness: 2026 Trends

Welcome to the Global Wellness Summit's annual trends report, the longest-running, most in-depth forecast into the big ideas that will transform health and wellness in the coming year.

Even in such challenging economic times, the wellness market just keeps clocking extraordinary growth, reaching \$6.8 trillion and forecast to approach \$10 trillion by 2029. Global survey after survey reveals that wellness is now the top priority for consumers, and that even if they're cutting spend in other categories, they aren't dialing back on wellness.

In our last three trend reports, each year we've seen more profound shakeups in wellness than we had in the decades before. A key, ongoing shift has been the rewriting of the market by high-tech, medical, hyper-optimizing approaches, including the boom in longevity clinics/programs and diagnostics and wearables (we dubbed this 'hardcare'). At the same time, powerful desires for no-tech, simple, deeply human, social and emotional wellness are rising ('softcare'). These polarities run throughout the 2026 report. But it's not just a simple polarity. Understanding the wellness market means grasping the young analog-life-embracing wellness raver, those bent on optimizing themselves in every new way, and even Silicon Valley types now creating wearables/apps to track and optimize "happiness" and "joy."

2026 will be another year of change. It's a year of corrections and backlashes, a big year for women, one where longevity moves in new directions, and where wellness tackles major environmental and human crises.

KEY THEMES FOR 2026

1. An Over-Optimization Backlash and Revenge of the Human: Cathartic and Wild, Emotional and Self-Expressive, Wellness Will Rise

After years of endless, lonely self-optimization—every sleep scored, your "biological age" constantly recalibrated and AI blitzing us with deepfake perfection—a stronger backlash is rising against stressful, high-tech, performative wellness that imagines the human as a perfectible machine. We'll witness a resurgence in experiences embracing what humans actually are: imperfect, emotional, relational and sensory—hardwired to seek pleasure, joy and self-expression. A group of trends speak, in different ways, to how wellness will pivot to meaning over measurement, and catharsis and connection over clinical data.

"The Over-Optimization Backlash": This serves as a framing trend, detailing the shift toward regulation over results, sensation over scores, and wellbeing measured by how fully alive we feel—and how in 2026, wellness will move beyond performance, towards emotional repair and embodied care.

"The Festivalization of Wellness": If IRL social wellness has been the biggest post-pandemic movement, this trend makes the idea of mere "social connection" feel too tame. It details how we'll see a wave of wild, cathartic wellness raves and gatherings. From sober morning dance raves to multiday festivals, dance, music and creative expression will redefine wellness as wild, collective energy; joy, magic and ritual; and profound emotional release.

“Fragrance Layering”: As the beauty market’s growth leader, fragrance has long been stuck in a luxury mindset, corporate branding and product homogeneity. This trend explores how the future is combining scents to create a personalized olfactory signature—changing how we express ourselves, shape our moods, and interact with others. Fragrance becomes a creative, cultural and emotional language.

2. The Year of Women: Correcting Gender Inequities

“Women Get Their Own Lane in Longevity”: The booming longevity market has been dominated by men. Born out of the tech bros’ extreme optimizations, even the now more evolved market extrapolates longevity regimes for women based on men’s data and protocols. This trend argues that the future of longevity is female. Research mounts that women age fundamentally differently, with the ovary as the “command central” of women’s health, and its decline dramatically accelerating systemic aging. Longevity will pivot to women’s healthspan, moving beyond managing menopause to addressing ovarian aging itself, with new diagnostics and interventions targeted for every life stage. Women-scientists-led labs are working hard on innovations that could slow or stop ovarian aging. Clinics, wellness resorts, telehealth platforms, wearables, diagnostics and gyms will reorient toward women’s health and longevity. And as women shape the market, culture change is also ahead: less ultrahuman optimization, more human approaches.

“Women & Sports: The Revolution Continues”: Men have eternally dominated sports, but the women’s sports economy is at its long-awaited tipping point, with huge cultural, commercial, social and wellness impact. Female athletes have unprecedented visibility as competitors, founders and marketing powerhouses—while fandom, media coverage and grassroots participation surges worldwide. Welcome to a world of new leagues and women’s sports bars—while “regular” women of all ages flock to strength training and competitive sport, reframing fitness from aesthetics to capability and longevity.

3. Longevity Expands in New Directions

If a new women-focused longevity may save what feels like a male-focused longevity bubble from bursting, several trends explore other new directions in longevity.

“Longevity Residences”: This trend investigates how longevity is moving out of clinics and resorts and into the places we live. This new category within wellness real estate supports longer, healthier lives by integrating preventive medicine, advanced diagnostics, AI-enabled health tracking and therapeutic interventions directly into the home. The idea is simple: lasting health change happens not during a week-long retreat, but in the environments that we inhabit every day.

“Skin Longevity Redefines Beauty”: A transformation is sweeping the beauty and wellness industries as “anti-aging” is rapidly being replaced by the concept of skin longevity. This new vertical merges cutting-edge biotech, proactive skincare and holistic wellness, reframing the conversation from reversing the effects of time to optimizing the skin’s health and function long term. Backed by major investments and new scientific research, advances include sophisticated skin diagnostics, new active ingredients and regenerative treatments, even “hair longevity.”

4. Wellness Tackles Major Environmental & Human Crises

We live in an age of accelerating, layered crises, from terrifying climate events to mounting political instability to brains barraged by bad news and bad information. Unsustainable anxiety levels are one reason the wellness market is thriving. Tackling these mounting crises will become central in wellness next year.

“Ready Is the New Well”: In 2025, climate disasters and eco-anxiety surged; they’re the new normal. If wellness has always promised protection, whether from disease or burnout, the next wellness wave will promise something different: survival itself. Just as preventive medicine transformed healthcare, disaster readiness is the next evolution of everyday resilience, where having a disaster plan is as essential as having a fitness plan. There will be a new focus on 1) mental resilience, with apps treating climate anxiety with mindfulness; 2) physical readiness, from wellness real estate shifting to climate-adaptive design to wearables tracking the health effects of extreme weather in real time; and 3) community interdependence, with grassroots groups training locals in evacuation and disaster-proofing homes. This new preventative continuum of care is not about panic but peace of mind.

“Tackling Microplastics as a Human Health Issue”: In 2025 we grasped the severity of the microplastics crisis as a human health threat. Microplastics are now detected in human blood, lungs, placentas and even the brain, with early research linking exposure to inflammation, hormonal disruption, cardiovascular disease and potential cognitive effects. 2026 is about moving from awareness to action—in wellness, but also in food systems, medicine, architecture, fashion, with a surge in consumer innovations and therapies that work to reduce microplastic loads in the body.

“The Rise of Neurowellness”: Modern life, from nonstop digital stimulation to rising global unrest, keeps our nervous systems in a chronic state of fight-or-flight, leading to everything from hormonal imbalances to accelerated aging. Regulating the nervous system is the next frontier in wellness, going far beyond “stress reduction” to focus on regulation, recovery and resilience before breakdown occurs. We’ll see far more neurowellness approaches in 2026, from new consumer neurotech to sensory design to somatic practices.

This is the only wellness trends report based on insights from hundreds of health and wellness experts—CEOs, doctors, investors, academics and technologists—that gather each year at the Global Wellness Summit. Each trend is packed with new ideas, sub-trends, and examples of the companies blazing these new trails.

If the world is increasingly complex, so is the wellness market. We hope this report helps you make sense of a market changing faster every year.

Beth McGroarty
VP, Research and Forecasting

GLOBAL WELLNESS SUMMIT

10 Wellness Trends for 2026



The longevity market was built by and for men. But clinics, wellness resorts, telehealth platforms, gyms and diagnostic platforms will all shift towards women's healthspan, requiring a new paradigm and set of interventions. (Credit: SHA Wellness)

Women Get Their Own Lane in Longevity

Men Have Dominated the Longevity Market, but the Future Is Female

After years of a men-focused longevity market, emerging studies show women age differently, identifying the ovary as playing the central role in women's overall health. In 2026, the industry will shift to address women's healthspan, with diagnostics and interventions targeted for every life stage.

By Beth McGroarty

INTRODUCTION

The booming longevity market is tacitly male: women's health and path to longevity is extrapolated from men's data and protocols designed for men. That era is ending. Research mounts that women age fundamentally differently. The ovary functions as "command central" of women's health, and its decline dramatically accelerates systemic aging, leading to a cascade of conditions that women suffer more—and longer. In 2026, longevity pivots to women's healthspan, moving beyond midlife and managing menopause symptoms to addressing ovarian aging itself, with diagnostics and interventions targeted for every life stage. Clinics, wellness resorts, telehealth platforms, wearables, diagnostics and gyms are

all reorienting toward women's biology and needs. And with women shaping longevity, its culture will shift too: less ultrahuman optimization; more human approaches.

The Trend

When you think of the "face" of longevity, you'll probably conjure up a tech bro like Bryan Johnson strapped into biohacking machines in his quest for immortality—or maybe an Andrew Huberman, Peter Attia, David Sinclair or Mark Hyman. The longevity vibe has been macho: competitive and individualistic, with endless extreme physical optimizations and leaderboard-style races to be the first (the first trillionaire, the first to reach 150, etc.).



The research mounts that the ovary is the underestimated, key regulator of women's aging and longevity, with interventions that slow ovarian decline the next big health breakthrough. (Credit: Adobe Stock)

Although women largely built the \$6.8 trillion wellness industry—in part because traditional medicine failed them—they've been too often left out of the longevity conversation. Go check out some longevity clinic websites, where the complex issue of women's health is reduced to a drop-down tab called “hormonal” or “reproductive” health, buried far under metabolic, mitochondrial or microbiome programs.

This will now change: the next longevity chapter will be built around women's unique biology, the fundamental differences in how men and women age, and how women's path to longevity—and, even more importantly, healthspan—requires a new paradigm and set of interventions. Generally, a new era for women's health is being identified as one of 2026's defining trends. Melinda French Gates recently predicted that thanks to advances in research, tech and investment, “In 2026, we'll stop seeing women's health as a niche issue and start treating it as a foundation for human progress.”

This new era for women's longevity is being led by a group of female doctors and scientists (see Women's Health for some key players), working to unriddle a stark if criminally under-researched fact: women live longer than men (in every country, across all socioeconomic groups, and by five-six years on average) but spend far more time than men (25% more years) in bad health, according to a McKinsey/World Economic Forum report.

In the last few years, the research has rapidly shown that the ovary—an organ many people wouldn't even recognize—is the lynchpin, and the

key, woefully underestimated regulator of women's aging and longevity.

The difference between men and women? Men live to 90 with a fully functioning gonad; women do not. The ovaries act, as Jennifer Garrison, neuroscientist at UCSF, put it, as “control center of a really complex signaling network” between women's organs and systems. And when they stop releasing critical hormones at midlife, it supercharges biological aging in women. As Piraye Beim, MD, founder of Celmatix, an ovarian aging therapeutics startup, summarized at the Global Wellness Institute's The Wellness Roundtable podcast: “The end of ovarian function during perimenopause and menopause is the single biggest accelerant of unhealthy aging in women,” explaining how it leads to a waterfall of negative effects on everything from the metabolism and immune system to a surge in inflammaging, defined as chronic inflammation throughout the body that contributes to half of all global deaths.

The fallout from ovarian decline (aka, menopause) is a surge in chronic conditions for women, including cardiovascular disease (their #1 killer), diabetes, autoimmune diseases (women are 80% of cases), dementia (2/3rds of sufferers are women and their lifetime risk of developing it is 48%), thyroid conditions (one in eight women will develop one) and osteoporosis (four times more common in women). The cost of ovarian decline is unique and staggering.

In 2025, the new women's longevity scientists—from Jamie Justice, gerontologist at Wake Forest University and director of the XPrize Healthspan, to

Dina Radenkovic, MD, a Serbian biotech scientist, to Yousin Suh, MD, at Columbia University—have gotten vocal about how we have to completely change the script on the ovary and stop limiting it to fertility. And why interventions to preserve ovarian function are the next big breakthrough—one that could radically improve the quality and length of life for half the world’s population.

The world and the media are waking up, with a flurry of important recent articles on how slowing ovarian aging could be a key to women’s longevity—from the *New York Times*’ [“It’s Time to Give the Ovary Some More Respect”](#) to the *Wall Street Journal*’s [“Step Aside Longevity Bros. It’s Time for the Longevity Ladies.”](#) to *TIME*’s new, [“Ovaries Could Unlock Secrets of Longevity.”](#)

Like many other women’s aging scientists, Dr. Beim points to the huge gap between “ovarian span” and modern women’s actual lifespans. “One hundred years ago, the average life expectancy of a woman was early forties (so women didn’t even experience menopause), but now we live past our gonadal function for many decades. The ovary is the *only* organ we let stop working, claiming it’s ‘natural.’ [Given the vast negative health impacts of ovarian decline], as a female biologist, I just can’t accept that.” Or, as Jennifer Garrison recently told the *Washington Post*, “The ovaries ... are the ‘canaries in the coal mine’ for women’s aging, and the organ has been totally overlooked in the male-dominated longevity movement.”

This trend covers the big shifts ahead in 2026 and beyond:

- **The longevity market will expand from “tacitly male” to woman specific.** Women’s longevity medicine will emerge as a new clinical and wellness category. There will be an increase in dedicated women’s longevity clinics as well as new programs for women offered at general longevity clinics, at telemedicine and women’s health platforms, wellness resorts and gyms, and in new diagnostic tools and wearables.
- **Biotech research into slowing (even stopping) ovarian aging will go mainstream.** Labs are already experimenting on everything from ovarian stem cell therapies to replacing

unhealthy ovarian cells with lab-made ones to cryopreserving (and later replanting) healthy ovarian tissue.

- In the wellness space, we’ll see a shift from the avalanche of evidence-challenged [“hormone balancing” products, hacks](#) and pampering menopause retreats to **serious medical-wellness longevity programs for women**, ultimately creating *integrative* models for ovarian health, as lifestyle interventions are key. The celebrity “meno-posse” will give way to the women’s longevity posse, a group of doctors, scientists and experts.
- **A shift in the goals of hormone replacement therapy**—currently having a renaissance and expanding from alleviating menopause symptoms to healthspan intervention—is fast underway at the big women’s telehealth platforms. HRT gets recast as a longevity platform, not a prescription.
- As women’s health expands from treating menopause at midlife to the stages of ovarian health, we’ll see a unique longevity paradigm arise: **programs designed for each stage of a woman’s biology, from the teens to the 90s.** The biggest growth: not menopausal women, but women from their 20s through their 40s building “runway” protocols around sleep, stress, metabolic and strength foundations, with ongoing tracking of ovarian and health biomarkers.
- A shift in women only tracking their hormones for fertility/pregnancy to **testing across decades for ovarian health**, for critical biomarkers like [anti-Müllerian hormone \(AMH\)](#), the best marker for ovarian reserve.
- **“Musclespan” becomes the most bankable intervention.** Strength training for women has been exploding, but with ovarian decline triggering dramatic losses in muscle and bone, building muscle becomes a non-negotiable intervention for women’s longevity, and more gyms will help them achieve it. At the same time, we’ll see the rise of the “gym-as-women’s-longevity clinic,” with full menus of woman-focused diagnostics and interventions.



There's too little research on how gender impacts longevity and health outcomes, but when available, it's often surprising, with the majority of interventions showing different results for males and females. (Credit: Canyon Ranch)

- **Women will shift the market's focus from longevity to healthspan.** The fact that women live longer, but with many more sick years, will accelerate the wider, positive shift underway from the biohacking bros' narrow chasing of a number to a healthier focus on healthspan: having as many happy, healthy years as possible.
- With women entering longevity, **programs will become more integrative, their tone more human.** Women doctors and wellness experts leading longevity programs are less likely to create programs solely focused on diagnostics, physical health, and high-tech "get young quick" biohacking—and more likely to integrate social, mental, emotional and spiritual wellness as key (and increasingly forgotten) pillars. These so-called "softer" longevity approaches currently have more hard evidence than any of the bleeding-edge interventions.

So, as women enter the longevity movement and market, and as more women lead longevity programs, we'll see important, positive shifts in the current market. In many ways, the new women-focused longevity may save what feels like a male-focused longevity bubble from bursting.

It's been a bizarrely ignored market opportunity. As the analysts at TBWA's trendspotting unit [Backslash](#) put it to us: "For wellness brands, this pivot from macho bio-optimization to female-first physiology is the next high-growth frontier."

FUELING THE TREND

The Gap Between Men's and Women's Longevity Research Has Been Abominable, But That's Changing

We all know the depressing stats on the decades-long gender inequities in medical research. Researchers in the US weren't even required to include women in clinical trials until 1993, and as of 2015, women still accounted for less than 35% of participants in early-stage trials—including trials on aging and longevity. According to Dr. Beim, the majority of Big Pharma's profits come from women—who spend far more years than men in bad health—but the industry invests less than 1% into women's research. As late as 2020, only 5% of global research and development funds went to women's health. Only 2% of VC in health goes towards women's health and 90% is focused on reproduction and fertility, as medicine has always reduced women to walking wombs.

No wonder that evidence about what most impacts women's healthspan has been shrouded in mystery; the research is decades behind where it should be. But there were important signs of change in 2025, with more serious investment in both diseases that disproportionately affect women and ovarian aging. Melinda French Gates' company, Pivotal Ventures, committed \$100 million to accelerate

research on areas of women's health with the highest rates of mortality, including autoimmune and cardiovascular diseases and mental health. There are now more major research organizations dedicated to women's healthy aging and longevity, such as [Johns Hopkins \(Women's Wellness & Healthy Aging Program\)](#), the [Buck Institute's Center for Female Reproductive Longevity](#) and [NUS Bio-Echo Asia Centre for Reproductive Longevity and Equality \(ACRLE\)](#). [Nuttall Women's Health](#), a new nonprofit, recently gave grants of up to \$5 million to scientists studying ovarian aging.

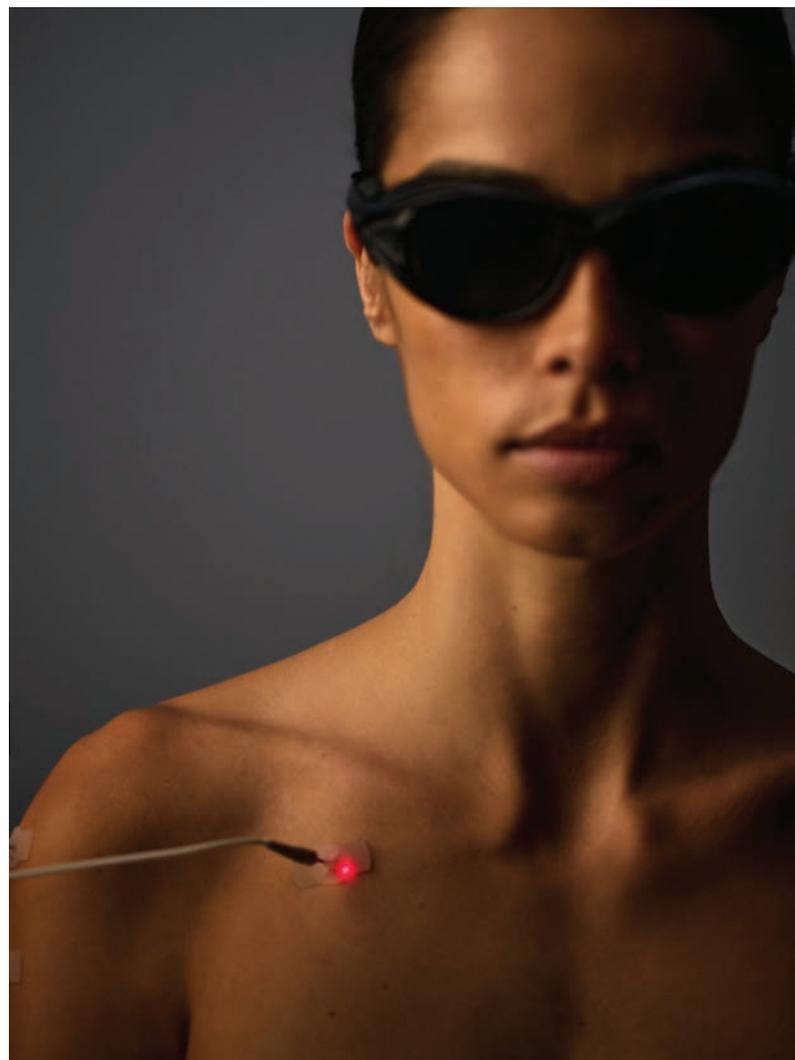
If the [XPRIZE Healthspan](#) grabbed headlines with a \$100 million prize for breakthroughs in longevity in 2025, Jennifer Garrison from the Buck Institute for Research on Aging co-lead the creation of the "Double X Prize": a \$50 million global XPrize competition—called the "[Ovarian Decoder](#)"—launching in 2026. This global contest will challenge scientists to develop better ways to track ovarian health across a woman's entire lifespan and to create real-world interventions. The fact that the XPrize has created such a hefty prize for innovations in ovarian health is a clear sign of the future.

Women's Wallet Power and Changing Lives

By not focusing on women, the [\\$58 billion longevity market](#) is leaving serious money on the table. According to Nielsen, women are expected to control 75% of discretionary spending worldwide in the next five years (\$32 trillion). The over 50 female demographic represents the fastest-growing consumer segment globally and women make 80% of healthcare decisions.

Women's exploding spending power make them the most powerful, bizarrely untapped longevity consumer, especially if offerings are actually grounded in their biology. (Credit: SHA Wellness)

For far more women all over the world, life is less about marriage and babies, and more about spending on their own wellbeing. Fertility rates are, of course, [in freefall across the world](#). The most likely to be childless? [Women with advanced degrees](#)—equaling spending power. [The Economist recently detailed](#) how the rise of singlehood is reshaping the world. These demographic realities are only expected to accelerate, making women globally the most powerful longevity consumer, especially if the offerings speak to them and are based on their biology. Gen Z women are now jumping in early with strength training, testing biomarkers, and [biohacking regimes](#) to prepare for perimenopause, menopause, and for longevity. [Fountain Life](#), longevity clinics grounded in



advanced diagnostic testing, report that 38% of their clients are women. We guess that's high for the average longevity clinic, which explains why they report it.

Science Mounts That Longevity Interventions Affect Men and Women Differently

Despite the fact that no FDA-approved lifespan-extending drug is available today, several therapies show great promise in lab mice, and as Freethink notes, in early studies, gender appears to be a critical factor in how aging interventions work. A [review](#) of 72 longevity studies in mice that tested treatments on both sexes revealed that the medications affected the lifespan and healthspan of males and females differently 73% of the time. Rapamycin, an immunosuppressant, extends the lives of both male and female mice, but females get more of a boost. The co-author of the review, Stephen Austad, a researcher on aging at the University of Alabama, summarized the findings: "Ultimately, the fact that so many interventions trigger different outcomes in male and female lab animals suggests we may never find a one-med-fits-all-sexes longevity treatment." Dena Dubal, MD, neurologist at UCSF, [told *The Wall Street Journal*](#) that she advises her female patients not to "assume that what is popular with male longevity influencers will work for them," noticing, for instance, that low-carb diets caused thyroid problems in some female patients. There's very little research done on how gender impacts longevity and health outcomes, but when available, it's often surprising. For instance, [a small study on cold plunges](#) (the trend du jour), found that neither cold- nor hot-water immersion improved recovery from muscle damage for women.

Because Research on Ovarian Aging Will Benefit Men!

Scientists increasingly believe that the study of ovarian aging could rewrite longevity science, and not just for women, but also for men. As Jamie Justice, who runs the XPrize Healthspan, recently explained [to *The Wall Street Journal*](#), a crucial predictor of longevity for both genders is the age their mother went through menopause: If a woman goes through it late, she's more likely to

live longer—but so are her sons and daughters—suggesting common genes are involved, still to be unriddled. In the same article Jennifer Garrison explains that because ovaries age 2½ times faster than other organs, studying this accelerated aging could lead to breakthroughs in our overall understanding of aging and longevity. [A new study](#) indicates that if you really want to speed up the testing of longevity drugs, they should be tested on the fast-aging ovary. Garrison summarizes the future: "Males have always been the baseline for longevity, but females should be." That's making more men and investors wake up.

ASPECTS OF THE TREND

HRT'S COMEBACK AND EXPANSION FROM MENOPAUSE TREATMENT TO LONGEVITY INTERVENTION

HRT Becomes a Platform, Not a Prescription

In perimenopause and menopause, the ovaries rapidly reduce production of estrogen and progesterone, causing many women to experience [debilitating symptoms](#) like hot flashes, night sweats, brain fog, insomnia, and weight gain. Since women can spend a third of their lives struggling with menopausal symptoms, addressing them is an outsized part of women's healthspan: years in good health. Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) has for decades been the gold standard—and main "biohack"—in menopause treatment. However, after the 2002 US Women's Health Initiative (WHI) sounded a global alarm that HRT increased risks for heart disease, stroke and breast cancer, the FDA slapped a black box warning (its strongest) on all menopause treatments containing estrogen. Doctors were then unlikely to prescribe, and women were scared, so countless millions of women worldwide were shut out of the symptom-relief benefits.

The decades of HRT fear have certainly been a factor in the explosion of alt-hormonal solutions that aim to help women manage perimenopause and menopause, and which have become a major wellness industry market: the sea of hormone

tests and tracking apps, “hormone-balancing” supplements, and all kinds of cycle syncing, from fitness to nutrition models.

For various reasons, the WHI findings were revealed to be badly flawed. The study focused on older, post-menopausal women, when the science shows that HRT should begin 10 years before menopause, or when perimenopausal symptoms start. Additionally, the therapies today (natural progesterone and transdermal estrogen patches) have low cancer or clotting risks. So, in November 2025, the US FDA lifted its black box warning on almost all estrogen products, leading to a storm of HRT prescription platforms.

The way the FDA did this has caused much debate. Health experts say (and *The Guardian* summarizes well) that while HRT offers overwhelming evidence for easing menopause symptoms and preventing osteoporosis, the FDA’s new claims for its extraordinary impact on women’s longevity—proven to prevent heart disease, Alzheimer’s and death—is still the subject of ongoing research. Despite that, the FDA head, Marty Makary, made the

bold pronouncement that, “There may be no other medication in the modern era that can improve the health outcomes of women at a population level more than hormone replacement therapy.”

The headlines subsequently swirled that HRT may be the blockbuster *longevity* drug women have been waiting for. In our own research on HRT as a longevity intervention, our own brain started swirling, with contradictory studies abounding. Studies show that women who start hormone therapy within 10 years of menopause onset have a reduced risk of death from all causes. As noted in the *New York Times*, some studies show that women on hormone therapy have a lower risk of developing heart disease and dementia. Other research found that the treatment has no benefit or actually increases the risk. A large meta-review of 50 studies found that Alzheimer’s risk was up to 32% lower for women who started HRT within five years of menopause, but the risk was 38% higher if HRT began after age 65. A new study from University College London found “no evidence” that HRT either increased or slashed dementia.

With HRT boomeranging back, more longevity clinics, med spas, wellness resorts, and telemedicine companies are prescribing it, expanding use from treating menopause symptoms to extending women’s healthspan. (Credit: Adobe Stock)



It's mind-boggling that after *decades* of HRT usage we don't have clear information on its impact on everything from cognitive decline to heart disease. But there are signs of hope. For instance, a \$50 million global women's health research initiative called CARE (cutting women's Alzheimer's risk through endocrinology) is underway, studying the biomarkers of 100 million women to identify why they're at such a higher risk of Alzheimer's and focusing on how HRT may provide neuroprotection.

After 80 years of essentially zero HRT innovation, new solutions are ahead. Gameto, a standout women's health startup with \$127 million in funding, is working on a next-gen vaginal ring that delivers cyclical, dynamic hormone patterns more aligned with the body's natural rhythms. Phase 1 trials are ahead.

With the black box warnings gone, HRT is boomeranging back and the market will keep expanding from treating menopause symptoms to extending women's healthspan. The women longevity experts seem generally more bullish. Jennifer Garrison argues that the default should

now be "that when ... you're having symptoms of perimenopause, you should probably go on hormone therapy." Robin Berzin, MD, founder of Parsley Health, the largest US functional medicine clinic, recently told GWI at the Wellness Roundtable that the number one thing she was most excited about in women's longevity was the return of HRT ... for its heart, brain and bone health benefits.

The HRT Prescription Boom—Platforms Pivot from GLP-1s to Hormones

In 2026, more longevity, wellness and women's health centers will expand their message from "HRT for menopause symptoms" to "HRT for longevity."

Since the rise of drugs like Ozempic, hundreds of online businesses bloomed, usually selling compounded, cheaper versions, to meet the insatiable demand. But as prices went down and the shortages ended in 2025, the mega telemedicine and weight-loss platforms are now pivoting fast to HRT and hormones. Weight Watchers, which first pivoted from lifestyle change to GLP-1s for weight loss, added a menopause and hormone prescription program in September. Noom, which began as a behavior change weight loss app expanded to GLP-1s, then to HRT in 2025. In October, Hims & Hers, the mega health and wellness platform, launched a dedicated women's health program centered around HRT, and in November launched Labs by Hims & Hers, bringing hormone testing for women home. Health experts interviewed at Stat News warned that profits may end up driving more prescribing than may be needed medically.

In 2026, more longevity clinics, med spas, wellness resorts, and telemedicine companies will prescribe HRT. Hormone replacement therapy can be very helpful for women when used thoughtfully, but it's not one-size-fits-all: estrogen often needs progesterone for safety; testosterone really seems to help women with sexual health/desire,

New diagnostic platforms are giving women new data about everything from their hormones to where they are in ovarian aging to inflammation markers. (Credit: SHA Wellness)



causing a mania; hormone levels are imperfect to measure, and while mail-order options have expanded access, the goal now needs to be careful, individualized prescribing that balances benefits with risks at each stage of life. More places will offer that kind of support, whether at [Ponti Health](#), a women's health practice in Sydney, Australia, or at the [Sacher Academy for Better Aging](#) in the Austrian Tyrol.

The shift from HRT for menopause to HRT for longevity is everywhere. The menopause care startup [Alloy Health's](#) founder, [Anne Fulenwider](#), states: "If estrogen therapy was labeled a supplement or tech device, it'd be the hottest product on the market. But because it's 'medical,' it's been overlooked by the wellness industry for decades. The truth is that estrogen is the original biohack for women. It ... helps protect everything from bone density to brain health. It's time we reframe it as the powerful tool for longevity that it truly is."

But as Dr. Beim told the GWI, adding back the temporarily protective estrogen, progesterone (and yes, testosterone), is just the "tip of the iceberg" and can never make up for the loss of the ovary. So, it's the scientific research underway on how to preserve ovarian function that's making the biggest waves in women's longevity.

OVARIAN HEALTH INNOVATION GOES MAINSTREAM

The New Science: Cutting-Edge Experiments to Slow Ovarian Decline

Scientists increasingly agree that as endocrine organs, the ovaries are part of a complex communication network with power over every tissue and organ in women's bodies. And that women's health is very much a stark story of "before" and "after" menopause. Whether it's dementia, heart disease, or stroke, the rates in women are dramatically lower than in men until ovarian function stops. With menopause, women experience a huge increase in risk for cardiovascular disease, diabetes, dementia, depression, weight gain, autoimmune disease, and osteoporosis.

There is a [preponderance of evidence](#) that going through menopause early (before 45) is linked to early death. Women who go through early menopause have a [50% higher risk](#) of coronary heart disease, are [64% more likely to have arthritis](#), [twice as likely to have obstructive sleep apnea](#), and [nearly three times as likely to have had a bone fracture](#). Conversely, women who experience menopause after 50 were [20% more likely to reach age 90](#) than those with pre-age-40 menopause.

Given these terrible facts, how is it possible that medicine hasn't cracked the code on how to forestall ovarian aging? If this happened to men, you can be sure it would have happened decades ago. Medicine doesn't even know why menopause happens in humans at all, and why it's almost unique to humans: across all species, only a handful of whale species and a single group of Ugandan chimpanzees stop reproducing and suffer ovarian "death."

Finally, a new group of largely women scientists are busy working on interventions that could slow—or even stop—ovarian decline to transform women's health and longevity. There has been excellent media coverage of this research movement, such as [Vox's "Is This the End Of Menopause?"](#)—which notes that "researchers are calling into question what once seemed like basic facts of human existence. What if menopause happened later? What if it never happened at all?"

Eye-Opening Research Underway

Decoding the Ovaries' Signals: We desperately need better tools to track the ovaries' complex signals and to measure ovarian function across a woman's lifespan. That is why the new \$50 million "XX Prize" specifically wants to identify breakthroughs in ovarian biomonitoring: how to decode the ovaries' signals, how ovarian health shapes whole-body health from before puberty to after menopause, and how to make ovarian function a core vital sign for lifelong health. [Rice University researchers](#) recently developed a mathematical model that maps the hidden mechanics of ovarian aging, which they say, "presents a potential blueprint for improved preventive care."

Cheap, Readily Available Rapamycin: Rapamycin is approved to prevent organ rejection in transplant patients and is already a favorite of the longevity crowd. And because it has been shown to significantly decrease ovarian aging in mice, [researchers at Columbia University](#) have been testing low-dose, non-invasive rapamycin in a small study called VIBRANT on 50 women ages 35-45. Their early results indicate that it reduces the release of eggs from around 50 to 15 each month, protecting ovarian reserve. The researchers estimate that this rapamycin dose decreases ovarian aging by 20%—and that patients report better energy, mood, memory, and even skin. Last we read, researchers will now conduct a bigger trial of about 200 women, and they will need a phase 3 trial before the process of prescribing the drug could begin. [The New York Times](#) reports that another longevity drug, metformin, is also being studied to see if it can slow ovarian aging.

Putting the Brakes on Wasteful Egg Loss: A group of scientists are focused on anti-Mullerian hormone, which regulates the number of growing follicles (the miniscule sacs that release eggs) in the ovaries. A low AMH level is the key indicator that ovarian reserve is being depleted. [Oviva Therapeutics](#) has developed a synthetic AMH (OVI-

586) to slow down the process where follicles within the ovary—each with a single egg—grow to eventually ovulate. The aim is to reduce egg loss, which slows ovarian aging, thereby boosting women’s healthspan. Oviva is experimenting with an AMH injection in animals now, so a human AMH drug could be years away. [Celmatix](#) is developing a drug that mimics AMH to inhibit the growth of new ovarian follicles that deplete ovarian reserve and will soon test the molecule in primates before starting trials in people.

Ovarian Stem Cell Implants: Researchers are experimenting with applying stem cell biology to ovarian aging to transform women’s longevity. Gameto is one such player, founded by Dr. Dina Radenkovic, whose first breakthrough therapy is hailed as the most significant IVF treatment innovation in decades. To learn more about her fascinating story and her obsession with ovarian follicles and aging, read this recent [Washington Post](#) article. It explains that Gameto’s second therapy, Ameno, creates healthy, lab-made ovarian cells from pluripotent stem cells that can then be implanted in the body to replace unhealthy ovarian cells. Their lab is now putting an under-the-skin implant in mice that “uses young ovarian cells to deliver tailored hormonal cocktails.” The



Labs are fast testing interventions that could slow—or even stop—ovarian decline. Readily available rapamycin is probably the simplest trial underway. (Credit: Shutterstock)

Women scientists are busy working on complex interventions to forestall ovarian decline—from ovarian stem cell implants to tackling ovarian fibrosis to AMH-mimicking drugs—to create that blockbuster therapy that could transform women’s longevity. (Credit: Adobe Stock)



goal: bring it to women to stop ovarian aging and the downstream diseases in its wake. As Jennifer Garrison notes in the article, “These stem-cell-derived ovarian treatments have the potential to open up a range of options for women throughout the second half of life.”

Cryopreserving Healthy Ovarian Tissue: Kutluk Oktay, MD, an ovarian biologist at Yale School of Medicine, has an entirely different solution to slow the rate at which eggs are lost, as women ovulate roughly 500 eggs by menopause but an extraordinary 99.9% are wasted. The Yale lab has created the first ovarian transplant therapy. They’ve collected healthy ovarian tissue containing hundreds of thousands of eggs from women under 40, and have frozen them, to reimplant later near menopause to restore ovarian function. They report their mathematical model predicts that “for most women under 40, ovarian cryopreservation can significantly delay menopause. And for women under 30, the procedure may be able to prevent menopause altogether.” Since the women in the study are still young, it will take years for real-world results.

Tackling Ovarian Fibrosis: The research mounts that how ovaries age is more than a question of ever-depleting eggs. It also involves the aging of the cells, nerves, blood vessels and connective tissue—the whole ecosystem around the follicles and eggs. If fibrosis and stiffening develop in many aging tissues, it happens decades earlier

in the ovary. Researchers are working on anti-fibrotic drugs and interventions that could boost the ovarian environment, as you can read in this recent *New York Times* article. Rebecca Robker, reproductive biologist at the University of Adelaide in Australia, demonstrated back in 2022 that ovarian fibrosis could be reversible. Francesca Duncan, reproductive biologist at Northwestern University, is now testing anti-fibrotic drugs for ovarian health and her lab is working on an ultrasound test that uses ovarian stiffness as a way to measure ovarian aging. Diana Laird and her team at UC San Francisco are investigating if ovarian nerves and blood vessels could be targets for new drugs that slow ovarian aging. Laird recently told *Forbes*, “We already have a work in progress, showing ... interventions that can make a 12-month-old mouse look nine months old in its ovaries. That’s making it look 25% younger. If I, at age 40, had the ovaries of a 30-year-old, I would have been pretty excited.”

The Complex Cultural Response to Delaying Menopause

You can imagine the complex responses from women to these scientific experiments that could delay or end menopause. *Vox* has a sensitive, thoughtful discussion. At the basic level, some women say they don’t want a life of mood swings, fertility and bleeding. On the other hand, there’s outcry that these experiments serve a rising conservative, pro-natalist, keep-women-breeding movement. With plummeting fertility rates,

governments want more fertile years from women and recently, tech bros—from OpenAI CEO Sam Altman to billionaire Peter Thiel—have creepily poured hundreds of millions into “repro-tech.” Doctors note that lengthening ovarian function, so increasing the time of estrogen exposure, could increase risks of breast cancer or blood clots.

Perhaps the most persistent reaction is the accusation that it’s not “natural,” that slowing ovarian aging means women aren’t *accepting* aging. You can imagine that argument getting loud in the wellness world, even though it has embraced every breed of biohacking and cosmetic procedure. Dr. Zev Williams, director of the Columbia University Fertility Center, answered the “it’s not natural” worry at *Vox*, asking if women would feel the same trepidation around treatments that focused on other areas of their body. “You want to extend normal heart function, liver function. But for some reason, if you say, we want to slow ovarian aging, that touches on a very different note.” Dr. Beim told *GWJ* that anything to do with women’s bodies is so exceptionally *fraught*. Somehow, when women try to hack their very outdated biology, it’s unnatural, immoral and judged.

She agreed that longer exposure to estrogen may lead to higher breast cancer risks but explained that ovarian aging interventions aim to give women the *choice* of where they put their risk, noting that breast cancer is treatable while Alzheimer’s is not. Ovarian aging therapies want to give women the choice NOT to spend those 12-14 more years than men do in sickness.

Beim points out how outrageous it is that there has not been a purpose-built blockbuster drug designed for women since the 1950s, when the pill was created. She, and other scientists, are working towards a future where a new drug or intervention that slows or stops ovarian aging could eliminate the dozen other meds many women are forced to take.

It’s the early days of the ovarian aging interventions. But Dr. Beim’s predicts: “Women will start on this in their teens to regulate ovarian function over their lifespan. And I think anyone now under 33 will have a choice about whether to go into menopause.”

TESTING OVARIAN FUNCTION AND AMH: THE NEW VITAL SIGN

Longevity and Wellness Centers Will Wake Up to How Tracking AMH and Other Ovarian Aging Markers Could Transform Preventative Care for Women

Given the outsized role that ovarian health plays in women’s healthspan, it’s puzzling why diagnostics for ovarian health (identifying where women are in that process) aren’t part of a regular women’s workup. For women, testing has been all about hormones and fertility. The future: diagnostics for ovarian health so actions can be taken. And this will be important to do early and across decades. For women in their 20s, ovarian problems can be a sign of polycystic ovary syndrome, leading to higher risk for infertility and heart disease.

We already have good markers of ovarian health/reserve. Three key letters to know and embrace: AMH, Anti-Müllerian Hormone, which has seen controversy because it’s not a good predictor of whether a woman can get pregnant, but is a strong, consistent marker of ovarian reserve across a woman’s life. Antral Follicular Count (AFC) also helps identify ovarian reserve as can ultrasounds that show how many visible ovarian follicles remain. If AMH levels become low or invisible about five years before menopause, the roughly ten-year process of ovarian decline is different for every single woman. Each woman needs to understand her own ovarian state.

Dr. Beim argues that women should first have their AMH levels tested in their teens to establish their baseline. These can be hard to measure in a woman’s twenties (as they fluctuate so much) but they should then be tested annually from their thirties on. Timeless Biotech has a new testing platform, MenoTime, using AI and hormone tests to calculate a woman’s “ovarian age.” Their mission: “reframe ovarian health as a central driver of longevity rather than just a reproductive milestone.” More testing platforms are ahead. Diana Laird of UCSF aims to design a blood test based on changes in the nerves and blood vessels surrounding the egg follicles that would be a new weapon in measuring ovarian health.

Studies show that specific lifestyle interventions, from certain diets to circadian health, are the powerful tools we have now to boost ovarian health. (Credit: Canyon Ranch)



Princeton geneticist Coleen Murphy is working on a blood test that could predict the rate at which ovaries are aging and when menopause will occur.

WELLNESS INTERVENTIONS ARE KEY WEAPONS IN SLOWING OVARIAN AGING

While lifestyle interventions cannot *stop* ovarian decline/menopause, evidence shows they are powerful tools to maximize our ovarian reserve and boost our ovarian health—when started as early as possible. While Jennifer Garrison is a leader in the ovarian biotech space, she also states forcefully at [Elle](#), “If you were to do a clinical study with diet and exercise up against any of the new anti-aging ovarian treatments being studied right now—rapamycin, AMH, any of them—diet and exercise are still going to win by a mile.” Healthy sleep, not smoking (there is much research, such as how smokers are twice as likely to go through menopause before age 45), and regular, moderate (not extreme) exercise all have a powerful impact on ovarian health.

But studies suggest that specific interventions may have unique benefits:

Diet: Studies show that a diet rich in antioxidants and omega-3 fats may delay menopause, as these nutrients may protect the eggs. Various studies show that caloric restriction and long-term fasting regimes could be impactful. A [Northwestern University study](#) (on monkeys) found that a 30% daily caloric reduction over three years significantly

delayed ovarian aging. Studies indicate that fasting and fasting-mimicking diets (FMDs) affect ovarian function by influencing follicle development, endocrine balance, and age-related decline. A new study on mice found that the duration and timing of the caloric restriction mattered: long-term caloric restriction resulted in significant preservation of the ovarian follicle pool; short-term restriction did not.

Neuro regulation: Numerous studies show how crucial the long-term management of stress is (which fuels system-wide inflammation), as women with high stress show lower levels of ovarian reserve markers, including anti-Müllerian hormone (AMH) and Antral Follicle Count (AFC).

Environmental factors: Circadian health seems critical (natural light exposure each morning, shutting down light in evenings), as mice studies show that if they spend two weeks in all dark or light, their ovaries completely shut down. Studies reveal how important clean air is, as exposure to air pollution is associated with reduced ovarian reserve. And now we have the microplastics crisis. Microplastics were found in human ovary follicular fluid for the first time in 2025, and animal research has linked the presence of microplastics to ovarian dysfunction and health problems. (See this year’s trend on how tackling microplastic exposure is a next era in wellness.)

Environmental factors’ impact on ovarian health seems to be borne out by the fact that, across the



Building muscle strength and bone mass is even more important for women. That's why "musclespan" is the "new metric and ultimate indicator of women's longevity." (Credit: Canyon Ranch)

world, the average age of menstruation differs by a few years. A [recent report](#) revealed how more Indian women are experiencing lower ovarian reserves at younger ages, with researchers speculating that the reasons are complex: a combination of biology, environment, and lifestyle factors like poor diet and too little exercise.

There's so much still to unriddle about which wellness and environmental interventions would most slow ovarian aging, thereby extending women's healthspan. For instance, Buck Institute scientist Deena Emera [has studied](#) how Mayan women experience menopause very differently: they go through it early (mid-40s) but don't experience hot flashes or other symptoms, and while their estrogen levels drop and their bone density declines, they don't experience more bone fractures. She posits that a drastically different diet and lifestyle, one more like our ancestors, may be the answer. In other words, there may be "Blue Zones" of ovarian health.

"Musclespan": Non-Negotiable for Any Woman's Longevity Program

Strength training is being reframed as the cornerstone of women's longevity (for bone density, insulin sensitivity, inflammation, fall prevention), not aesthetics.

If a mountain of new research concurs that muscle strength (critical to bone mass) is a crucial factor for longevity and healthspan in both men and women, it's *especially* key for women. Again, the

culprit is ovarian decline. Men lose muscle and bone gradually, but as women (who typically start with less muscle) head into perimenopause, and estrogen plummets, muscle and bone density also plummet—leading to a storm of negative effects. Muscle [helps regulate](#) blood sugar and insulin, it protects against [chronic inflammation](#), and is the key weapon [against osteoporosis](#). (*Self* has a [great article](#) on what muscle loss uniquely does to women.)

That's why muscle has been dubbed "the organ of longevity." [Numerous studies](#) show that the link between muscle strength and all-cause mortality is stronger in women, and large studies, like one from [Cedars-Sinai](#), also reveal that women who did strength/resistance training two to three days a week were more likely to live longer and have a 30% lower risk of death from heart disease. If men lost 20% of their bone mass and 10% of their muscle mass around age 55, we think medicine might have paid attention.

Now women are REALLY paying attention, with 2025 the turning point year for a women's "musclespan" movement (a term coined by Dr. Gabrielle Lyon, meaning the length of time that you live with healthy skeletal muscle.) As [Women's Health](#) points out, musclespan is becoming the "new metric and ultimate indicator of women's longevity." Dr Lyon further notes: "We're beginning to see ... this concept of muscle being an organ system that's just as important as the heart, the lungs, the endocrine system. Women are turning

toward muscle as their North Star. It was never like that before.”

In 2025, a record high number of women rushed to weightlifting—and to rucking, and muscle—and bone-building creatine and high-protein diets. As *Fitt Insider* reported, this is rewriting the gym/studio market. Crunch Fitness (500+ US locations) notes that women now represent 50% of their lift usage, while social fitness app *Strava* reported that in 2025, strength training was the fastest-growing sport among women, who logged weight training at rates 21% higher than men. Gen Z is driving the boom, but *The New York Times* reports on a new trend: women pumping iron in their 80s and 90s. Women are the fastest-growing consumer market for muscle-building creatine, and embracing it for new research on its potential impact on brain health, menopause and aging.

We’ll see more for-women strength studios, such as *Ladies Who Lift* in the UK. Fitness brands are fast launching women’s strength-training programs, such as Chris Hemsworth’s Centr’s brand’s “the Foundation”.

While it might feel like we’ve hit peak strength training for women, it’s only the beginning. And if women have suffered cardio amnesia with muscle-mania, it will become re-integrated in 2026.

THE MARKET RESPONSE

WOMEN’S LONGEVITY GROWS ACROSS ALL WELLNESS SEGMENTS

Longevity clinics, telehealth, wellness resorts, gyms, diagnostic platforms and wearables are all now building women-first longevity stacks.

If “women’s health” has long been reduced to hormones, fertility and treating menopause symptoms (with interventions circling around midlife), now most wellness segments are expanding their focus to women’s *total* health and longevity—a shift from mid-life to whole life. With growing research that ovarian decline is not some isolated event but one that creates a long stream of health issues that impact women

As women rush to strength training, it’s transforming the fitness space—from for-women strength studios to new programs at resorts. (Credit: SHA Wellness)



Finally. Care for the whole you.



Because women's health follows the trajectory of "ovary-span," it necessitates a new life-stage-specific longevity paradigm, with different interventions from the 20s to the 90s. (Credit: Tia Health)

differently (cardiovascular, metabolic, immune, bone, and brain aging issues, etc.) more companies are creating health and longevity approaches for women from their 20s to 90s.

The new women's longevity models are about testing crucial markers around ovarian reserve, hormones, and for conditions that beset women more, to create smarter, personalized interventions that can get in front of the conditions hitting women harder and longer. The goal: get beyond reactive midlife symptom treatment and optimize women's healthspan early and for decades.

WOMEN'S LONGEVITY MEANS A NEW PARADIGM: LIFE-STAGE-SPECIFIC WITH EARLIER INTERVENTIONS

Because women's health trajectory follows the complex stages of ovarian aging (men suffer late and gradual gonadal decline), women's longevity programs are starting to reflect "ovary-span" by being more life-stage-specific: from the fertile 20s, to perimenopause, menopause, and for those many decades post-menopause. Programs will be designed to test and intervene across each decade: in the teens and 20s establishing baselines; in the 30s zeroing in on ovarian reserve and metabolic resilience; in the 40s dealing with the perimenopause runway; in the 50s and on working hard to protect brain, bone, and cardiovascular health. Women's unique biological trajectory also

pushes *everything earlier*: the diagnostic and lifestyle interventions—whether strength training, brain training or stress-reduction—need to start at least in the 30s to forestall and gird for ovarian decline.

The following section is about what the market is doing with women's longevity. It's a story of MORE: more telehealth companies, women's health practices, longevity clinics, wellness resorts, diagnostic platforms and wearables now pivoting to built-for-women health and longevity programs.

Shift 1: The Gym as Women's Longevity Clinic

The gym-as-clinic was a major 2025 trend: gyms morphing into preventative health centers, uniting fitness with longevity—including menus of biometric testing, health coaching, nutritionists (you name it). Now gyms and fitness platforms are reaching deeper into women's health, aiming to become a woman's longevity hub. At the simplest level, more gyms, like [Recess Fitness](#) in Texas, have added hormone testing and HRT prescriptions for women, overseen by a women's health specialist. Life Time Fitness expanded into longevity clinics with its seven US [MIORA](#) locations and goes [deep into hormone testing](#), prescription and optimizing for women, with medical oversight. Italian fitness equipment giant [Technogym](#) launched Healthness, which uses AI-powered "Checkup" stations that

analyze physical and cognitive measures to prescribe highly personalized training programs (at gyms, at home, at hotels). They've recently added a women's lane for Healthness: training tailored to a woman's health state and stage of life, from adolescence to post-menopause.

The Practice, which opened a pilot location in late 2025 (Greenwich, CT), exemplifies the gym-as-women's longevity-clinic with its "Practice 5" methodology—a strength training framework built around the five key markers of healthspan: body composition, mobility and balance, cognition, cardio, and capability (aka strength). It begins with a Healthspan Discovery assessment that establishes baseline biomarkers, allowing coaches to design personalized protocols that evolve as a woman's biology shifts across decades—an integrated, diagnostic-first approach that the new women's longevity movement demands.

Equinox (113 global clubs) has gone far with its new EQX ARC program for women's longevity. It spans "Stronger Women" strength training classes, lab testing from Function Health that measures 100 biomarkers focused on women biology and specific risks (heavy on hormone panels testing estradiol, testosterone, progesterone, cortisol, DHEA-S, LH, and FSH), and metabolic, thyroid and inflammation markers. This is integrated with wearables that track everything from sleep to cycle patterns, and

one-on-one sessions with certified women's health coaches. Their goal: support women's health and longevity across all hormonal and life stages. More gyms will become one of women's preventative care front doors: Strength + screening + recovery + coaching will converge, including partnerships with health systems and longevity clinics.

Shift 2: Telehealth Platforms Expand from Menopause to Women's Longevity

The mega telehealth and wearable giants generally, whether Hims & Hers, Oura, or Whoop, have all recently jumped into blood diagnostic testing for preventative health and longevity. At the same time, the big menopause care platforms are fast expanding into longevity programs for women. Midi Health, which has raised an impressive \$150 million (a sign of change for women's startups), took off because of online hormone prescriptions and menopause care. In 2025 it launched AgeWell, a longevity program specifically designed for women (and covered by US insurance), that, as their chief medical officer put it, moves longevity beyond the male "billionaires and biohackers" and addresses "the unique ways women age and the specific health risks we face." The clinician-led telehealth visits mean women talk with a real doctor instead of just getting test results and an AI-generated action plan, like so much of "online longevity." AgeWell combines blood biomarker

The startup concept, The Practice, exemplifies the gym-as-women's longevity-clinic, with an integrated, diagnostic first approach and a strength training framework built around the five key markers of healthspan. (Credit: The Practice)





The big telehealth, online menopause care, and women's virtual health platforms are all thinking beyond menopause to launch women's longevity programs. (Credit: Tia Health)

and genetic testing, full-body MRIs and DEXA scans, plus mammograms and Pap smears, to create personalized interventions around heart, brain, muscle, bone and hormonal health across a woman's life. [Lyv Health](#), launched in late 2025 as a virtual longevity clinic for women (with medical advisors from institutions like Harvard and Mayo), involves in-depth lab testing and doctor consultations, to forge a longevity plan, including stress, sleep, nutrition and exercise. Telehealth platforms will continue to launch with the premise that women's longevity can be delivered online and more affordably than the extremely expensive longevity clinics.

Shift 3: Wearables and Testing Platforms Rush to Women's Health

Diagnostics and wearables move from fertility to lifespan. More at-home blood, saliva, urine—and the emerging space of continuous hormone monitoring—is turning women's biology into trackable longitudinal data (not episodic doctor visits).

Wearables and diagnostic platforms are making moves to give women new data about everything from their hormones to their state of aging to their inflammation markers. The biggest wave is around hormones, but companies are now messaging that hormone tracking goes beyond fertility and predicts perimenopause and tracks ovarian

reserve—so ultimately serves as a longevity tool. The big wearables, like [Whoop](#) (its new “Hormonal Insights” feature) and [Oura](#), have moved into tracking metrics that support women through perimenopause and menopause. If [Mira](#) built its brand on hormone and ovulation tracking (via urine tests) to help women get pregnant faster, its new products like Ultra4 go further, with at-home tracking of key hormones around menopause and ovarian function (“Egg Count Intelligence”). Mira's CEO, Sylvia Kang, [has stated](#) that their goal is to test more fluids and go deeper, and really move into women's longevity and preventive health. Montréal-based, woman-founded [Eli Health's](#) mission is to make hormone testing as easy as testing your heart rate. Its Hormometer—a system that allows you to test with a saliva stick and get quick analysis in the app—started with cortisol, but has just moved into women's hormones, adding progesterone and estrogen monitoring.

The future? Continuous hormone monitors (CHMs) that give women an always-open window into their hormonal state. UK startup [Level Zero](#) is starting clinical trials on its arm patch, which uses DNA-based sensors that constantly track progesterone, estrogen and testosterone to reflect ovarian reserve, estimate when perimenopause will hit, and provide stress and inflammation markers. Tests are going in very new directions. [Base4](#), in Spain and Saudi Arabia, is an AI-powered multi-organ aging

test just for women, aiming to give a molecular-level view into biological changes before symptoms surface. Period blood, a rich source of information into hormones and health biomarkers (it's also a rich source of stem cells), has been ignored as a testing ground because of squeamishness. That's changing: Vivoo, for instance, just unveiled the first smart menstrual pad (maxipad-as-lab) that measures hormones for insight into ovarian reserve, perimenopause, inflammation, and more (with no blood-touching required).

Shift 4: More Women's & Functional Health Clinics Pivot to Women's Longevity

Women's medical practices and general functional medicine clinics are expanding into deeper longevity programming for women. Ponti Health, a women's practice in Sydney, Australia, is focused on women's longevity, bringing together doctors delivering preventative diagnostics, perimenopause/menopause care, endocrine health, pelvic floor- and woman-focused physiotherapy, bone health and osteoporosis prevention, and psychiatric support. Parsley Health, the US's largest functional medical practice (offering telehealth in all states and with physical locations in New York

City and Los Angeles) recently launched Longevity Labs for women, testing 100 biomarkers around cardiovascular, metabolic, thyroid, hormonal, bone and immune health. (It typically takes women a shocking five to seven years to get an auto-immune disease diagnosis through traditional medicine.) Their male-focused Longevity Labs are coming, and we applaud the order of their rollout.

Tia Health (four women's health locations in the US and a nationwide virtual clinic), recently launched its women's longevity program, aiming to be the first clinic to "normalize cardiovascular-first longevity care for women at scale." Heart disease, coded male, is the #1 killer of women, causing more female deaths than all cancers combined. Tia's program includes advanced labs into cardiometabolic and arterial health and inflammation and tracks biomarker improvements over time. It's now expanding its women's longevity track into brain health, autoimmune conditions, cancer risk, and more. We expect that the big platforms will consolidate the middle: a handful of large telehealth, diagnostics and specialty health platforms will become "operating systems" for women's longevity, bundling labs with coaching, Rx and community.

More longevity clinics are finally putting women at the center, such as Longevity Center (Switzerland, Poland), with woman-focused diagnostics and personalized intervention plans. (Credit: Longevity Center)



Shift 5: Women Longevity Clinics Will Grow; General Clinics Will Take Women More Seriously

If longevity clinics typically relegate “women’s health” to a niche program, the future is more dedicated longevity clinics for women—and more for-all clinics rolling out deeper women’s programs—with the diagnostics, longevity assessments, and interventions most relevant to women’s biological trajectory and unique risks.

Switzerland seems out in front. [Clinique Suisse](#) in Zurich is entirely dedicated to women’s health and longevity, combining functional medicine, diagnostics, hormonal therapies, neuro-emotional coaching, and surgical treatments, from pelvic floor reconstruction to endometriosis. [Longevity Center](#) (Switzerland and Poland) is open to all but has a strong focus on women-specific diagnostics, leading to individualized lifestyle plans, from nutrition to fitness. They zero in on the different hormonal stages across each decade of a woman’s life and believe that longevity is more than data, but also how the body and mind interact. [AYUN Longevity Clinic](#) (Zurich) recently launched a women’s program led by experts in genetics, gynecology, and longevity medicine. [EV Clinic](#) in Dubai, a functional medicine center

for everyone, founded by Anna Sepiolo, MD, a specialist in women’s longevity, has created a women’s healthspan program that includes deep diagnostics, hormone therapy and epigenetic testing.

It’s also striking how many women doctors have either founded or lead some of the world’s most respected longevity centers. For instance, Andrea B. Maier, MD, a prolific longevity science researcher and professor at the National University of Singapore, is founder of the very sophisticated Singapore clinic, [Chi Longevity](#). Tzipi Strauss, MD, professor at Tel Aviv University, directs the [Sheba Longevity Center](#), the world’s first within an academic medical institution—Sheba Medical Center—one of the world’s best hospitals.

Shift 6: Wellness Resorts: Less Pampering Menopause Retreats, More Precision Women’s Health and Longevity Programs

If women’s health was long a footnote in medicine and is often one in the new longevity space, you could also say that wellness resorts/retreats have underserved women. We’ve seen menopause retreats boom, but when you look under the hood, there’s often not much there:



Parsley Health, the US’s largest functional medicine clinic-platform, recently launched Longevity Labs for women, testing 100 biomarkers around cardiovascular, metabolic, thyroid, hormonal, immune and bone health. (Credit: Parsley Health)

Six Senses recently launched a dedicated Female Wellness program at four properties. Its unique focus: perimenopause, a crucial time for women to proactively get ahead of the negative biological changes kicking off with ovarian decline. (Source: Six Senses)



much pampering of menopause symptoms, some education, and the communal support of other women. All very important, but the next era in women's health at wellness destinations will expand beyond comforting menopause to much more sophisticated, structured medical-wellness programs for women's total health and longevity—that address every phase of a woman's life.

Italy's [Palazzo Fiuggi](#), a historic palace transformed into an advanced medical-wellness longevity destination, recently launched its Femina Program created by endocrinologists and gynecologists, revolving around interventions for perimenopause, menopause and women's longevity. The program includes molecular diagnostics, senescence testing, nutrigenomics, hormone mapping, breast and pelvic screenings, mental health sessions, movement diagnostics, and more.

The longevity powerhouse [SHA Wellness](#) (in Spain and Mexico, and coming to the UAE in 2027) recently launched a [Women's Unit](#) "focused solely on the longevity of women." A team of gynecologists, physiotherapists, psychologists, regenerative-medicine experts, revitalization physicians, TCM practitioners and osteopaths tackle the specific hormonal and health shifts women experience from adolescence to post-menopause. The program includes everything from advanced diagnostics to pelvic floor physiotherapy to personal training by a women-led team. A

special focus: therapies that encourage estrogen production, not just for menopause survival but for longevity, given its impact on the immune system, bones and cardiovascular health.

Wellness pioneer [Six Senses](#) has rolled out a dedicated Female Wellness program at its Rome, Italy, Douro Valley, Portugal, Kanuhura, Maldives, and Crans-Montana, Switzerland properties. Its unique focus: perimenopause, a crucial time for women to proactively get ahead of the biological changes kicking off with ovarian decline. The program is more proactive—goes deeper—than the old menopause retreats. Created with female health and hormonal expert, Dr. Mindy Pelz, it involves pre-stay screenings with experts, biometric testing, sleep analysis, continuous glucose monitoring and strength training—with a strong focus on using fasting principles that synch with hormonal cycles to impact hormonal and overall health.

[Canyon Ranch's](#) next location, coming to Austin, Texas, in Fall 2026, may represent the most ambitious and clearest example of the trend: a major new wellness destination for all, but one that's putting 360-degree medical-wellness programming for women's health at the center. The beating heart of the destination: a Women's Collective health hub that will deliver the interventions women most need across each decade of their lives—whether in their 20s, 50s or 90s.

Jennifer Wagner, MD, their chief health and performance officer, explained to us the unique vision and scope of this female-first project. They're bringing together a team of physicians, practitioners, and lifestyle experts that will collaborate to address all aspects of women's healthspan, zeroing in on the most precise and evidence-based optimizations for women. The program spans deep diagnostics, with a keen focus on cardiovascular, musculoskeletal, hormonal and pelvic floor health—tackling everything from inflammation during hormonal transitions to age-specific beauty. And their roadmap for female thriving reaches beyond the “clinical” to address women's emotional and financial health, community and connection.

As Wagner put it, “With so much new research on the very different ways that men and women age, we're excited to design this program from the *ground up*, with a goal of delivering true precision care for each decade of a woman's life.”

Wagner shared how their focus on gender-specific optimization even reached down into the design of physical spaces: for instance, even the cold plunges will be engineered to the optimal temp for men and women.

Shift 7: As Women Shape Longevity, We'll See Culture Change: Less Superhuman, More Human Approaches

The first chapter of longevity sprung from the high-tech, extreme practices of the self-optimizing tech bros. Their intense, competitive mindset still looms large in what the more evolved “longevity” market means today. We've had three years of solutions promising “bulletproof cellular health,” “superhuman energy,” and ways to become “ammortal.” We've been blasted with social media images of ageless men radiating light and power from some quantum-universe gym.

If women largely built the wellness market around pillars like stress-reduction, emotional wellness, social connection, touch, and spirituality, you could say that about three years ago men swooped in, “hardened up” the offerings (more tech, more medical), and hatched the new longevity space. The cornerstones of wellness have quickly taken a back seat at too many longevity clinics, despite the mountain of evidence that they, more than any current hack, improve both healthspan and longevity. We all know the stats, such as the dozens of studies showing how social connection is powerfully linked to a longer life.



Canyon Ranch's next location in Austin, TX, is a very ambitious version of the trend: putting 360-degree medical-wellness programming for women, designed for every decade of their lives, at the center. Its beating heart: its Women's Collective health hub. (Credit: Canyon Ranch)

Italian medical-wellness destination, Palazzo Fiuggi, recently launched its Femina Program for women's longevity, spanning molecular diagnostics, senescence testing, nutrigenomics, hormone mapping and mental health sessions. (Credit: Palazzo Fiuggi)



A backlash against the stressful “chasing a number” version of longevity is everywhere now, along with pushback against a longevity market where human connection, joy and meaning aren’t given equal weight or cred for their evidence. The call to bring back those wellness foundations to the heart of longevity is getting vocal, especially from women doctors and experts. For instance, during her keynote at the 2025 Global Wellness Summit, wellness pioneer Anna Bjurstam of Six Senses, presented the evidence for why spirituality belongs alongside diagnostic testing as a core longevity pathway. She threw down the challenge: “Let’s build clinics that don’t just extend years, but ones that deepen connection, purpose and awe.” Or, as Jessica Horwitz, chief clinical officer at Tia put it about their new women’s medical longevity program: “We envision longevity as a lifelong journey that helps women feel better, not a gamified optimization of lab metrics.”

So, while this trend is very much about advanced diagnostic and medical solutions for women’s healthspan, we already see that built-by-women-for-women longevity programs are more integrative, giving mental and emotional wellness their central places. It’s notable that a key focus of the Buck Institute for Research on Aging’s recent [Longevity Summit](#) was “Longevity Through a Female Lens,” and that a panel of scientists and clinic owners explored how “decoding female aging” means embracing the science of “physical, mental and emotional longevity.”

Condé Nast Traveler’s prediction for the biggest wellness travel trends in 2026 are experiences that feel “less like a doctor’s visit” and more like a fun vacation—a shift from diagnostic-driven stays to super-social experiences. We agree, but we think women will also embrace the new, more serious, doctor- and expert-led medical-wellness longevity programs finally designed for THEM. And more destinations will unite medicine and diagnostics with joy and connection as the best, most evidence-based longevity plan.

THE FUTURE

In researching this trend for months, our response has been equal parts anger and astonishment. We felt angry that we were never made aware that the ovary was the central conductor of female biology and health, and that it’s “death” at menopause had such a terrible, long fallout on our cardiovascular, brain, immune and bone function. Angry that since women have won the longevity lottery (they live longer) medicine didn’t seem to care if they lived many more sick years than men. Angry that women who experienced early menopause had such higher rates of early death. Angry that only [1% of healthcare research and innovation](#) is invested in female-specific conditions, beyond oncology. *Still.*

Angry that, despite the outsized impact of ovarian aging on women’s lives, medicine hadn’t even



There's major pushback against a longevity market where meaning, joy, emotional wellness, spirituality and human connection aren't given equal weight or cred for their evidence. As women enter longevity, the pillars of wellness will take their rightful place in longevity programs. (Credit: Canyon Ranch)

bothered to decode the ovary and its complex impact on women's organs and systems; or found a perfect way to measure ovarian function across a life. Angry that, if ovarian aging is the earliest, best predictor of women's whole-body aging, we're never given ovarian aging tests. Angry that, while treatments like HRT have been around for decades, there still isn't a clear picture of its impact on longevity and conditions like heart disease or dementia, and that there has been zero innovation in the space. Angry that, because of this criminal lack of investment into researching women's health and the ovary, we're now generations behind with interventions. Angry that if this happened to men, it would be solved.

We feel frustrated that attempts by (largely) women scientists to create interventions that could delay (or even end) ovarian decline—hence menopause—is met with a fierce judgment that it's unnatural. And angry that women are uniquely required to always accept—and even celebrate—their aging and decline as simply the price-tag of being female.

At the same time, we were frustrated by longevity clinics that relegate women's health to a drop-down tab, if they even addressed it at all, and that they were all in on diagnostics like “biological

aging clocks” while disregarding women's actual biological timelines.

Frustrated by a wellness market that, despite being the liberating place where menopause has recently become less taboo, still relies on celebrities as brand leaders, and has remained mostly stuck in “wellness-lite,” pampering approaches for menopause, flooding women with unproven supplements. We're frustrated that women's health is so grotesquely under-researched and at the same time so overmarketed in wellness. (Don't click on a post for online HRT or the barrage of ads will take years off your life.)

But a new, much more serious era for women's longevity and healthspan really does feel here. The culture has caught up. The frustration has finally led to action. And the new “man-gevity” market has certainly helped expose the gender gaps. A new group of women scientists are driving a wave of innovation (and investment) in ovarian health and aging—and a major media reframing is underway about what finally constitutes evidence-based longevity care for women. As one of these scientific trailblazers, Jennifer Garrison, put it on *TIME*: “It's about time for women's health to take a front seat. We've got to do something different, something really big.”

Implications for Wellness

We wrote this trend because there is a profound disconnect between the emerging science on ovarian aging—and its impact across women’s health—and the wellness space. We’ve detailed how that is now starting to change, with clinics, wellness resorts, telehealth platforms, wearables, diagnostics, and gyms all expanding beyond hormones and menopause to full lifespan approaches for women.

A few opportunities for the wellness market:

- Biotech labs are busy working on that breakthrough intervention that could slow ovarian aging—whether cellular and stem cell approaches, tissue preservation, anti-fibrotic targets or novel therapeutics. Medicine moves very slowly, which is why the medical-wellness preventative longevity clinics (and all kinds of new concierge care) have recently exploded. It’s possible that novel therapeutics could live under that medical-wellness umbrella, just as the new diagnostic testing and GLP-1s have done.
- Before such breakthroughs, preventative, integrative approaches are key. Wellness centers can take the lead on testing for ovarian age, hormonal states, and for the conditions that most befall women, to deliver personalized medical-wellness interventions that could both help forestall ovarian decline and manage the problems that arise in its wake. Wellness destinations can zero in on proactively stopping muscle loss, cognitive decline, insulin resistance, inflammaging and stress as explicit ovarian aging interventions.
- Ovarian function will become a key vital sign and women’s healthspan metric. We expect that ovarian health measurements will become routine and happen earlier, with AMH and next-gen biomarkers integrated into preventative models. Longevity and medical-wellness centers could lead the way with tracking AMH and ovarian aging markers to transform preventative care for women.
- Women’s health follows the complex stages of ovarian health (ovary-span), so a multi-

decade testing and intervention paradigm is required for women’s health—not just focusing on the “second half” of their lives. This offers much bigger care opportunities for wellness companies than the narrow focus on menopause. We’ll see more women’s longevity programs designed for every decade, from the teens to 90s. Tackling ovarian aging also shifts everything far earlier. This is what young women are already doing. For instance, in [The Flow Space’s 2026 wellness trends forecast](#), they name “you’re going to start planning for dementia once you turn 40” as a top trend.

- As women enter longevity, the metric obsession won’t disappear, but the definition of optimization will include resilience, emotional regulation, human connection, and quality-of-life outcomes. The heartbeat of wellness will take its rightful place in longevity programs.

We don’t know of a wellness center, longevity clinic, or wellness resort that has created a program specifically designed to optimize ovarian health and aging: a truly integrated program that tests, measures, and intervenes consistently over a woman’s life. But we think that is the future.

Researching this trend has been a powerful, belated education. And we don’t see the new focus on women’s healthspan, and the interventions around slowing ovarian aging, as a “trend.” It looks to redefine women’s health, and what a woman’s longevity paradigm should look like, going forward. And oh, only potentially transform the lives of 4 billion people, known as women.



A backlash against over-optimization is emerging—a recalibration that prioritizes regulation over results, sensation over scores and internal coherence over external validation. (Credit: Open Meditation)

The Over-Optimization Backlash

Pushing Back on Peak Wellness

We've tracked our steps, scored our sleep and hacked our biology—and created a culture of constant self-surveillance. In 2026, the next phase of wellness moves beyond performance, towards emotional repair, nervous-system safety and embodied care.

By Jessica Smith

INTRODUCTION

We're living through a paradox: Never before has wellbeing been so measurable—and never before has it felt so psychologically demanding. Sleep is scored, glucose is graphed, aging is tracked. Health is no longer something we sense, but something we perform correctly. What began as empowerment has quietly slid into self-surveillance.

This is not a backlash against progress. Longevity research, diagnostics and health technology have dramatically expanded what we can know about the body—often with profound benefit. But optimization without integration has consequences. As the volume of health data grows, the question is no longer what we can measure, but what humans can realistically process and regulate. As therapist Kate Miskevics, who specialises in anxiety and compulsive behaviors, observes: “When

health becomes overly data-driven, it can tip from motivation into fixation—turning insight into pressure rather than support.”

Evidence increasingly suggests that optimization itself has become a stressor. Rather than easing anxiety, wellness has absorbed the logic of high performance: discipline, visibility and constant comparison. Tracking culture intensifies this pressure. Reporting from the *New York Times* shows how sleep wearables can undermine intuition, with users experiencing anxiety after low sleep scores even when they initially felt rested—a phenomenon now clinically recognized as orthosomnia. This effect has been demonstrated experimentally. In a Harvard Health-reported study, people told they had slept poorly felt more fatigued the next day despite no actual change in sleep quality. The data, not the body, shaped the experience. *The Verge* has similarly documented how continuous glucose

monitoring among non-diabetic users is fueling food fixation and disordered eating, particularly among women already vulnerable to body-image pressure.

The impact is not only emotional, but cognitive. Research from [MIT's Media Lab](#) shows that reliance on AI tools for thinking and decision-making reduces neural engagement and memory retention—raising concerns that outsourcing cognition, like outsourcing bodily intuition, weakens internal regulation over time. Health, work and self-care now demand constant interpretation: what to eat, what to track, how to optimize sleep, hormones, focus and longevity. Instead of clarity, many experience analysis paralysis—too many inputs, too many “right” answers, and a growing fear of getting it wrong.

Together, these signals reveal the limits of an optimization model that treats the body like a programmable system. Humans are relational, sensory and inherently non-linear. Optimization can fine-tune performance, but it cannot satisfy deeper needs for connection, agency and emotional coherence. What's emerging in response is not a rejection of science or technology, but a backlash against over-optimization—a recalibration that prioritizes regulation over results, sensation over scores and internal coherence over external validation. The next chapter of wellbeing will be defined not by how intensively we optimize, but how fully we feel alive.

FUELING THE TREND

Optimization Fatigue

What once felt aspirational—biohacking routines, longevity stacks and wearable-guided habits—is increasingly experienced as emotionally draining. Instead of delivering motivation, optimization culture now carries the weight of obligation: routines to maintain, standards to uphold and visible proof of “doing wellness right.”

This shift is playing out at scale. According to the [Pew Research Center](#), nearly one in five US adults

now regularly uses a smartwatch or fitness tracker, embedding performance metrics into everyday life. But the emotional return is diminishing. A 2024 global [lululemon](#) study found that 61% of people feel pressure to appear “well,” while 45% report experiencing wellbeing burnout—exhaustion driven not by illness, but by the expectation to continually improve health, bodies and routines.

Culturally, the mood is turning. As Victoria Buchanan observes: “We've reached the point where optimization has become its own form of anxiety. When every run needs to be tracked, every meal logged and every recovery session measured, the pursuit of marginal gains starts to feel like a second job.”

What is being rejected is not science or progress, but the idea that wellbeing must be constantly engineered, displayed and perfected to be legitimate.

Biohacker Backlash

As biohacking culture reaches saturation, more people are questioning whether peak performance is actually making them feel better. What began as a niche longevity movement has hardened into an optimization mindset—one that treats the body as a system to hack rather than a state to inhabit.

Wellness platform [Healf](#) has become a cultural mirror to this shift. Through weekly posts, it satirizes the emotional emptiness behind engineered routines. “If you cold plunge every morning but haven't hugged someone for days, is your nervous system really regulated?” asks one. Another: “If you track your sleep but sleep alone, is your body missing the emotional rest that comes from closeness?”

Psychologists increasingly describe this tension as “[betterment burnout](#)”—the paradox where relentless self-improvement reduces life satisfaction rather than enhancing it. Instead of clarity or control, hyper-optimization often produces emotional detachment and a sense of disconnection from the body.

A gender reckoning is also embedded in this backlash. Much of biohacking's canon—[fasting](#)

protocols, cold exposure and extreme training loads—has been developed and tested primarily on male bodies. Female health researchers are now challenging the assumption that these practices are universally beneficial. A 2025 study found that post-exercise cold-water immersion delivered no meaningful recovery benefits for women, directly contradicting earlier male-led research and exposing how “discipline” in optimization culture can translate into physiological overload.

Taken together, these signals explain why biohacking is losing cultural credibility. The backlash is not about abandoning routines, but about reclaiming agency—and redefining what wellness is meant to support.

Hypervigilance Culture

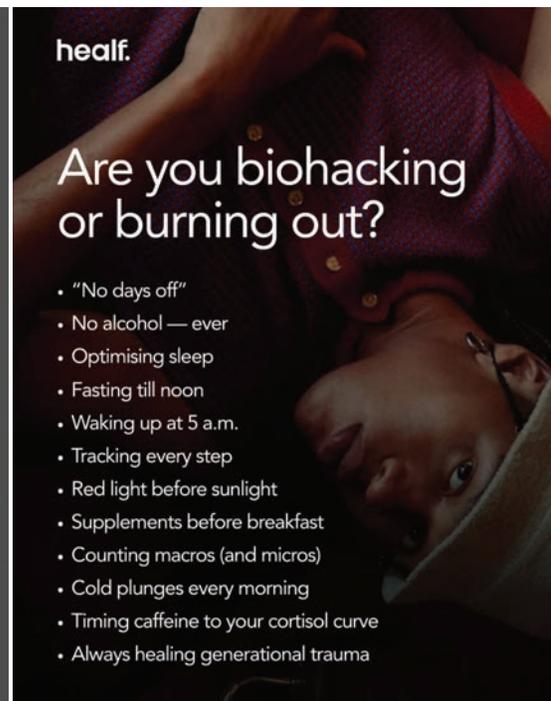
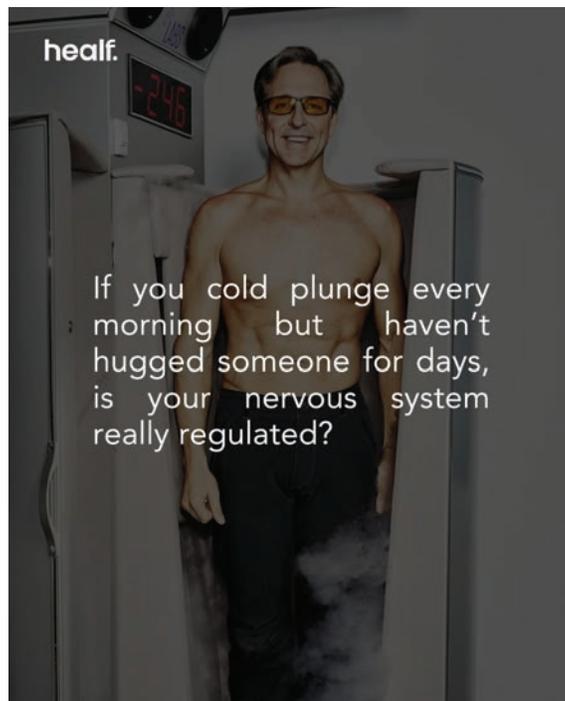
As wellness knowledge expands, so does vigilance. Tracking, testing and avoidance behaviors have become embedded in everyday life, but research suggests that constant threat monitoring may be doing more harm than good. A 2024–2025 review published in Frontiers in Psychology found that frequent optimization behaviors are associated with heightened anxiety, obsessive thinking and reduced trust in internal bodily cues—particularly

among individuals with perfectionist traits. Rather than creating reassurance, vigilance often amplifies fear, turning health into a continuous risk calculation.

At the same time, biohacking has expanded beyond routines into full-spectrum environmental alertness. Plastics, non-stick cookware, water purity, ingredient lists, endocrine disruptors and “hidden toxins” now shape daily health decisions. Wellbeing no longer lives in practices alone—it lives in ongoing threat assessment. Health is not just something people do; it is something they guard against.

Emerging research suggests this heightened awareness can undermine the very outcomes it promises. Studies in psychoneuroendocrinology show that perceived threat alone is enough to activate stress pathways associated with inflammation, impaired digestion and metabolic disruption. Research published in 2024 demonstrates that chronic anticipatory stress alters gut-brain signaling and hormonal regulation, meaning the body processes food, recovery and even “healthy” inputs differently when operating under anxiety. In this context, fear itself becomes part of the physiological load.

Wellness platform Healf has become a cultural mirror through weekly posts that satirize the emotional emptiness behind engineered routines. (Credit: Healf)





Gen Z is increasingly choosing rest, emotional safety and personal autonomy over upward mobility at any cost. (Credit: Adobe Stock)

As Anne-Claire Marsden, naturopathic nutritional therapist and co-founder of [The London Wellbeing & Nutrition Clinic](#), observes: “I see clients who are doing everything right on paper—eating clean and avoiding every perceived toxin—yet their nervous systems are constantly on edge. When food and lifestyle choices are driven by fear, the body doesn’t experience them as nourishment.”

Toxic Perfectionism

Perfection has become a modern pathology. Across work, wellness and daily life, people are contorting themselves to meet standards that are increasingly unachievable—and emotionally draining. What was once framed as self-improvement has quietly become self-surveillance, with optimization applied not just to productivity, but to bodies, emotions and identity itself.

Recent research suggests that perfectionism is no longer just a personal trait, but a cultural condition. A 2024 global study by [Dove and the Centre for Appearance Research](#) found that more than 60% of young adults feel constant pressure to optimize their appearance, with researchers linking this form of body surveillance to increased stress, emotional fatigue and lower wellbeing—not greater confidence. Rather than empowering individuals, optimization increasingly turns the self into a site of continuous evaluation.

This pressure is playing out at population level. In the UK, [the 2025 Burnout Report](#) shows stress-related exhaustion continuing to rise, with burnout increasingly framed as a structural issue rather than

an individual failing. In the US, workplace stress has reached a six-year high.

Globally, younger generations are beginning to push back. [In China](#), movements such as tang ping (“lying flat”) and bai lan (“let it rot”) reflect growing resistance to hyper-competitive work and appearance standards. Surveys and cultural reporting show Gen Z increasingly rejecting the [996 work culture](#) (where employees are expected to work 9 am to 9 pm, six days a week) and the relentless self-discipline it demands—choosing rest, emotional safety and personal autonomy over upward mobility at any cost.

This psychological strain is also reshaping identity language online. A growing number of people now describe themselves as [Type B](#)—relaxed, unhurried and deliberately non-competitive—as a humorous counter-identity to the Type A ideal that has dominated the past decade. Its popularity signals not laziness, but fatigue: a collective rejection of the pressure to hustle, perfect and perform the self without pause.

Pleasure Deficit

A growing lack of joy is shaping the wellness landscape. Amid constant pressure to be productive and perfected, people are spending less time on activities that offer genuine pleasure or creative rest. This includes everything from hobbies to reading, which has declined by roughly [40%](#) over the past two decades. This erosion of everyday enjoyment is contributing to rising loneliness and a sense of emotional flatness.

At the same time, the rapid rise of GLP-1 medications is revealing another layer of the issue. These drugs don't only suppress appetite—they often mute desire more broadly. Many users report reduced interest in food, alcohol, sex, shopping and even socializing. In other words, the internal reward system itself feels quieter.

Taken together, these shifts point to a wider cultural deficit in pleasure. As joy, craving and spontaneity become dulled—whether by lifestyle pressures or pharmaceutical trends—people are seeking wellness practices that reignite feeling, connection and emotional vitality.

As Anna Bjurstam, wellness pioneer at Six Senses, observes: “We can optimize every biomarker, but if we're not emotionally and spiritually coherent, we're still aging under stress. The body doesn't just respond to nutrition and sleep—it responds to whether we feel seen, safe and loved. People no longer want to track more. They want to feel more.”

Her perspective reflects a broader shift underway: from biohacking to human wholeness, and from self-improvement to self-remembering. In a culture where pleasure has been sidelined or pharmacologically softened, wellness is being redefined not as control, but as reconnection—with sensation, meaning and the full spectrum of feeling.

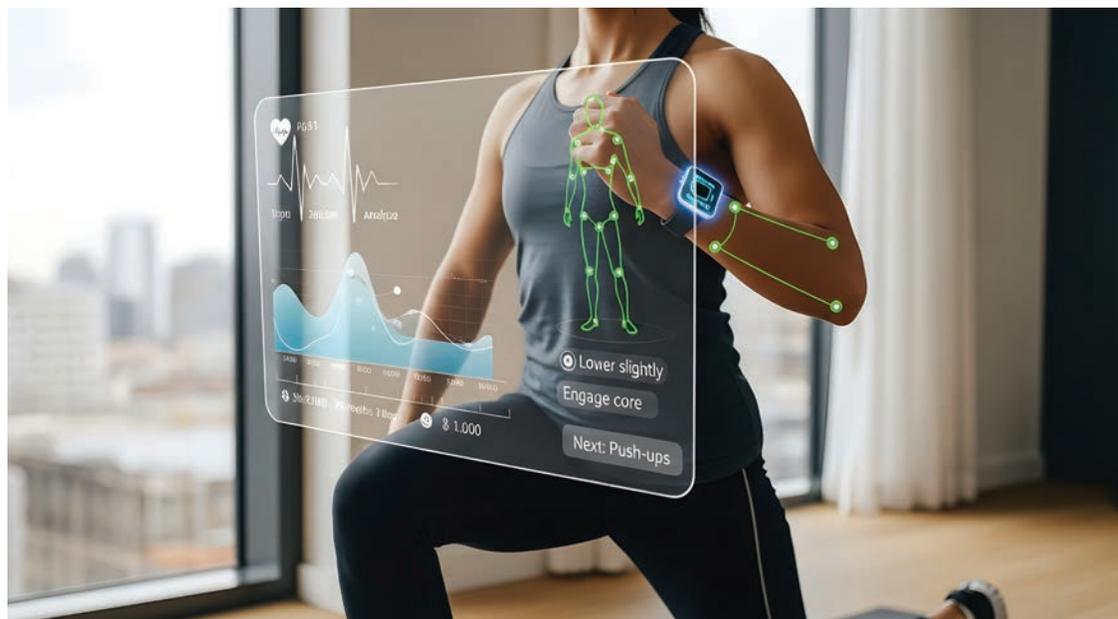
Performance Culture Breakdown

Performance-driven living is reaching a breaking point. For years, fitness, sport and everyday wellbeing have been shaped by the language of discipline, optimization and continual improvement. But under mounting geopolitical tension, economic instability and digital overload, these expectations are becoming emotionally unsustainable. What once symbolized ambition now increasingly amplifies anxiety, inadequacy and fatigue.

The cracks are showing most clearly at the extremes. In elite sport, the launch of the Enhanced Games—a competition that openly endorses performance-enhancing drugs—exposes how far optimization culture has stretched. Olympic silver medallist Ben Proud's decision to align with the event reflects a growing disillusionment with traditional, metric-heavy sporting structures. As journalist Sam Rider observes, “Like it or loathe it, the Enhanced Games are not going away.”

Medical evidence reinforces this collapse. Professor Jiří Dvořák, neurologist and former FIFA chief medical officer, warns that long-term physical and psychological stress is routinely underestimated, and often masked rather than addressed. “People tend to suppress warning symptoms with medication instead of understanding the underlying cause,” he explains. In elite

Evidence increasingly suggests that optimization itself has become a stressor, and that tracking culture increases this pressure. (Credit: Adobe Stock)



environments, he notes, repeated micro-injuries, reliance on painkillers and stress-reducing drugs may sustain short-term output, but “over time, these minor injuries accumulate into major damage, limiting both physical and mental performance.”

Nervous-System Dysregulation

People aren't just stressed—they're dysregulated. Beneath burnout, anxiety and fatigue sits a deeper physiological issue: nervous systems stuck in survival mode. [Gallup's 2025 global data](#) shows that 39% of adults experienced high anxiety and 37% high stress the day before being surveyed, signalling a population struggling to return to baseline rather than simply manage busy lives.

What's striking is how poorly traditional wellness has met this moment. Much of the last decade's wellbeing culture has been built around discipline, self-improvement and individual optimization—asking people to fix themselves rather than feel safe, supported or connected. The result is not resilience, but rigidity. As Jamie Clements, founder of The Breath Space, explains: “Stress and anxiety are often just surface symptoms of something deeper—a void of meaning, purpose

and connection. Wellness has been rooted in individualism, perfectionism and escapism, pushing us away from true community and wholeness.”

Rather than restoring regulation, many modern wellness practices have compounded dysregulation. The body remains in a state of vigilance—always assessing, correcting and bracing. The nervous system never fully switches off.

This helps explain the growing pull toward practices that prioritize safety over striving: breathwork, sound, somatic release, ritual and shared emotional experience. Demand for emotional and spiritual regulation tools is accelerating, as the [global spiritual wellness apps](#) market reached \$2.16 billion in 2024 and is forecast to grow at 14.6% annually through 2033.

What people are buying into isn't optimization, but relief. Not better performance, but steadiness and connection. Wellbeing is being reframed: regulation, not optimization, is becoming the baseline need. Healing is no longer about pushing harder—it's about restoring connection to the body, to others and to a felt sense of being okay.



Designers are rethinking how what we wear and touch can ground the senses, downshift the nervous system and offer subtle psychological protection. (Credit: Open Meditation)

After years of being told to breathe, regulate and optimize, people are craving permission to unravel. (Credit: Adobe Stock)



ASPECTS OF THE TREND

Emotional Release Rituals

After years of being told to breathe, regulate and optimize, people are craving permission to unravel. Emotional release rituals replace quiet discipline with embodied expression: sound, movement and collective discharge. From scream circles to rage-led group sessions, these practices offer a controlled loss of control: a way to offload emotional weight that mindfulness alone can no longer contain.

This shift reflects growing recognition that the nervous system does not always resolve stress through calm alone, but often requires completion—the physical finishing of interrupted stress responses. Trauma psychiatrist and author [Bessel van der Kolk](#), best known for *The Body Keeps the Score*, has shown that unresolved stress is stored in the body and often requires movement, sound and physical expression—not stillness alone—to resolve.

Globally, this insight is showing up in varied ways. Viral [TikTok](#) group screams, communal [Scream Club](#) circles, [somatic release classes](#) and [rage-release formats](#) signal a cultural demand for sanctioned emotional discharge—even when some expressions veer toward spectacle rather than therapy. At the same time, more contained formats are emerging. In India, [crying clubs](#) invite participants to cry openly in group settings,

positioning tears as physiological release rather than emotional weakness.

The next evolution of this trend is more subtle and body-led. Practices such as spinal energetics—developed over the past decade by Australian chiropractor [Dr. Sarah Jane](#)—build on established somatic and trauma principles, but shift the focus from deliberate expression to involuntary release. Rather than instructing participants to scream or shake, the practice works with the nervous system to allow spontaneous movement, tremoring and sound to emerge organically. As [Dr. Sarah Jane](#) explains to *Women's Health Magazine*: “Healing isn’t about forcing emotions away. It’s about allowing them to move through.”

Its growing mainstream visibility reflects a broader recalibration. Emotional release is increasingly understood not as excess or indulgence, but as a physiological necessity. As optimization fatigue deepens, embodied release—whether loud or subtle—is being reclaimed as essential to regulation, resilience and long-term mental health.

Pleasure-Forward Wellness

Optimization fatigue also means that the sector is shifting away from discipline, deprivation and endurance, and towards experiences people actively look forward to. Pleasure-forward wellness reframes enjoyment as functional rather than frivolous, recognizing that anticipation, emotional reward and sensory engagement are key to sustaining long-term wellbeing behaviors.



Immersive installations such as [The Forest Within](#) in New York City, created in partnership with goop founder Gwyneth Paltrow, use sensory saturation—sound, scent, light and stillness—to slow perception and deepen presence, inviting people to feel more rather than optimize outcomes. (Credit: Genesis)

This shift has been articulated by Six Senses' Bjurstam, who argues that the industry has long relied on a language of suffering. As she notes, "the future of wellness lies in understanding the science of feeling good." In this model, pleasure is not indulgence but a biological driver—with anticipation often delivering as much emotional impact as the experience itself.

The clearest expression of this logic is the rise of contemporary sauna culture. According to the British Sauna Society, the number of Finnish-style saunas in the UK doubled from 45 in 2023 to more than 100 in 2024, and is expected to double again by the end of 2025. Sauna is being reimagined not as an endurance test, but as a ritualized, sensory experience designed to create desire and repeat engagement. In London, [Sauna Social Club](#) and [Arc Community](#) foreground atmosphere, pacing and choice—using zoned spaces or classes for connection and quiet, as well as curated lighting, sound and scent, and practices such as *aufguss*. Heat becomes something to savor, not survive.

Soon-to-launch [Soak](#) extends this shift by repositioning sauna as a social ritual rather than a test of endurance. Set within a floating narrow boat, it integrates heat and cold with hospitality and beautiful design to create a unique experience that's meant to be a shared joy, rather than an individual discipline. The pleasure begins before the heat does. As co-founder Riccardo Codacci-Pisanelli explains: "The physiological benefits of sauna are well understood. What's often overlooked is the role of space, setting and who you share

the experience with. Our most meaningful sauna experiences have always been by water, with friends and family - that's what we're recreating in the city."

This anticipation-led approach is also surfacing in adjacent cultural and clinical spaces. Immersive installations such as [The Forest Within](#) in New York City use sensory saturation—sound, scent, light and stillness—to slow perception and deepen presence, inviting people to feel more rather than optimize outcomes. At the clinical end, [SHA Wellness Clinic](#) has integrated sexual wellbeing into its longevity model, positioning intimacy and desire as indicators of vitality and engagement, not peripheral lifestyle concerns.

Together, these signals point to a recalibration in wellness design. As burnout and emotional flatness rise, adherence is no longer driven by discipline alone. Instead, wellness that people return to is increasingly built around anticipation—making pleasure not the reward for health, but the mechanism that sustains it.

Functional Diets

Food culture is moving out of restriction and into repair. After a decade dominated by free-from logic—cutting sugar, gluten or carbs to signal discipline—consumers are rejecting dietary moralism in favor of food freedom. The goal is no longer purity, but resilience: enjoying real life while reducing the physiological cost of modern indulgence.

Rather than eliminating pleasure, people are seeking functional buffers that work with how they actually eat and drink. This shift is visible in the rise of glucose-moderation tools popularized by [Jessie Inchauspé](#), whose supplements and education reframe blood sugar management as supportive rather than punitive. Similarly, Beiersdorf's [glycation-protective actives](#) address sugar's downstream effects on skin and aging without demanding abstinence.

This logic is also reshaping experiential food and drink. At [Brown's Hotel's Donovan Bar](#) in London, cocktails are designed to evoke emotional states—adrenaline, wonder, indecision—positioning indulgence as a curated sensory journey rather than a guilty pleasure. Function here is emotional, not nutritional: mood, memory and feeling become part of the value exchange.

At the other end of the spectrum, brands like [Happy Thoughts](#) inject humour and hedonism into functional beverages, pairing dopamine-supporting ingredients with playful flavour names and a deliberate rejection of optimization culture. As co-founder Jason Gaboriau tells [LS:N Global](#): “We wanted to make something that tastes amazing and makes you feel good without overthinking it.”

Together, these signals point to a new wellness contract: liberation, not limitation. Consumers want to eat, drink and socialize—but with guardrails that soften harm without amplifying fear. Functional foods are becoming emotional safety nets, not performance tools. In this context, “functional” doesn't mean frivolous. It means freedom with foresight: wellbeing that supports real life, rather than policing it.

Post-Performance Wellness

Wellness has long mirrored the logic of sport: discipline, measurement, improvement. But as burnout deepens and perfection loses its shine, a new sensibility is emerging—one that rejects optimization as a life strategy. Performance is no longer the point. Presence is.

This shift is reshaping the playbook for global brands. In 2025, Swiss performance company On launched a series of quietly radical campaigns that moved away from metrics and mastery—and toward depth, ritual and emotional resonance. One featured [Kurt Steiner](#), a man who has spent decades mastering the unmasterable: stone skipping. The film celebrated patience and devotion without targets, pace or output—an ode to practice for its own sake.

Swiss performance company On launched a series of quietly radical campaigns that moved away from metrics and mastery, including one featuring Kurt Steiner, a man who has spent decades mastering the art of stone skipping. (Credit: On)





Swiss performance company On cast Elmo—the joyfully soft Sesame Street icon—as a symbol of emotional strength over physical dominance for its Soft Wins campaign. (Credit: On)

As Victoria Buchanan, co-founder of Sports Research Studio Non-Sweat and former director of Emerging Trends and Cultural Insights at Nike, explains: “On’s approach signals a shift from optimization narratives to what I’d call wisdom signaling—positioning brands around depth, patience and mindful engagement rather than efficiency and hacks. It’s less ‘how fast can you go’ and more ‘how deeply can you experience this.’”

Crucially, this reframing is not just cultural—it’s increasingly supported by science. [Psychological research](#) shows that positive affect, playfulness and enjoyment enhance cognitive flexibility, creativity and learning performance. Rather than distracting from achievement, pleasure improves the brain’s ability to adapt and sustain effort over time. In this context, depth and enjoyment are not the opposite of performance—they are part of its mechanism.

On extended this philosophy further with [Soft Wins](#), casting Elmo—the joyfully soft Sesame Street icon—as a symbol of emotional strength over physical dominance. In a culture addicted to intensity, softness was reframed as resilience. “Softness can be strength,” said CMO Alex Griffin.

This also helps explain the quiet rise of anti-metric movement cultures: [slow running clubs](#), [analogue running groups](#) and [athletes](#) deliberately leaving trackers behind. These movements reject optimization not through protest, but through

absence—removing data to reclaim sensation, rhythm and intrinsic motivation.

Other brands are following suit. Nike’s 2025 campaign reframes its ethos from [Just Do It to Why Do It?](#)—a pivot from output to intention, and from competition to connection. Across sport, wellness and movement culture, performance is being redefined not as pressure, but as presence. Doing something not to win—but to feel.

What’s emerging is a post-performance philosophy: one that values depth over dominance, ritual over routine, and lived experience over measurable gain. In this new era, the most radical act isn’t chasing your limits—it’s choosing not to.

Nervous System Tech

After a decade of optimization-led wellness technology, a quieter paradigm is emerging—one designed not to push, score or correct the body, but to regulate it. These new tools prioritize nervous-system calm, intuitive recovery and emotional attunement over performance metrics or behavioral pressure. (For an in-depth look at the new solutions, see our dedicated “The Rise of Neurowellness” trend.)

Leading this shift is [Yōjō](#), a wellness system combining non-invasive vagus nerve stimulation, biofeedback and human coaching. Rather than driving targets, its rhythm-responsive approach

helps users sense physiological states and guide the body back toward balance.

In the bedroom, Ambient's Dreamie replaces phone-based stimulation with circadian lighting and soft audio cues, supporting sleep without screens, scores or interaction. The technology works *around* the nervous system, not through cognitive effort.

At a spatial level, London wellness club Grey Wolfe blends advanced diagnostics with somatic therapies such as Airnergy+ (photosynthesis-inspired oxygen therapy) and Rebalance Impulse, a light-guided bed that synchronises Alpha and Theta brainwaves. It's high-tech healing grounded in rhythm, not control.

Wearable innovation is shifting too. The Nuna pendant uses radar and voice analysis to detect emotional shifts, offering gentle breath prompts or haptic feedback when stress rises. It doesn't gamify wellbeing—it quietly supports emotional presence.

Together, these systems signal a fundamental design turn: from performance and perfection to

presence and repair. Nervous system tech is no longer about optimizing harder. It's about learning how to come down.

Regulation Wear

A new frontier is emerging in product and textile design—one that treats materials not as passive surfaces, but as active tools for emotional and physiological support. From footwear to sleepwear to home textiles, designers are rethinking how what we wear and touch can ground the senses, downshift the nervous system and offer subtle psychological protection.

Nike's Mind 001 and Mind 002 shoes mark a step-change in this thinking. Designed as neuroscience-informed footwear, they aim to help athletes regulate their mental state before and after performance. Built with 22 independent foam nodes that act like micro gimbals, the shoes amplify tactile feedback and ground-feel, heightening bodily awareness, presence and calm. Their development was informed by mobile brain and body imaging, tracking cognition, sensory input and stress responses in motion.

Nike's Mind shoes, designed as neuroscience-informed footwear, aim to help athletes regulate their mental state before and after performance. Their development was informed by mobile brain and body imaging, tracking cognition, sensory input and stress responses in motion. (Credit: Nike)



Moving from performance to rest, Japanese brand [ZZZN](#) has introduced the Sleep Apparel System—a multifunctional puffer jacket that doubles as on-the-go sleepwear. Inspired by traditional Yagi coats, it integrates photoelectric fibre for thermal regulation, red-blue circadian lighting, frequency-based sound and biometric tracking via the SOXAI ring. The result is sleep technology as embodied design: a wearable cocoon for nervous-system regulation.

Comfort is becoming olfactory, too. In late 2024, Cotton Inc. partnered with fragrance house D.S. & Durga to launch the [Cool Calm Cotton Set](#), a premium lavender-scented blanket designed to promote nervous-system calm. Woven from breathable cotton and infused with spike lavender, vetiver and herbs, it pairs scent with ritual, reinforced by a stitched mantra encouraging slow, intentional care.

Together, these examples point to a clear shift in design values. Products are no longer expected only to perform, optimize or express identity, but to regulate. This is material culture built for grounding, softness and emotional repair, responding to a world that has become chronically overstimulating.

Low-Stimulation Wellness: Intentional Stillness

After a decade of constant stimulation, curation and self-optimization, a quieter form of wellness is emerging—one that treats low input as active regulation. Born on TikTok as “[rawdoggging life](#),” this viral rejection of stimulation has grown into a full-blown cultural detox—one where people are removing noise, resisting distraction, and sitting with their own minds. Intentional stillness reframes rest not as collapse or avoidance, but as a deliberate practice of nervous-system recovery. The goal is not productivity or insight, but presence.

In wellness hospitality, properties are designing experiences that reduce choice, noise and instruction in favour of rhythm and containment. At [Blackberry Mountain in Tennessee](#), programming now includes somatic sculpt classes that blend silent disco with mindful movement, alongside watercolour reiki and lunar rituals. At [Cayo Levantado’s Yubarata Wellness Centre](#) in the Dominican Republic, full- and new-moon ceremonies anchor monthly programming, using song, journaling and intention-setting to mark time rather than maximize performance.

Stillness is also being reintroduced through low-stimulation, lo-fi activities that ground attention in



London wellness club Grey Wolfe blends advanced diagnostics with somatic therapies such as Rebalance Impulse, a light-guided bed that synchronises Alpha and Theta brainwaves. (Credit: Grey Wolfe)

'Star bathing'—quiet, unstructured presence under the night sky—is being adopted by wellness resorts worldwide. (Credit: Adobe Stock)



the body and hands. At [Sterrekopje farm in South Africa](#), guests spend days gardening, learning botany and regenerative farming between bathing rituals—a “soil-to-soul” approach to regulation. In the US, Mah Jongg has surged as a social wellness activity, offering slow cognition, tactile play and shared focus.

Nature-based stillness is another key expression. “Star bathing”—quiet, unstructured presence under the night sky—is being adopted by wellness resorts worldwide. [Cal-a-Vie Health Spa](#) in California calls this “galaxy wellness,” pairing stargazing with mindful solar hikes. [Six Senses](#) has introduced moonlight meditations and astronomer-guided star watching at properties including Kanuhura in the Maldives, where sessions are accompanied by singing bowls and ocean soundscapes. The emphasis is not learning constellations, but downshifting perception.

What unites these signals is a rejection of constant input. Intentional stillness values boredom, silence and repetition as regulatory tools, counteracting a culture that treats attention as something to fill or monetize. This is wellness that doesn't ask people to improve themselves, track themselves or explain themselves. It simply gives them permission to be.

In an era of cognitive overload and nervous-system fatigue, stillness is no longer passive. It is protective, reparative and increasingly essential.

Mindful Aesthetics

Beauty is beginning to mirror the wider collapse of optimization culture. For years, aesthetic care followed the same logic as biohacking: correct, enhance, maintain. Injectables, “tweakments” and clinical skincare promised control over time itself, turning aging into a problem to manage. But as fatigue with performance culture deepens, that corrective mindset is starting to feel emotionally and psychologically misaligned.

Rather than chasing reversal, consumers are shifting towards longevity of function, integrity and self-recognition. Search behavior and formulation trends point away from instant payoff and towards regeneration, barrier health and long-term skin resilience. The rise in conversations around [filler removal](#) and aesthetic “resetting” reflects a deeper unease: the sense that constant intervention can erode identity as much as it preserves appearance. Beauty, like wellness, is confronting the limits of perpetual optimization.

Clinics and brands responding to this shift are reframing aesthetics as care rather than correction. London- and Dubai-based clinic [Ouronyx](#) exemplifies this transition through its concept of mindful aesthetics. Rather than leading with procedures, the clinic prioritizes deep, psychologically informed consultations that seek to understand a client's values, life stage and emotional relationship with aging. As Ida Banek, founder of Ouronyx, explains: “We see a

growing number of people who don't want to 'fix' their face anymore. They want to understand it. When aesthetics becomes about chasing an external ideal, it often disconnects people from themselves. Mindful aesthetics is about working with the biology, psychology and life stage of the individual—making considered, restrained interventions that preserve rather than overwrite.”

This marks a broader recalibration in beauty culture. Aesthetics is moving away from high-intervention performance towards stewardship, continuity and restraint. The goal is no longer to look younger at all costs, but to feel coherent, recognizable and well over time. In the context of humane wellness, beauty becomes less about surface control and more about alignment—between biology, psychology and how people want to inhabit their future selves.

THE FUTURE

Invisible Care

As fatigue with constant self-monitoring grows, the next phase of wellness is moving out of dashboards and into the background. Rather than asking people to track, interpret and optimize themselves,

invisible care embeds health intelligence into everyday life, capturing meaningful signals without demanding attention, discipline or behavioral change.

Two emerging innovations illustrate this shift clearly. Throne transforms the toilet—one of the few universal daily touchpoints—into a passive diagnostic surface. Its clip-on device uses a downward-facing camera to analyse stool and urine, monitoring hydration, gut health and early markers of bladder or prostate issues. The user doesn't log, scan or act; the system simply flags anomalies when intervention is needed. Health data is gathered without turning the body into a project, signalling a move from self-surveillance to ambient prevention.

In reproductive health, Comma takes a similar approach. By turning tampons into diagnostic tools, Comma analyzes menstrual blood—historically treated as waste—to track biomarkers related to fertility, inflammation and hormonal health. The data feeds into a secure clinical platform, reducing reliance on symptom tracking apps or manual logging. While in both these examples the user still needs to evaluate the results and decide if any actions are needed, the difference is that the tracking is embedded in routine behaviour, not layered on top of it.



Beauty is beginning to mirror the wider collapse of optimization culture, and rather than chasing reversal, consumers are shifting towards longevity of function, integrity and self-recognition. (Credit: Adobe Stock)

Together, these models point to a decisive cultural pivot. Wellness is no longer something people actively perform or constantly monitor; it becomes something quietly held. In the post-optimization era, the most advanced health systems may be the least visible—protecting attention, reducing anxiety and allowing wellbeing to be felt rather than continuously measured.

Bio-Intelligent Wellness

Looking ahead, researchers envision fully integrated bio-AI systems. Cutting-edge projects hint at devices that communicate through the body's own networks. [Georgia Tech](#) scientists have prototyped a “Smart Wireless Artificial Nervous System” (SWANS) that literally uses the body's tissue to transmit signals between wearables and implants. In essence, this system can send tiny electrical signals through your cells, turning implants on and off much like nerves do in our own bodies.

Although still experimental, SWANS suggests a future where electronics fuse with physiology at the signal level, enabling imperceptible sensing and interventions. In consumer terms, one could imagine smart jewelry or micro-sensors that tap into hormonal or neurochemical cues and automatically adjust your environment or self-care routine.

AI-driven “electric medicine” will likely expand, blending seamlessly with daily life (imagine silent, gentle currents via earbuds or pillows that tune your brainwaves). Meanwhile, entrepreneurs are exploring [hormone-responsive environments](#): smart lighting that shifts with your cortisol or melatonin levels, climate control that preempts hot flashes, or even adaptive nutrition dispensers that adjust menus to your endocrine state. These examples show the beginnings of living spaces that respond to your body, not the other way around.

Emotional Infrastructure

As cities absorb the psychological fallout of constant stimulation, optimization and digital saturation, emotional regulation will become an urban challenge rather than a personal one. Over

the next 10–20 years, wellbeing will be designed into streets, buildings and public space—not as technology layers, but as structural calm. The future city is not smarter; it is steadier.

After a brief era of homes and offices styled like control rooms—filled with dashboards, sensors and biohacking hardware—a reversal will take hold. Emotional infrastructure prioritizes subtraction. Fewer screens. Fewer alerts. Fewer demands on attention. Space is deliberately given back to art, music, reading, nature and unprogrammed pause. Calm becomes a planning principle.

Unlike invisible care, which embeds intelligence into products and routines, emotional infrastructure operates at civic scale. Architecture, zoning and spatial flow are designed to reduce cognitive load before stress accumulates. Quiet corridors, low-stimulation transit zones, sound-softened public buildings and shared decompression spaces become as expected as green space was in the past.

Early signals of emotional infrastructure are already visible across hospitality, culture and residential design. Projects such as [Capella at Elanan](#) experiment with environments that regulate experience invisibly, while [Aman](#) demonstrates a longer-term trajectory—spaces where restraint, silence and material simplicity do the emotional work. Cultural interventions like KissMe Ferme's [“lipstick in the dark”](#) preview how sensory reduction becomes a tool for presence and intimacy. This logic is now extending into everyday living. In Dubai, [SHA Residences](#) are designed around circadian and microbiome health, while [Six Senses Residences The Forestias](#) embeds recovery into domestic architecture through soundproofed, sleep-enhancing bedrooms and infrared therapy spaces.

By the 2040s, emotional infrastructure may be treated as essential civic architecture. In an attention-extractive economy, the ability to move through a city without being constantly activated becomes a public good—and the cities that protect inner quiet emerge as the most liveable of all.



Elemind pairs EEG sensing with adaptive AI to personalize neurostimulation for sleep, signaling the tech-forward edge of a much larger neurowellness movement now extending into spaces, services and the built environment. (Credit: Elemind)

The Rise of Neurowellness

Regulating the Nervous System for a New Era of Human Wellbeing

The rigors of modern life result in the constant engagement of the nervous system. Neurowellness is an emerging field focused on ensuring that the regulation, recovery and resilience of this system is optimized throughout life.

By Heidi Moon

INTRODUCTION

For most of human history, our nervous system had one main job: keep us alive. If a threat appeared, our body flipped into “fight or flight” mode. Laser-focused on survival, heart rate rose and muscles tightened. Once danger passed, the body settled back into calm. That rhythm—stress followed by recovery—is how we evolved. The problem today is simple and profound: the stress never turns off. This is why the field of neurowellness has suddenly become one of the most important frontiers in health.

Today, across cultures and age groups, people are experiencing chronic stress from a modern lifestyle riddled with constant notifications, endless news cycles, artificial light at night, work without boundaries, social media FOMO and global uncertainty delivered straight to our phones. Our nervous systems cannot tell the difference between being chased by a lion or a phone vibrating with

a new alert. To your brain, it’s all a threat. We are living in a state of chronic low-grade fight-or-flight—not enough to run, but enough to slowly wear the body down.

Keeping the nervous system locked in survival mode contributes to poor sleep, anxiety and depression, digestive issues, hormonal imbalance, chronic inflammation, heart disease, weakened immunity, brain fog and accelerated aging. Neurowellness is emerging as a distinct and powerful category focused not on treating disease, but on training and regulating the nervous system to function better in daily life. Drawing from neuroscience, behavioral science, somatic practices, sensory design, and consumer neurotechnology, neurowellness provides practical, evidence-informed tools to improve stress regulation, cognitive clarity, emotional resilience and sleep. Neurowellness is not just about mental health or brain health. It’s about whole-body health.

This trend reflects a fundamental shift: from managing symptoms to building nervous system capacity. Critically, neurowellness operates upstream of brain aging and neurological medicine. While clinical neuroscience intervenes once degeneration, impairment, or disease is present, neurowellness focuses on training neuroregulation before pathology appears. The research is clear: an unregulated neurological system impacts far more than just future brain health—it impacts all key physiological systems in the body. Neurowellness addresses how the nervous system responds to stress, recovers from stimulation, processes emotion, and sustains attention over time. This preventive terrain is not about diagnosis or treatment; it is about preserving function, flexibility, and resilience.

Neurowellness is not a niche or luxury concept. Much of its impact comes from accessible, repeatable practices that individuals can integrate into everyday life—often without expensive devices or clinical settings. At the same time, it is opening significant new opportunities across hospitality, real estate, corporate wellness, consumer technology, and longevity-focused businesses. AI is quickly becoming the accelerant of the neurowellness market, providing pattern recognition, prediction, personalization and protocol optimization in a trusted closed-loop system that will help people move through modern life without living in fight-or-flight mode.

DEFINING NEUROWELLNESS

Terms like “vagus nerve stimulation” and “neuroregulation” now appear everywhere—from consumer health magazines to clinical wellness programs. But without anatomical context, these concepts can blur together, making it difficult to distinguish evidence-based interventions from emerging hype.

Neuroscience is the scientific study of the nervous system—how the brain, nerves, and neural circuits shape behavior, emotion, cognition, and bodily function. According to the [Global Wellness Institute](#), wellness is “the active pursuit of activities, choices

and lifestyles that lead to a state of holistic health.” At their intersection is an emerging, preventative field focused on nervous system regulation as a foundation for overall health.

Neurowellness refers to approaches that support the nervous system’s ability to regulate the body. This happens through pathways that influence stress response, recovery, emotional balance and physiological resilience. To understand how these solutions work—and why they matter—it helps to first understand how the nervous system itself is organized.

Understanding the Human Nervous System

The human [nervous system](#) is broadly divided into the **central nervous system** (brain and spinal cord) and the **peripheral nervous system**, which carries signals between the brain and the body. Neurowellness largely focuses on this peripheral network—especially the systems below conscious control.

Within the peripheral nervous system are two distinct branches: the **somatic nervous system**, controlling voluntary actions, such as muscle movement, posture and conscious responses to the environment; and the **autonomic nervous system**, which regulates involuntary functions like heart rate, breathing, digestion and sleep. It operates continuously in the background, shaping how the body responds to stress and how effectively it recovers.

The autonomic nervous system has two primary modes:

- Sympathetic activation, often described as “fight or flight,” which prepares the body for action
- Parasympathetic activation, often described as “rest and repair,” which supports healing, digestion, immune function, and emotional regulation

Modern life disproportionately activates the sympathetic system, keeping many individuals in a state of chronic physiological alert.

The Role of the Vagus Nerve

At the center of the autonomic nervous system—particularly its parasympathetic “rest and repair” branch—is the vagus nerve, one of the longest and most influential nerves in the body. Extending from the brainstem through the neck and into the chest and abdomen, it forms a direct communication pathway between the brain and major organs, including the heart, lungs, and digestive system.

The vagus nerve plays a critical role in signaling safety to the body. It helps heart rate, digestion, inflammation and recovery after stress. Because it carries continuous feedback from the body back to the brain, the vagus nerve is a key regulator of how the nervous system shifts between states of activation and rest.

For this reason, the vagus nerve has become a central focus within neurowellness—both through everyday practices that naturally stimulate it, such as slow breathing and vocalization, and through emerging technologies designed to influence vagal pathways more directly.

What Is Neuroregulation?

Neurowellness interventions are designed to restore balance between the sympathetic and parasympathetic modes, allowing the nervous system to shift between activation and recovery.

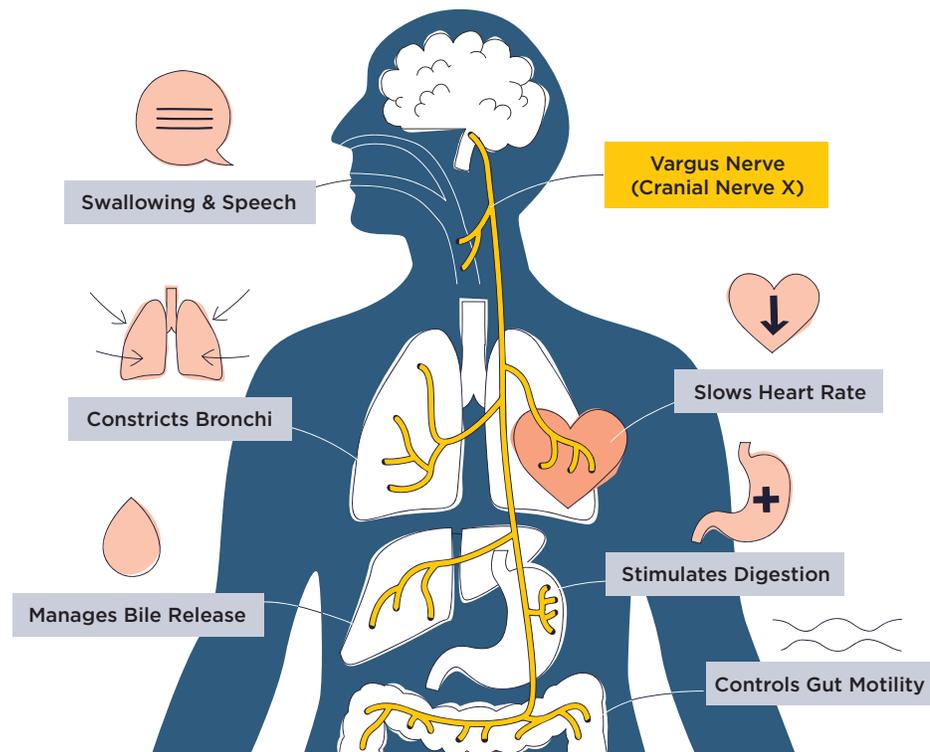
Neuroregulation is the missing piece of preventive medicine. Traditional medicine treats symptoms after something goes wrong, such as high blood pressure, anxiety leading to poor sleep, digestive issues and auto-immune disorders. What if we keep the nervous system balanced so disease never takes hold? When the nervous system is regulated, blood pressure and digestion improve, hormones rebalance, blood sugar stabilizes, inflammation decreases and immune cells function better.

A Framework for Neurowellness Solutions

Neurowellness solutions can be understood not as a single category, but as tools that interact with different nervous system pathways:

- **Somatic-focused approaches**, such as breathwork, gentle movement and posture-

The vagus nerve forms the primary communication pathway between the brain and major organs, regulating heart rate, digestion, inflammation and the body's ability to shift into parasympathetic “rest and repair.”



based practices, influence the nervous system through conscious control of the body.

- **Autonomic-focused approaches**, such as vagus nerve stimulation, sound therapy, acupuncture, neurofeedback and neuromodulation devices, act more directly on involuntary regulatory circuits.
- **Hybrid and technology-enabled approaches**, including wearable biofeedback and AI-guided nervous system training, combine real-time measurement with targeted regulation.

Seen through this framework, neurowellness is not about calming the mind alone. It is about supporting the nervous system as the body's master regulator, with implications for mental health, metabolic function, immune resilience, cardiovascular health and longevity.

FUELING THE TREND

A Global Mental Health, Stress and Burnout Crisis

The most powerful driver of neurowellness is simple: people are stuck in stress mode. Chronic activation of the nervous system's "fight or flight" response is showing up as rising anxiety, burnout, sleep disruption and physiological strain, deeply affecting daily life. These phenomena are not isolated to one region or age group, but increasingly present worldwide, illustrating that nervous-system strain has become a *global public health challenge*.

According to the World Health Organization, more than 1 billion people worldwide live with mental health conditions, with anxiety and depressive disorders among the most common across countries and income levels. Anxiety disorders alone affect an estimated 4.4% of the global population—equivalent to hundreds of millions of people.

Sleep disruption—which both reflects and exacerbates nervous-system dysregulation—is similarly widespread. Recent surveys in the United States found that more than 70% of adults report

sleep problems tied to stress or anxiety, with more than half identifying depression as a contributing factor.

These data show that stress, burnout, emotional distress, and sleep problems are not niche concerns—they are *common real-life experiences* across diverse demographic and geographic contexts. And, importantly, they are not clinical disorders requiring treatment, but rather chronic, subclinical forms of distress that affect wellbeing, performance and quality of life.

This fuels demand for approaches that help people *function better today*—not just treat illness later. As individuals, workplaces and cultures become aware of operating in a state of persistent nervous system activation, there is growing interest in accessible, evidence-informed tools that support regulation, resilience and recovery long before clinical intervention is needed.

The Visibility of Stress Through Wearables

Consumer technology has made the invisible visible. Wearables that measure heart rate variability, sleep stages, recovery scores and readiness metrics provide daily feedback on nervous system state in real time. Instead of relying on subjective feelings of stress or fatigue, people can see how their bodies are responding physiologically to strain.

A substantial share of the global population now uses smart devices to track health metrics: roughly 22-26% of people worldwide wear a smartwatch or fitness tracker. The global wearable tech market, which includes fitness bands, smartwatches and rings, exceeded \$84 billion in 2024 and is projected to more than double by 2030 as demand for health-focused features grows. Sleep and stress tracking are a major part of this uptake. The wearable sleep tracking segment alone was valued at more than \$14-15 billion in 2024-2025 and is expected to more than double within the next decade as consumers prioritize sleep health and nervous system recovery.

From global smartwatch brands such as Huawei, Apple and Samsung to health-tracking wearables like Garmin, Whoop, Fitbit and the Oura Ring, the

Wearables like WHOOP are making nervous system strain visible—turning sleep and recovery into data and fueling demand for interventions that improve regulation and resilience. (Credit: WHOOP)



growth is explosive. At the end of 2025, over 5.5 million Oura Rings were sold since its launch in 2015, with half of that growth coming from the last 12 months.

This widespread adoption creates a powerful feedback loop: when people see measurable signs of strain—poor recovery scores, low HRV, fragmented sleep—they're more likely to seek interventions that improve those numbers. As a result, the demand for neurowellness practices, tools and environments is accelerating.

Neuroscience Has Entered Public Awareness

Neuroscience is no longer confined to academic journals or medical conferences; it has entered everyday conversation through media, sport and popular culture. A major catalyst has been long-form science communication, most notably from neuroscientist Andrew Huberman, PhD, and the *Huberman Lab* podcast, with millions of listeners globally. By translating peer-reviewed research into practical guidance on sleep, stress regulation, focus, light exposure and habit formation, the podcast has helped normalize terms such as neuroplasticity, autonomic balance, circadian rhythm and nervous system regulation far beyond clinical or academic audiences.

At the same time, neuroscience-informed practices have been amplified through elite sport and celebrity culture. Performance and recovery

wearables like WHOOP are publicly associated with athletes including LeBron James, Michael Phelps and Cristiano Ronaldo, as well as institutional partnerships with the National Football League and the PGA Tour. Sleep- and readiness-focused devices such as the Oura Ring have gained cultural visibility through users including Prince Harry, Gwyneth Paltrow and Jennifer Aniston.

Longevity Investor Thinking Has Expanded

Longevity is no longer defined solely by how long the body lasts, but by how well the mind and nervous system function over time. This shift was underscored by the Global Wellness Summit's 2025 theme, Longevity Through a Wellness Lens, which positioned longevity not as a medical endgame but as a lifestyle-driven continuum shaped decades before disease appears. As longevity thinking matures, cognitive clarity, emotional regulation and nervous system resilience are increasingly seen as central to meaningful lifespan extension.

This reframing is also driven by economics. Longevity now sits at the intersection of three massive markets: the \$6.8 trillion global wellness economy, the \$11.2 trillion health and medical sector and the \$1.8 trillion biotechnology industry. Within this convergence, neurowellness occupies critical preventive terrain, focusing on the daily habits, environments and regulatory practices that preserve brain resilience, reduce chronic



Example of emerging consumer neurotech: Neurable's MW75 Neuro LT embeds EEG sensing into everyday headphones to deliver passive brain tracking, biofeedback and personalized cognitive insights. (Credit: Neurable)

neuroinflammation and support cognitive and emotional capacity across the lifespan.

Investor activity shows that this convergence is already translating into real capital deployment. According to reporting by [Fitt Insider](#), venture funding is accelerating into consumer-facing neurotech and brain-health platforms. Cambridge-born startup [Atlas](#) emerged from stealth with \$14 million to develop a multimodal brain-interactive wearable for real-time mental clarity and brainwave tracking, while [SynchNeuro](#) raised \$3 million to commercialize an EEG-based device integrating brain, metabolic and autonomic data. At the scaling end of the market, [Neurable](#) secured \$35 million to expand everyday neurofeedback interfaces and [Audicin](#) launched Audicin 2.0, a neuroscience-driven recovery device designed to regulate stress without requiring focused attention. Together, these investments signal growing investor conviction that neurowellness sits at the commercial heart of the longevity economy.

Neurowellness Moves from Wellness Promise to Clinical Use (with Insurance Coverage)

Investors are aware of the cultural changes driving this trend—chronic stress being recognized as a whole-body performance drag and consumers embracing always-on biometrics—but something more impactful is happening in the eyes of the private equity market. As Abby Levy from Primetime Partners referenced on the Global

Wellness Institute's [The Wellness Roundtable podcast](#) last year, insurance coverage brings the scalability needed to drive large-scale wellness investment and profitability.

The [FDA's approval](#) of Swedish neurotech startup [Flow Neuroscience's FL-100](#) at-home neuromodulation device marks a critical inflection point for neurowellness, signaling that non-invasive nervous system interventions can move from wellness to regulated, prescription-grade care. In Europe, Sooma is another serious player in transcranial direct current stimulation (tDCS), marketing direct patient access to devices to ease depression and pain with national insurance coverage that varies by country. While the efficacy of tDCS used by Flow to treat depression [has its critics](#), this milestone legitimizes neuromodulation as a scalable, home-based pathway—accelerating consumer trust, clinical adoption, and investment across the broader neurowellness ecosystem. Once a category has a regulated, prescription pathway, it tends to pull the whole market forward, raising consumer expectations, accelerating clinical studies and increasing participation from insurers and employers.

Accessibility and Self-Regulation Drive Adoption

A defining feature of neurowellness is that much of its “work” can be done independently. Breath regulation, light exposure, sleep timing, sensory modulation and cognitive recovery practices

require little to no equipment. This accessibility makes neurowellness feel empowering rather than extractive.

While premium devices and immersive experiences play a role, the core promise is agency: individuals can learn to regulate their own nervous systems, in minutes a day, wherever they are.

ASPECTS OF THE TREND

Neurowellness is not a single intervention or technology. It is an ecosystem of practices that influence nervous system regulation through different entry points—breath, movement, sensation, cognition, and technology. While these approaches vary in form, they share a common aim: improving the nervous system’s ability to shift out of chronic activation and into states that support recovery, resilience, and long-term health.

These modalities reveal how neurowellness is moving from abstract concept to lived, daily practice—at home, in wellness destinations, in urban environments, and increasingly through consumer technology.

SLEEP BECOMES NEUROWELLNESS’S PRIMARY ON-RAMP

Sleep is rapidly emerging as the most powerful gateway into neurowellness. More than any other biological process, sleep reflects the state of the nervous system: when the body feels safe and regulated, sleep deepens; when it remains in a state of vigilance, sleep fragments. As a result, improving sleep quality has become one of the most tangible and motivating ways people engage with nervous system regulation.

Unlike many wellness outcomes, sleep is objectively trackable, making it a natural proving ground for neurowellness interventions. Changes in sleep duration, depth and recovery are often the first visible signals that nervous system regulation is improving. While the popularity of the Oura ring has put “what’s your sleep score” into everyday conversations, other wearables from WHOOP and FitBit to Apple Watch and Garmin continue to expand sleep quality awareness to the masses.

This measurability is fueling rapid innovation. From wearables and rings to neuro-acoustic tools to light-based circadian support and emerging neuromodulation devices, sleep-focused solutions are translating nervous system science

Elemind illustrates how sleep is becoming neurowellness’s primary on-ramp, using real-time EEG sensing and adaptive acoustic stimulation to work with the brain’s natural rhythms, prioritizing regulation over sedation. (Credit: Elemind)





Eight Sleep's Pod is a modular, AI-powered sleep system that fits on top of nearly any mattress, layering adaptive temperature control, elevation, and full-body comfort to support deeper, more restorative recovery. (Credit: Eight Sleep)

into daily habit formation. [Elemind](#) exemplifies how neurowellness technology is translating neuroscience into practical sleep interventions. The headband uses EEG sensors, advanced signal processing and AI to detect an individual's brainwave patterns in real time. Rather than inducing sleep chemically or through general relaxation, the device applies precisely timed acoustic stimulation that interacts with the brain's natural rhythms, helping quiet the neural activity associated with wakefulness.

This approach reflects a broader shift in neurowellness: from passive sleep aids to adaptive, brain-responsive tools that work with the nervous system rather than overriding it. Regulation, not sedation, is the goal. With many other sleep headbands entering the market, from Muse to Somnee, sleep headbands are poised to be the new “eye mask.”

Sleep has also become a cultural marker of longevity, performance and status—measured, shared and optimized through wearables and apps. While back in 2017 [a Harvard study](#) illuminated that 50% of CEOs were getting less than six hours of sleep, today [your sleep score is a status symbol](#). The world's richest have poured in over [\\$5 billion into longevity startups](#) in the past two decades, with much of that focused on sleep-related tech. [Smart bed Eight Sleep](#), embraced by Mark Zuckerberg and Elon Musk, [just raised \\$100 million](#) in Series D funds for its Pod, a biometric monitoring tool integrating AI to create real time

interventions that promote ideal sleep—from temperature, to firmness, to head position, offering gentle vibration and detailed tracking.

According to [Research Nester](#), the global sleep tech device market was valued at almost \$27 billion in 2025, projected to be almost \$114 billion by 2030.

[CES 2026](#) reinforced sleep's role as the most powerful on-ramp into neurowellness, showcasing innovations that do more than log hours—they actively understand and support sleep as a nervous system state. Notable products included Wis Medical's Tedream™ sleep patches, a wireless, multi-sensor system that replicates a full sleep lab at home by measuring EEG, ECG, EMG, SpO₂ and other key biometrics. NeuroTx's WillSleep neurostimulation device uses non-invasive vagus nerve stimulation combined with biometric tracking to improve sleep quality and reduce insomnia symptoms. The Sleepal® AI Lamp demonstrated how contact-free sensing (radar, thermal and acoustic) can personalize sleep insights while also integrating with smart home lighting and environmental cues. Other emerging concepts, like smart beds with integrated AI health concierge systems, further blurred the line between passive tracking and real-time support, pointing to an ecosystem where sleep environments themselves adapt to users' physiology.

Taken together, these innovations illustrate a shift from static outcome measurement toward dynamic, responsive sleep regulation—where sensing, interpretation and environmental

modulation operate in unison. Sleep at CES 2026 wasn't just a feature category; it was a laboratory for closed-loop neurowellness, underscoring how nighttime regulation may soon integrate with daytime nervous system management for holistic wellbeing.

The commercial reality: for many consumers, neurowellness is going to enter their life through sleep first, then expand into daytime stress regulation.

VAGUS NERVE STIMULATION (VNS): THE BREAKOUT PILLAR

Vagus nerve stimulation has become the headline concept of neurowellness because it offers a simple promise: flip the body from stress mode to recovery mode. And, no surprise, it is VNS's positive impacts on sleep duration and quality that have made it such a key pillar and entry point for many in the neurowellness market.

The evidence supporting VNS is mounting. *Brain Sciences* published results from a 2017 study citing the benefits of transcutaneous VNS in the treatment of insomnia, and another study concluding in 2022 from Beijing reinforced this. A study published in *Frontiers of Neuroscience* promotes the benefits of VNS to manage a broad spectrum of inflammatory and autoimmune conditions such as IBS or rheumatoid arthritis, and *Frontiers in Aging Neuroscience* published a study highlighting implications of VNS on the treatment of other systematic disease.

In the US, the FDA has approved a variety of VNS devices to treat depression and to be used in stroke recovery. Named a top five Emerging Neurotechnology Startup by StartUs Insights in 2020, Vagustim's VNS device has appeared in over 30 published research studies and was founded

Nuropod is a wearable ear-based device that delivers gentle, non-invasive electrical stimulation to a branch of the vagus nerve, signaling the brain to activate the body's natural "rest and repair" response and restore nervous system balance. (Credit: Nuropod)

by Istanbul-based Ali Veysel Ozden, MD, PhD, author of *The Mystery of Medicine: The Autonomic Nervous System Dysfunction*. Claiming to be the most-researched VNS device, Nuropod reports over 50 studies showing reduced anxiety and stress (35%), less chronic fatigue (48%), reduction of depressive states (45%), improved deep and restorative sleep (31%), better heart rate (18%), reduced inflammation (78%), improved gut health (80%) ... the list goes on.

The market splits into two lanes: consumer-first wearables and evidence-forward medical-leaning brands.

Consumer-First "Nervous System Wearables"

These brands lead on accessibility, design and habit formation, positioned as daily training for your nervous system. An early entrant was Alpha-Stim, delivering low-level currents via ear clip electrodes. Pulsetto, a device worn on the neck





Pulsetto is a neck-worn vagus nerve stimulator that pairs targeted electrical pulses with app-guided programs for stress, sleep, and focus, offering short, on-demand sessions designed to fit easily into daily routines. (Credit: Pulsetto)

to stimulate the vagus nerve, is among the most visible VNS entrants, boosted by viral social media reels and lifestyle positioning. Famous biohacker and longevity expert Bryan Johnson boasts the benefits of his [Pulsetto](#) stimulator in his Netflix documentary, *Don't Die: The Man Who Wants to Live Forever*. [Neuvana Xen](#) uses ear-based stimulation via specialized headphones, promoting quick and on-demand nervous system support. [Sensate](#) takes a different angle, promoting home rituals with its device, which couples sound and vibration with soundscapes aimed at “vagus toning.” With a leadership team including a medical biochemist, an astrophysicist and AI expert and a neuroscientist, [Sona](#) markets its AI-enabled personalization. While national health plans and private insurance companies are not generally covering these yet, in the US many tax-exempt health savings accounts (HSAs) can be used to pay for these, increasing affordability.

In Asia, South Korea's [WillSleep](#) is likely to gain traction globally having won the CES 2026 Innovation Award. It's a neck-adhered neurostimulation device delivering transcutaneous VNS to improve sleep quality and reduce insomnia and stress. Its popularity reflects Asia's rapid adoption of neurotech for sleep and autonomic regulation.

Evidence-Forward, Medical-Leaning VNS Brands

A second cluster of products are leaning harder into clinical language with research-based branding narratives. The gammaCore® device delivers non-invasive VNS through the skin to help prevent

and treat migraine and cluster headaches. Its FDA clearance underscores clinical acceptance of non-invasive VNS in the US.

In Europe, Nurosym positions itself as a CE-marked, research-driven wearable. London-based Parasymp appears in published research and registered trials for auricular VNS, giving it credibility as a bridge between consumer and clinic. [tVNS](#)® from tVNS Technologies GmbH is approved under the EU-MDR as a Class IIa medical device, offering a scientifically validated treatment for conditions related to the imbalance of the autonomic nervous system.

The category is bifurcating into lifestyle neurowellness and medically adjacent neuromodulation—with very different marketing messages, pricing and distribution models.

BRAIN-BASED TECHNOLOGIES MAKE THE INVISIBLE VISIBLE

While vagus nerve stimulation acts primarily on the autonomic nervous system—shifting the body between stress and recovery—other brain-based technologies focus on mental states themselves, helping people observe, train, and influence patterns of focus, calm, cognitive fatigue, and emotional load.

As neurowellness matures, a growing class of brain-based tools is translating abstract internal experiences into observable, trainable signals. These technologies do not diagnose disease or replace clinical neuroscience. Instead, they sit upstream—making brain and nervous system

states visible, measurable, and responsive to daily behavior. The next wave of neurowellness isn't just stimulation, it's measurement and training.

Brain Mapping and Measurement: Seeing the State of the System

Emotional states can't be measured directly, but they leave fingerprints in the body. Metrics like heart rate variability, sleep disruption, and recovery time act as useful proxies for emotional and cognitive load. Wearables such as WHOOP and the Oura Ring make these signals visible, helping people see how stress, focus, and strain show up physiologically over time.

That's the starting point.

Neurowellness now goes a step further, bringing technology once limited to hospitals into preventative care and performance optimization.

Electroencephalography (EEG) measures the brain's electrical activity in real time. Historically reserved for clinical diagnosis, EEG is increasingly used in wellness settings to establish personal baselines and identify patterns linked to focus, rest and cognitive fatigue.

Devices like Muse, a brain-sensing headband, use EEG to track brainwave activity, alongside functional near-infrared spectroscopy (fNIRS) and oxygen monitoring to observe blood flow. Together, these signals provide real-time neurofeedback on attention, mental effort, and decision making.

Other consumer-focused, everyday brain tracking devices include Emotiv, wearable EEG headsets and software solutions for emotion tracking, cognitive state monitoring, and neurofeedback; NeuroSky, pioneer in consumer EEG technology, with sensors and headsets used in wellness, education, and biofeedback products; BrainBit, EEG hardware and software platform offering headbands and flexible EEG systems for tracking brain activity; Neuphony, EEG headbands targeting at-home neurofeedback and meditation tracking; and Bittium, real-time cognitive monitoring headsets for wellness and performance applications.

Clinical, more advanced hardware players using EEG include ANT Neuro, EEG and neurotechnology solutions used in research and clinical settings; Brain Products GmbH, research-grade EEG hardware widely used in labs and mobile neurophysiology; g.tec Medical Engineering GmbH, advanced EEG

Muse pairs its brain-sensing headband with Enso, an AI Brain Coach, included in the premium subscription, turning personal brain data into clear insights and guided plans that make at-home neurotraining feel like a personalized neuroscience lab. (Credit: Muse)





The Stat X-Series mobile EEG from Advanced Brain Monitoring shows how brain monitoring is becoming more portable and practical, enabling clinicians and researchers to capture high-quality EEG in real-world settings to support diagnostics, sleep quality, and performance. (Credit: Advanced Brain Monitoring)

and brain-computer interface systems; Advanced Brain Monitoring, Inc., clinical-grade EEG headsets for monitoring neural activity.

Rather than labeling pathology, these tools help users understand how sleep, stress and stimulation shape mental performance over time. Brain data is becoming a starting point for wellness personalization—not a clinical endpoint.

Neurofeedback & Brain Training: Training Regulation Through Feedback

Neurofeedback builds on measurement by closing the loop: real-time feedback helps users gradually train steadier attention, emotional regulation, and stress resilience. Once confined to clinical or elite performance settings, neurofeedback is now entering mainstream wellness as a form of “mental fitness.”

At-home platforms and app-guided systems are reframing cognitive resilience as a trainable capacity shaped through repetition—much like physical conditioning—rather than a fixed trait. Platforms like Myndlift are building “guided neurofeedback” ecosystems compatible with consumer headbands—moving the space toward subscription coaching and semi-clinical protocols. Myndlift specifically [markets to clinicians](#), providing a clear framework for including it in any mental health professional’s “toolkit” in addition to talk therapy, medication and lifestyle improvements.

Other companies going beyond EEG and emphasizing brain training include: Mendi, emerging EEG neurofeedback devices aimed at cognitive training and emotional regulation; FocusCalm, consumer neurofeedback tools targeting calm and focus states; Neurosity, brain-based focus and productivity headbands with real-time feedback; Sens.ai, neurofeedback devices with adaptive training protocols; BrainCo, EEG + AI applications for attention, stress management and training; and i-BrainTech, neurofeedback interfaces geared toward performance and motor control training.

Companies worth watching as AI tech converges with consumer neurowellness include NeuroX, wearable EEG neural interface with machine learning for cognitive monitoring and neurofeedback; Neuroable, brain-computer interface and EEG research applied to everyday brain health tracking; and OpenBCI, open-source EEG hardware that fosters innovation in wearable neurotech ecosystems.

Mental clarity and emotional steadiness are being reframed as skills, not states. Brain training is being rebranded as “focus endurance, recovery and resilience”—language the workplace and performance markets understand.

Stepping into the spotlight in late 2025 with \$14 million in funding, Atlas is developing a discreet, behind-the-ear neurotechnology wearable

designed for continuous brain sensing in everyday life. Co-founded by Oxford- and Cambridge-trained neuroscientists, the device uses advanced nanosensors positioned to minimize motion artifacts common in traditional EEG, enabling more reliable real-world capture of brainwave activity. Rather than stimulating the nervous system, Atlas decodes brain signals into real-time indicators of mental clarity, focus, and cognitive load, translating them into AI-driven personalization and coaching. Positioned as a mental-fitness platform, Atlas reflects a broader shift in neurowellness toward awareness-first, data-driven regulation—treating the brain as a continuous signal and helping individuals recognize overload, optimize performance, and build cognitive resilience before dysfunction appears.

BACK TO BASICS: BREATHWORK, SOMATIC MOVEMENT, TOUCH-BASED THERAPY AND CATHARTIC RELEASE

As brain-based technologies make mental states increasingly visible, they also highlight a deeper truth: the most accessible and powerful tools for nervous system regulation remain rooted in the body itself.

Breathwork remains a bedrock of neurowellness. Breathing is one of the few physiological processes that can be consciously controlled while also directly influencing the autonomic nervous system. Slow, rhythmic breathing—particularly nasal breathing with extended exhales—stimulates parasympathetic activity and improves heart rate variability within minutes.

Atlas is an emerging neurotechnology wearable designed for continuous brain sensing in everyday life. Recently raising \$14 million in funding, Atlas reflects a shift in neurowellness toward awareness-first tools that decode brain signals into real-time insights. (Credit: Atlas)

In 2021, after just launching his now well-known *The Huberman Lab* podcast, Stanford neuroscientist Andrew Huberman, PhD, spoke at the 2021 Global Wellness Summit on breathwork, stating “Meditation and breathwork can change the mechanical and the chemical.” He then explained how to achieve desired outcomes using the variables in breathwork such as diaphragmatic breathing versus lung expansion, rate, intensity, breathing through the nose versus the mouth, and length of inhale versus exhale.

While meditation concepts are not easily embraced by all, breathing exercises form the most accessible entry point into neurowellness and are often the foundation upon which other interventions are layered.

Breathwork apps and wearables increasingly guide breathing patterns using real-time physiological feedback, reinforcing breath as a measurable, trainable nervous system skill.



Platforms like Aura Health and Open lead more intentional, physiology-informed practices, while mainstream apps such as Calm and Headspace continue to normalize breathing as a mental health tool at scale. More breathwork-first platforms like Othership and Breathwrk focus on targeted outcomes such as calming, energizing and emotional release, while biofeedback-driven systems like HeartMath connect breathing directly to measurable nervous system coherence. Notably, programs like Open's [Back to Life](#) specifically promote training the nervous system to "reawaken your senses and feel alive again," and the [WELLTTH](#) app specifically promotes [a regulated nervous system as a new status symbol](#) with its "Power Up" and "Power Down" categories.

Beyond apps, neurowellness is also moving into simple, physical tools that translate breath regulation into everyday, screen-free practices. [Komuso's Shift](#) necklace uses a precisely engineered stainless-steel tube to slow the exhale, leveraging the well-established link between extended exhalation and parasympathetic activation to reduce stress within minutes. [Moonbird](#) takes a

tactile approach, guiding slow breathing through gentle expansion and contraction while providing optional HRV biofeedback via its companion app. Together, these devices reflect a broader shift toward low-tech, body-led interventions that support nervous system balance through basic physiology—making regulation intuitive, repeatable, and easy to integrate into daily life without constant instruction or digital overload.

Alongside these tools, a growing body of influential teachers and researchers have shaped the modern breathwork landscape, including James Nestor in the US, Patrick McKeown in Europe, Eddie Stern bridging Eastern and Western traditions, Stig Severinsen in performance physiology, and Australian practitioners like Nicola Laye. For years, the Global Wellness Institute's [Breathe Initiative](#), led by Chair Sandy Abrams (and including member McKeown and other global leaders), has shared thought leadership, posted free resources and offered complimentary, expert-led webinars. In the 2025 annual [GWI Initiative Micro Trends](#) report, the Breathe Initiative experts identified neuro regulation through breath as a key trend to watch.



How the Shift necklace works: Inhale twice through the nose, then exhale slowly through the patented chamber to extend the breath and release tension. Repeating this cycle stimulates the vagus nerve, helping calm the nervous system in as little as 30 seconds. (Credit: Shift)

WTHN brings acupuncture into modern life through clinically grounded, doctor-founded treatments, combining in-studio care with at-home tools like ear seeds and digital guidance to support stress relief, sleep and nervous system balance. (Credit: WTHN)



Somatic movement supports nervous system regulation through gentle, internally focused practices that work from sensation and awareness rather than effort or performance. Modalities such as yin yoga, the Feldenkrais Method, and the Alexander Technique reduce muscular guarding and restore efficient movement patterns by emphasizing slowness, subtlety, and interoception—signals closely linked to safety and regulation. Working at the intersection of attention, posture, movement, and breath, these approaches bridge voluntary control with autonomic nervous system response, making them a core pillar of neurowellness.

The Human Method™ Soothe Programme, founded by Nahid de Belgeonne, applies this philosophy to modern burnout through a 12-week hybrid program designed for high-functioning individuals whose nervous systems are depleted by constant self-management. Rather than offering quick fixes, Soothe uses paced somatic repatterning, co-regulation and progressive integration to help participants re-learn a felt sense of safety without adding another demand to daily life.

Zurich-based KEEN Wellbeing positions itself as Europe's first Active Recovery Club, combining somatic movement, breathwork and hot-and-cold therapies in both guided and self-led formats, with a growing focus on corporate clients seeking preventative neurowellness solutions. Meanwhile, The Class, founded by Taryn Toomey, takes a more

dynamic somatic approach, using music-driven movement, repetition, breath, and sustained effort to gently stress and release the nervous system—allowing physical exertion, emotional processing, and regulation to unfold simultaneously.

Touch-based modalities—including massage, acupuncture, craniosacral therapy, and reflexology—activate sensory pathways that communicate safety to the nervous system. These therapies reduce sympathetic activation and support parasympathetic recovery by engaging the body's innate calming circuits.

From a business perspective, recent investment activity underscores that touch-based therapies remain central to the future of wellness, not peripheral. The \$5 million Series A raise by WTHN, led by L Catterton, signals strong conviction in hands-on modalities like acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine as scalable, modern care models. Notably, this comes alongside L Catterton's investments in digital and product-led wellness brands such as Thorne HealthTech and Tally Health, suggesting a diversified portfolio strategy where physical, touch-based clinics play a critical role in delivering regulation, pain relief and embodied care that technology and supplements alone cannot replace.

Medical-wellness hybrids and longevity clinics routinely integrate touch therapies as core nervous system interventions. Bodywork is seen as foundational to recovery, sleep optimization and



Led by founder Luuk Melisse, this guided SANCTUM program for 2025 Global Wellness Summit delegates started at Al Maha in the Dubai Desert Conservation Reserve, featuring music and meditation streamed through headsets along with a cathartic movement journey. (Credit: SANCTUM)

immune regulation rather than as luxury add-ons.

Cathartic release—allowing the body to fully complete the stress cycle—is emerging as a critical component of neurowellness. A growing body of research, alongside lived clinical experience, suggests that chronic stress and trauma do not resolve through cognitive insight or calming practices alone. When stress responses are repeatedly activated without discharge, the nervous system can remain locked in vigilance, with downstream effects on mental health, immune function, and longevity.

In her keynote at the 2025 Global Wellness Summit, Six Senses wellness pioneer Anna Bjurstam shared, “If left untreated, high trauma exposure can shorten life by decades,” referencing data from Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) research linking unresolved childhood trauma to dramatically shortened lifespan. Her message reframed trauma not as a psychological narrative, but as a physiological burden carried by the nervous system.

This reframes neurowellness as more than regulation or calm—it also requires release. Practices that support catharsis help the body complete cycles of activation and recovery that were previously interrupted, releasing stored tension, grief, or fear rather than suppressing it.

A frequent collaborator with Six Senses and other destination resorts, [SANCTUM](#) offers cathartic,

music-driven workouts in a signature sequence combining HIIT, martial arts, breathwork, vocal release and free movement, using headphones for a guided audio experience. Offering annual experiences at the Global Wellness Summit and now found in many cities, [SANCTUM](#) classes create a structured pathway for completing the stress response, illustrating how expressive practices can help the nervous system exit survival mode and restore resilience.

MULTISENSORY SPACE DESIGN: HOW ENVIRONMENTS REGULATE THE NERVOUS SYSTEM

Nervous system regulation does not happen in isolation. It is shaped continuously by context. Light, sound, texture, temperature, and spatial rhythm act as silent signals that tell the body whether it is safe enough to settle, recover and reorganize. As neurowellness matures, attention is shifting from individual techniques to the environments that make regulation possible in the first place.

This shift has been reflected in recent Global Wellness Summit trends written by neuroscientist and sensory designer Ari Peralta, “[Multisensory Integration](#)” (2023) and “[A New Multisensory, Immersive Art for Wellness](#)” (2024). Peralta, director of the COCUN Wellness Research Institute, explains, “In today’s evolving wellness design landscape, neuroscience is transforming the way wellness brands support their customers ... pivoting from the chaos of overstimulation

to a new focus on nervous system regulation.” He shares that multisensory design is no longer confined to buildings and interiors, but is increasingly embedded in what we wear, sit in, and move through every day, from [recovery-focused footwear](#) like Nike Mind, to [neuroscience-informed automotive cabins](#) by Bentley, to [furniture systems shaped by belonging and sensory preference](#).

Multisensory space design is also a central theme at the [Wellness Real Estate & Communities Symposium](#), where developers, designers, and investors increasingly examine how it influences health outcomes. Anjan Chatterjee, MD, director of the [Penn Center for Neuroaesthetics](#) at University of Pennsylvania, presented on “Neuroarchitecture: An Old Brain in a New Environment” and architect Tye Farrow delivered a keynote entitled “Constructing Health: Your Mind’s Response to the Built Environment.”

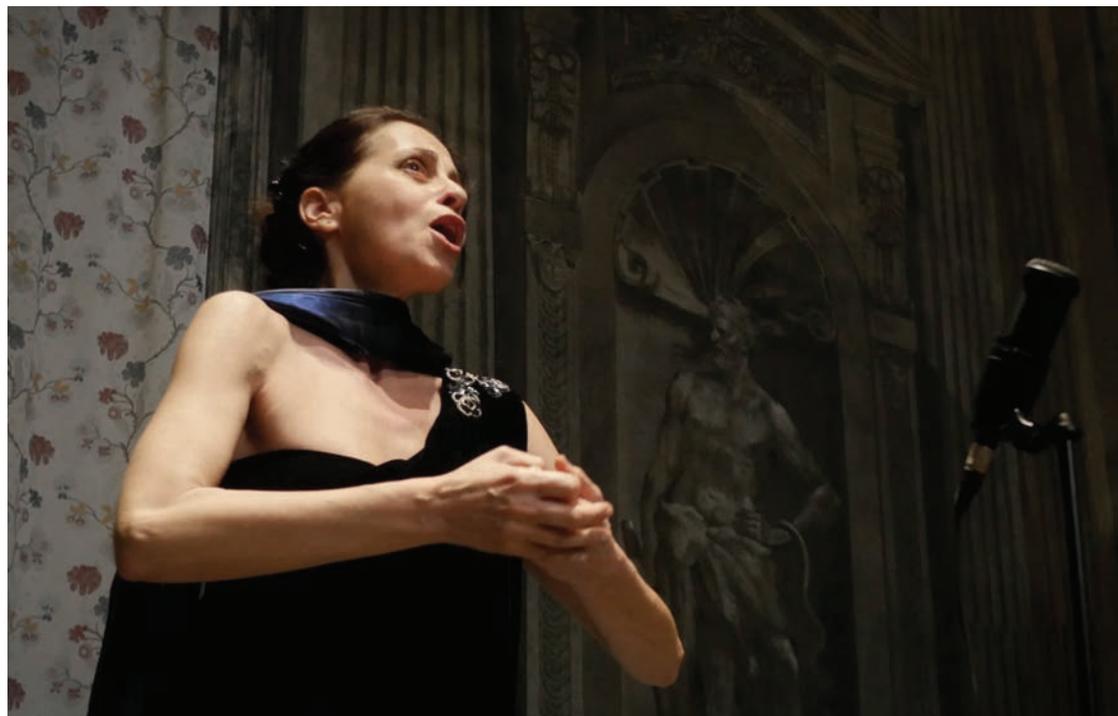
Neuroscience and neuroaesthetics research shows that the nervous system continuously integrates sensory input, often below conscious awareness, to assess safety or threat. [Studies](#) demonstrate that environments with coherent sensory cues, such as balanced acoustics, [natural light](#), and tactile warmth, can measurably reduce stress markers

and cognitive load without requiring active effort. [Chrono-architecture](#) builds on this research by designing spaces that change over time, especially through dynamic lighting that mirrors natural daylight cycles, helping regulate circadian rhythms and, in turn, nervous system stability.

As a result, homes, workplaces, and public spaces are evolving into active regulatory environments. Circadian lighting, sound attenuation, natural materials, and views of nature are no longer aesthetic choices alone, but nervous system interventions. Research from institutions such as Parson’s [Healthy Materials Lab](#) and Harvard University’s [Healthy Buildings](#) program further links building materials and indoor environmental quality to cognitive function, emotional wellbeing and neurological health.

This convergence of science, design and experience is evident in both wellness real estate and cultural spaces. Architects like Veronica Schreibeis Smith, founder of [Vera Iconica](#), apply a science-informed approach to residential and hospitality design. In parallel, neuroaesthetic research led by Susan Magsamen, founder of the [International Arts + Mind Lab](#) at Johns Hopkins University, provides evidence that aesthetic and multisensory

As part of the International Arts + Mind Lab Sound Resonance project, participants wore biosensing devices from Empatica to track their physiological responses to live music, exploring how sound shapes stress, calm, and connection. As IAM Lab executive director Susan Magsamen explains, “We are just beginning to understand the science behind the healing power of music.” (Credit: Johns Hopkins University)





Radial Clinics uses FDA-cleared Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS) to deliver personalized, non-invasive brain stimulation, targeting specific neural circuits to support measurable recovery across depression, chronic pain and complex neurological conditions. (Credit: Radial Clinics)

experiences can directly influence brain function, emotional regulation, and resilience.

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER: FROM STUDIOS AND CLINICS TO DESTINATION RESORT PROGRAMS

As neurowellness matures, its most powerful expression is no longer found in single devices, standalone practices or isolated protocols. Instead, it is emerging through integrated environments that combine multiple regulatory inputs, including touch, sound, breath, light, movement, nature and technology, into cohesive nervous system experiences. These spaces are built on a shared insight: regulation is cumulative. The nervous system responds most effectively when signals of safety are delivered simultaneously across sensory, emotional, and physiological channels.

Clinical & Neurotechnology Clinics

Clinical settings are where neurowellness establishes credibility, translating subjective experience into measurable data and targeted intervention. These environments make the invisible visible—showing how the brain and nervous system function, and how they can be actively changed.

- **Bright Brain Centre.** Founded by clinical neuroscientist Nadia Hristova, Bright Brain is a neuroscience-led clinic specializing in EEG assessment, neurofeedback and brain stimulation to support nervous system regulation, cognitive performance and emotional resilience.

- **Radial Clinics.** Operating five locations across the US, Radial blends psychiatry with FDA-approved neuromodulation therapies including TMS, ketamine nasal spray, vagus nerve stimulation, and neurofeedback. Insurance-backed and clinically rigorous, Radial reframes mental health treatment as reactivating underperforming neural circuits rather than managing symptoms alone.
- **Peak Brain Institute.** Founded by cognitive neuroscientist Andrew Hill, Peak Brain Institute uses QEEG brain mapping and personalized neurofeedback to support cognitive performance, emotional regulation, and mental clarity. Based in London and part of a global network spanning Los Angeles, New York City, Stockholm, and beyond, it represents the rise of data-driven brain optimization.
- **NeuroX Clinic.** With locations in London, Amsterdam, and Dubai, NeuroX combines neuroscience, neurotechnology, and personalized care. Using QEEG mapping, neurofeedback, and light-based therapies, the clinic focuses on enhancing focus, emotional balance, and nervous system self-regulation.
- **JYZEN.** Based in Northern California, JYZEN integrates QEEG brain mapping, neurofeedback, movement, and recovery into a preventative NeuroFit® model. Led by a medical and neuroscience team, the experience emphasizes actionable insight—using targeted protocols to support neuroplastic repair and

performance for everyone from everyday clients to elite athletes.

- **Lanserhof at The Arts Club.** This London collaboration embeds medical-grade neurowellness—particularly sleep and nervous system care—directly into an elite urban private members’ club, signaling a shift from destination clinics to integrated, lifestyle-based brain health infrastructure.

Together, these clinics show how neurowellness is moving beyond diagnosis toward training and repair—positioning brain health as something that can be actively worked with, not passively monitored.

Nervous System Fitness in Urban Studios

As nervous system overload becomes a defining condition of modern urban life, a new category of wellness space is emerging to offer regulation for daily life, not retreat. These studios translate neurowellness into repeatable, habit-forming practices designed for high-performing populations with limited time.

- **Equinox.** Once synonymous with intensity, Equinox has shifted toward regeneration—integrating recovery, sleep and nervous system-supportive services across clubs and hospitality, signaling a broader reframing of performance through neurological load and recovery.
- **Remedy Place.** Blending breathwork, cold exposure and sensory downshifting, Remedy Place embeds nervous system regulation into urban social life, positioning regulation as a lifestyle practice rather than a clinical or retreat-based experience.
- **Third Space.** London-based Third Space treats recovery, breath and environmental design as core training elements, reflecting a premium

At Pause, a guided sound bowl journey led by a yoga trapeze teacher, Reiki master, and sound healer uses resonant vibrations to ease stress, restore balance and invite deep nervous system relaxation. (Credit: Pause)

gym model built around nervous system sustainability, not just physical output.

- **Pause.** In high-density Hong Kong, Pause meets growing demand for intentional sensory downshifting, offering urban residents dedicated spaces for nervous system regulation amid constant stimulation.
- **NuCalm.** Partnering with gyms like **ASWA GYM** and recovery studios such as **Revival**, NuCalm delivers vagus nerve-informed neuroacoustic experiences designed to shift the nervous system out of stress without active effort, now expanding across fitness, hospitality and wellness settings.
- **BrainTap.** Claiming to reduce stress by up to 39.5% in a single session, BrainTap brings audio-visual brain training into gyms, yoga studios like **SoulSpace**, and corporate wellness, positioning brain fitness alongside physical training.
- **SOMA Breath.** Used globally in fitness and studio environments, SOMA Breath offers





yōjō in use: real-time nervous system feedback pairs with app-guided daily tasks, turning regulation into a simple, actionable practice woven into everyday life. (Credit: yōjō)

structured breathing protocols aimed at influencing autonomic balance, stress resilience and energy regulation.

- **Open.** Expanding beyond digital meditation, Open's hybrid studios blend movement, breath, sound and sensory coherence into physical spaces designed explicitly for nervous system downregulation and emotional balance.

Together, these models point to a clear shift: nervous system regulation is moving out of clinics and retreats and into the fabric of daily urban life. Fitness and mind-body studios are evolving beyond strength and flexibility to train recovery, regulation, and resilience—positioning nervous system capacity as a core life skill for modern cities.

Portable Neurowellness Systems

yōjō represents a new class of neurowellness infrastructure that moves regulation out of dedicated spaces and into daily life. Positioned as a personal nervous system health ecosystem, yōjō combines non-invasive vagus nerve stimulation, real-time biofeedback, and personalized human coaching to make regulation a measurable, repeatable habit. Rather than treating stress as an occasional issue to be managed, the system addresses chronic autonomic overload at its root, reframing nervous system health as something trained daily, much like physical fitness. Waldi Hoon, founder of yōjō said: "In a world that feels faster and more demanding than ever, we built yōjō as

a simple, science-backed tool to restore balance. Whether it's easing into restful sleep, resetting after a stressful day, or finding calm before an important moment, yōjō helps people reconnect with their natural equilibrium." By integrating device, data, and human accountability into a single workflow, yōjō demonstrates how neurowellness can scale beyond clinics and retreats, embedding regulation directly into modern routines at home, work, and on the move.

Immersive & Experiential Wellness Spaces

Beyond clinics and studios, neurowellness is increasingly taking shape through immersive environments designed to shift nervous system states through orchestration rather than instruction. These spaces blend sensory design, ritual and cultural practices to make regulation experiential, intuitive and repeatable.

- **AIRE Ancient Baths.** Operating in cities including New York, Paris, and Copenhagen, AIRE uses sequenced thermal contrasts, sound, lighting, and tactile immersion to guide parasympathetic activation—aligning ancient bathing rituals with modern insights into autonomic regulation.
- **Othership.** Othership combines guided breathwork, heat, cold exposure, music, and group ritual into tightly choreographed sessions that use controlled stress and sensory entrainment to make nervous system regulation

social, emotional, and culturally engaging.

- **Submersive.** Set to open in Austin in 2027, Submersive—co-founded by [Meow Wolf's](#) Vince Kadlubek—will blend ancient water rituals with light, sound, neuroscience, and AI to create measurable shifts in relaxation and regulation, showing how advanced technology can disappear into immersive experience.

Together, these spaces signal a broader shift: neurowellness is no longer confined to devices or diagnostics. It is increasingly delivered through environments where art, ritual, and sensory design quietly guide the nervous system toward regulation—making neuroscience feel human, cultural, and lived.

Destination Wellness Resorts

Destination wellness resorts offer what urban life cannot: time, environmental immersion, and alignment with natural rhythms. As neurowellness matures, these settings are increasingly positioning nervous system regulation as a primary outcome—using extended stays, nature exposure, and layered daily protocols to support parasympathetic recovery and long-term regulation.

- **REVĪVŌ Wellness Resort.** REVĪVŌ integrates advanced neurotechnology within a holistic retreat container. Its REBALANCE Impulse® neurorelaxation experience uses chromotherapy, binaural sound, guided breath cues and neuromeditation—embedded alongside nutrition, movement, somatic therapy and coaching to support sustained nervous system regulation.
- **Chiva-Som.** A long-standing pioneer, Chiva-Som weaves nervous system regulation into daily life through bodywork, breath, movement, sleep optimization and sensory environments—embedding regulation into rhythms and rituals rather than isolating it as a single treatment.
- **Castle Hot Springs.** Through its Seasonal Wellness Protocol, Castle Hot Springs aligns vagus nerve toning and parasympathetic activation with six energetic seasons. Thermal soaking, sound, craniosacral therapy, yoga nidra, breathwork and hydrotherapy support regulation through pacing, place and environmental rhythm.
- **SHA Wellness Clinic.** SHA incorporates [non-invasive neuromodulation](#) into its [Rebalance and Energize](#) program and neurocognitive assessment into the [Advanced Longevity](#)

At SHA Wellness Clinic, the Brain Health Program integrates advanced neurotechnology and clinician-guided protocols to assess, stimulate, and optimize brain function, translating cutting-edge neuroscience into highly personalized cognitive and nervous system care. (Credit: SHA Wellness Clinic)





At Six Senses Crans-Montana, relaxation pods pair quiet, cocoon-like design with smart health tracking, reflecting how neurowellness is being built directly into hospitality to support lasting nervous system balance. (Credit: Six Senses)

program, positioning nervous system regulation within a preventative, medical-longevity framework.

- **Lanserhof Tegernsee.** While primarily focused on neurodegenerative disease, its Brain Health program combines diagnostics, reduced sensory input, structured daily rhythms and nature immersion—framing nervous system unloading as foundational to cognitive health and disease prevention.
- **Clinique La Prairie.** Developed with CHUV’s Neuroimaging Lab in Lausanne, the seven-day Brain Potential program targets cognitive longevity while also addressing neurowellness through reducing neural oxidative stress and supporting whole-body regulation.
- **Kamalaya.** Kamalaya’s Brain Enhancement program blends breathwork, somatic therapies, Eastern healing traditions and contemplative practices into extended retreats focused on emotional balance and nervous system regulation.
- **ZEM Wellness Clinic Altea.** The Health Brain Boost program integrates neuro-assessment and emotional regulation within a preventative longevity model, positioning neurowellness as a proactive life-stage intervention.
- **Gwinganna Lifestyle Retreat.** Live. Life. Well (Brain Health) emphasizes nervous system recovery through nature immersion, digital detox, movement and stress education delivered over multi-day stays.

- **Six Senses.** Across its global portfolio, Six Senses offers Relax and Renew to calm the nervous system and Mind Your Brain, which blends modern biohacks with yoga, meditation and ancient practices to support cognitive and emotional balance.

Together, these destinations reflect a clear shift: neurowellness at the resort level is less about individual treatments and more about creating sustained regulatory environments. Through time, consistency and alignment with natural rhythms, these programs show how place itself can become therapeutic—allowing the nervous system to recalibrate in ways daily life rarely permits.

Real Estate & Urban Development

The final signal of neurowellness maturity is its integration into the built environment itself. Nervous system regulation is beginning to shift from something people seek out to a baseline condition of everyday living.

Global Wellness Summit delegates saw this evolution firsthand during on-site visits at the 2025 GWS in Dubai, where neurowellness is being embedded into urban and hospitality real estate at scale—an approach likely to shape discussions at the Wellness Real Estate & Communities Symposium in May 2026.

- **Aldar.** Aldar is integrating neurowellness at scale through lifestyle-led, mixed-use communities such as Haven by Aldar and The Wilds (launching 2029). By prioritizing walkability, access to nature, sensory balance

At The Wilds by Aldar, neurowellness is built into the environment itself. The Nest serves as a calm, nature-immersed gathering space, showing how developers are embedding nervous system regulation directly into the design of everyday living in Dubai. (Credit: Aldar)



and community rhythm, these developments position nervous system health as an outcome of daily living rather than a discrete amenity.

- **SIRO One Za'abeel.** SIRO embeds nervous system regulation directly into luxury urban hospitality through offerings like State of Mind by Welnamis, a soundwave therapy using binaural acoustic frequencies to induce relaxation, rebalance the nervous system, and support restorative sleep. Its dedicated Recovery Suite—a 120 sqm sanctuary with a private treatment room, recovery bath, sleep-optimized bedroom, and lounge—positions neurowellness as an integrated, immersive part of city living rather than a standalone service.
- **Six Senses The Palm.** Six Senses brings its neurowellness ethos into residential and hospitality real estate through biophilic design, sleep programming, sensory art, nutrition and holistic spa services adapted for high-density urban environments.
- **Global Developers: Hines, Swire Properties, CapitaLand, Related.** Across major commercial and residential projects, these firms are embedding biophilic design, circadian lighting, acoustic comfort, and human-scaled placemaking—reducing cognitive and sensory load and supporting recovery through passive, everyday design rather than explicit wellness programming.

This shift was powerfully articulated in the 2025 Global Wellness Summit keynote *Cutting Edge Real Estate: Sustainability and Longevity for*

People and Planet by Alex Zagrebelny, founder and CEO of R.Evolution. Describing a move toward “Architecture 5.0,” Zagrebelny framed buildings as “living, breathing companions to our lives,” arguing that the built environment is never neutral—shaping energy, emotion, cognition and behavior through design. His message reinforced a core neurowellness insight now gaining traction across real estate: environments can either tax the nervous system or actively support human flourishing, depending on how intentionally they are designed.

Neurowellness is no longer confined to spas, clinics, or retreats—it is becoming a baseline expectation of how cities, homes and communities are designed to support regulation, recovery and long-term resilience.

These clinics, studios, portable systems, immersive spaces, destination resorts and real estate developments reveal a decisive market shift: neurowellness is moving from isolated interventions to integrated systems that shape daily life. Regulation is no longer delivered through one-off treatments or niche biohacks, but through layered environments that combine self-practice, expert guidance, technology-enabled feedback and supportive design. What unites these models is a shared understanding that nervous system health is foundational—something trained, supported and embedded across healthcare, hospitality, fitness and the built environment. As neurowellness becomes infrastructural rather than episodic, it signals a new baseline for modern living—setting the stage for what comes next.

THE FUTURE

The future of neurowellness won't be defined by a single breakthrough device or modality. It will be defined by how seamlessly nervous system regulation is woven into everyday life, with homes that support sleep, workplaces that reduce cognitive load, products that guide micro-recovery and care models that intervene earlier. In other words, neurowellness moves upstream, becoming preventative, ambient and continuous rather than episodic or reactive.

Key signals to watch include:

Sleep becomes the lifelong “gateway” to regulation. Sleep will remain the category's most powerful adoption engine, but its framing will broaden from stress relief to developmental and cognitive health. Early signals from CES show sleep tech expanding into multisensory environments and even youth-oriented concepts, positioning sleep quality as foundational to learning, growth, mood, and long-term brain resilience, not just adult burnout recovery. As sleep tools evolve, they will increasingly aim to deepen restorative stages and

make nighttime regulation the anchor for daytime nervous system capacity.

Closed-loop regulation replaces passive tracking.

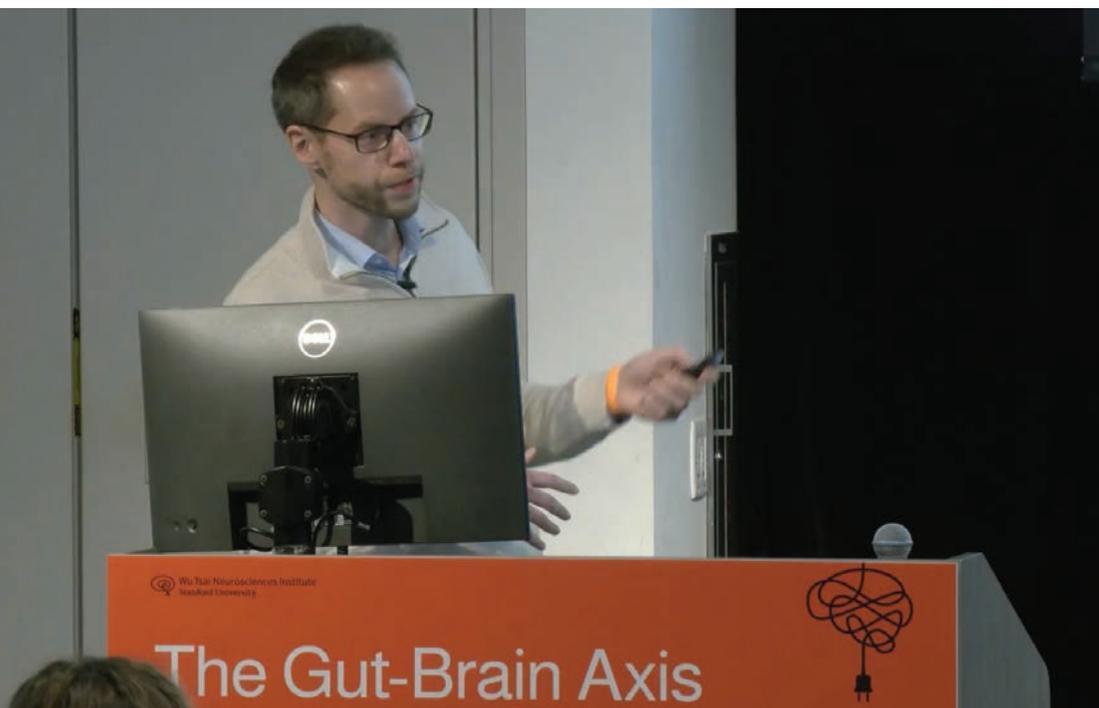
The next wave is not more data, it's systems that respond. We'll see more products that:

- detect stress signatures (HRV drops, breathing shifts, sleep debt),
- deliver a targeted intervention (breath pacing, sound, light, stimulation), and
- learn what works for each individual over time (AI-driven personalization).

This “measure > intervene > adapt” loop will define competitive advantage, especially as consumer fatigue with constant self-tracking grows.

The medical-grade consumer middle becomes the growth engine.

The biggest near-term market expansion will come from brands that can bridge wellness and medicine without overreaching: credible studies, conservative claims, clear safety and professional integration when needed. This middle lane will outperform hype-driven gadgets as regulators, platforms and consumers become more discerning.



Christoph Thaiss, PhD, delivers the opening keynote at the Wu Tsai Neurosciences Institute Symposium 2025 at Stanford University, themed “The Gut-Brain Axis and Other Brain-Body Connections.” His move from the University of Pennsylvania to the Wu Tsai Neurosciences Institute signals the growing importance of brain-body research to the future of neurowellness. (Credit: Stanford University)

More approvals and reimbursement unlock scale.

As neuromodulation moves further into regulated pathways, insurance coverage and employer adoption will accelerate. The category will increasingly segment into three tiers:

- everyday consumer calm (sleep, stress, focus),
- premium evidence-based “bundles” (device + app + coaching),
- prescribed neuromodulation (clinician oversight, reimbursement).

This tiering creates clearer business models and clearer investment pathways, drawing in larger pools of capital with a clearer exit strategy for investors.

AI becomes the differentiator, not the feature. AI’s role in neurowellness won’t be a soothing chatbot. It will be the engine that turns biology into guidance: pattern recognition across weeks of biometrics, prediction based on your personal rhythms, personalization of what actually works for you and optimization of timing, dose and frequency. The winners will use AI to make regulation simpler, not more complicated.

Brain-body research advances evidence-based neurowellness. Neuroscience and wellness research are increasingly converging, accelerating our understanding of how the brain and body regulate one another. This shift was on full display at Stanford University’s [Wu Tsai Neurosciences Institute Symposium 2025](#), themed “The Gut-Brain Axis and Other Brain-Body Connections.” The opening keynote, *Body-Brain Interactions: A New Frontier in Biomedicine*, was by Christoph Thaiss, who just moved [his lab](#) to Stanford, signaling the rising importance of research on bidirectional brain-body communication. As this science advances, neurowellness will increasingly be shaped by deeper insight into how lifestyle, environment and physiology influence regulation long before disease or dysfunction appears.

Regulation by design scales the category beyond products. The most important long-term shift may be environmental, as neurowellness will increasingly be designed into spaces. Homes, hospitality, offices, and schools will be shaped around nervous

system realities, using lighting, acoustics, materials, temperature and spatial flow to reduce load and support recovery without requiring effort. This moves wellness from an activity people add on to a baseline condition they live inside.

Implications for the Global Wellness Economy

Neurowellness is solidifying as a foundational pillar of the wellness industry because it provides a scientifically grounded bridge between mental wellbeing, performance and longevity without needing to claim disease treatment. It will reshape multiple sectors at once: consumer tech (closed-loop products), hospitality (regulatory environments), real estate (nervous-system-aware design), corporate wellness (capacity protection) and preventative care (earlier intervention). The biggest commercial opportunity lies in solutions that reduce friction: simple daily practices, supportive environments and evidence-based tools that help people regulate in minutes, not hours.

Looking Ahead

Neurowellness is not about doing more. It’s about creating better conditions for human systems to function as intended in a high-stimulation world. As regulation becomes embedded into products, spaces and care models, neurowellness will shift from a trend to a norm: the operating layer beneath sustainable performance, emotional resilience and long-term cognitive health.

Neurowellness reflects a deeper understanding of what it means to be well in a complex world. It moves beyond the pursuit of calm toward the cultivation of resilience, clarity and adaptability. By training the nervous system for daily life—not just moments of escape—neurowellness offers a durable, inclusive and economically meaningful path forward.

This is not a passing trend. It is the operating system upgrade for modern wellbeing.



Once associated mainly with luxury and seduction, fragrance is re-emerging as a cultural and emotional language. (Credit: Jo Malone)

Fragrance Layering

Crafting the Scent of Self

Fragrance layering—the art of combining scents to create unique, personalized identities—is redefining how we express and signal personality, curate our moods and engage with others.

By Olivia Houghton

INTRODUCTION

Today, the global fragrance market is the biggest it has ever been and still growing. It is set to generate revenue of about \$62.11 billion in 2025, according to [Statista](#). Yet beyond its scale, what's most striking is how profoundly our relationship with scent is evolving. Once a symbol of luxury or allure, fragrance is re-emerging as a deeply personal and cultural language—and at the heart of this evolution lies the ritual of fragrance layering.

For centuries, scent has been one of humanity's most profound identity markers. Across Ancient Egypt, Arabia and India, people used resins, attars and sandalwoods not merely for beauty, but to express belonging, invoke spirituality and connect to cultural heritage. Fragrance was never just aesthetic—it was aura, presence and story.

In Ancient Egypt, priests and royalty burned frankincense and myrrh to purify temples and homes, while perfumed oils anointed the body to show they were spiritually pure and favoured by the

gods. In Arabia, attars and ouds were layered on pulse points before social gatherings, while clothes were often fragranced with scented smoke from bakhoor, adding another aromatic dimension—both marking status and hospitality. In India, sandalwood, jasmine and vetiver were applied in Ayurvedic rituals to balance mind, body and spirit. “The culture of fragrance is as old as the discovery of fire,” says fragrance expert and founder of Türkiye's first scent academy, Koku Akademisi—Bihter Turkan Ergul. “When people threw aromatic herbs and wood into flames, incense was born.”

These scents were woven into ceremonies, festivals and daily grooming alike, and many of these traditions continue in households today as a subtle but enduring language of identity and intention.

Over time, Western beauty culture distilled this complexity into a narrower form of expression, tying fragrance to celebrity, seduction and status. Perfume became a symbol of aspiration rather than authenticity. But that model is now fracturing. A new global sensibility is restoring fragrance to its

roots as a tool for ritual, emotion and individuality. “Fragrance as a whole feels very airbrushed, like a celebrity on a horse. And culture has moved so much beyond that. I like an element of humanity or grit,” Melanie Bender, former chief executive of Rhode and co-founder of recently launched [Lore](#), [tells](#) the *New York Times*.

And reasons for using personal scent are evolving. “People discovered they could punctuate their day with moments of difference—travel with their noses, revel in nostalgia or excite their senses with novelty. I think that was when people realized it’s not about ‘attracting a partner’ or having a signature scent—if it ever was. It’s donning an invisible cloak of protection, empowering yourself,” Suzy Nightingale, founder of [On the Scent](#) podcast, [tells](#) the *Guardian*.

Today, this search for individuality and creative expression has found its outlet in fragrance layering, a creative and intuitive practice of combining multiple scents to craft one’s own olfactory identity. What began as an ancient ritual in Middle Eastern perfumery—where the layering of oils, ouds and musks formed part of daily grooming and spiritual practice—is now being reimaged by a new generation.

Scent is becoming a participatory art form defined by experimentation, emotion and individuality, thanks to online communities like TikTok’s “smellmaxxing”, indie fragrance forums and new challenger brands like Sephora top seller Kayali, based on Middle Eastern tradition, that just [launched](#) its first dedicated website.

FUELING THE TREND

Individualism Rising

Across contemporary culture, identity has become a defining axis of how people live, consume and express themselves. As traditional structures of belonging—from religion to shared media to stable community life—have weakened, individuals are increasingly expected to author their own sense of self. This shift has placed greater emphasis on

personal taste, self-curation and the idea of a life narrative that is uniquely one’s own.

Digital culture accelerates this. Social platforms make the self visible, editable and continually performed. Identity becomes something not just felt, but shown. An estimated 200,000 creators exist worldwide, according to [Linktree](#), and the creator economy is [projected](#) to grow to nearly \$480 billion by 2027.

This cultural orientation toward self-definition and self-authorship is reshaping beauty and lifestyle practices, elevating those that allow for agency and experimentation.

This is particularly visible in fragrance. As Jeff Lindquist, a managing partner at Boston Consulting Group, [tells](#) Business of Fashion: “It’s no longer about someone wanting to smell like an identity that’s been prescribed by a brand for them, but rather to create their own identity that is aligned with their style.”

The Rise of Micro-Communities

Where subcultures were once broad and visually legible—punk, goth, grunge—today’s social identities are increasingly fragmented and niche.

Digital culture has enabled the rise of micro-communities: small, highly specific groups united by aesthetics, values or sensibilities. These groups often communicate through shared references and subtle codes, visible only to those who are “in.” On TikTok, for example, tags like Group 7, cottagecore beauty or clean girl signal belonging not through explicit labels, but through tone and taste. As Anna Kellum, SVP Beauty & Wellbeing at PurplePR notes, “TikTok’s algorithm has created incredibly specific beauty micro-communities ... each developing their own aesthetic codes.”

This shift is reshaping beauty markets. [According](#) to Nielsen, indie fragrance brands now account for 23% of category sales, growing 34% year-on-year and outpacing the mainstream. In this landscape, beauty becomes a way to signal alignment, not to everyone, but to your community—intimate, nuanced and sometimes deliberately opaque. In this environment, practices that are both

Founded by Niko Dafkos and Paul Firmin in 2014, British fragrance house Earl of East has now grown to four stores in London. (Credit: Earl of East)



expressive and quietly coded, such as fragrance layering, naturally flourish.

Market Saturation/The Illusion of Choice

Despite the explosion of beauty brands over the past decade, much of the market has become increasingly homogeneous. Investor pressure and fast trend cycles push companies to prioritize what's proven, leading to products that share formulas, aesthetics and narratives. Shelves appear abundant, yet the degree of actual differentiation is limited.

At the same time, social platforms accelerate sameness. Trends like PerfumeTok, which drove 45% of social media-driven scent sales in the US by 2023, can propel a scent to viral status overnight. TikTok creators such as [@professorperfume](#) and [@jeremyfragrance](#) often describe scents so vividly that followers sometimes purchase perfumes without smelling them. But this often results in large groups wearing the same few fragrances, reinforcing a sense of repetition rather than individuality.

In the past, individuality was achievable through niche fragrances that felt unique to the user, but as Carla Seipp, fragrance and beauty strategist, notes, “now we have niche brands gaining viral momentum and therefore that fragrance consumer

might be looking to adapt their scent routine to smell different even if they are wearing an online-famous fragrance.”

In a culture where identity feels central yet commercial beauty feels uniform, people seek greater agency over how they express themselves. Customization and subtle self-authorship have become ways to reclaim a sense of distinction.

Reclaiming Reality

In today's hyper-connected world, people are living in a constant stream of information. Social media feeds, notifications and endless content mean attention is fragmented and perception is often flattened.

Globally, individuals now spend an average of six hours and 40 minutes on screens each day, and much of this content is trivial or repetitive, a phenomenon recently dubbed “brain rot” by the Oxford Dictionary as its 2024 word of the year. A recent study suggests that overconsumption of such content can lead to emotional desensitization, cognitive overload and a negative self-concept.

In a world shaped by algorithms and constant digital input, people are seeking ways to reclaim their attention. They crave activities that allow them to experiment, make new choices and express personal creativity.



Italian perfumery Massimiliano Torti's philosophy is that fragrance should be layered, not imposed, and its new London atelier provides a space where this can be explored. (Credit: Massimiliano Torti)

ASPECTS OF THE TREND

Traditions, Redefined

Once a long-held tradition, fragrance layering is now a global phenomenon, with legacy brands leading its resurgence.

Since its founding in Oman in 1983, [Amouage](#) has introduced the world to the Middle East's rich fragrance heritage, particularly its tradition of layered, ritualistic perfumery. Its 2024 fragrance Guidance won at the Fragrance Foundation France Awards. "People think the centre of gravity for perfume is Paris, Milan or New York. But Oman has many reasons to claim it," [says](#) Renaud Salmon, Amouage's chief creative officer.

Across the Mediterranean, Italian perfumery Torti approaches heritage differently. "It's not recreated aesthetically but respected structurally," says CEO and co-founder Nina Simona Briazu. Founder Massimiliano Torti's method embraces high-concentration essences, oil-based rituals and the philosophy that fragrance should be layered, not imposed. Its new London atelier provides a rare space where this philosophy can be appropriately and respectfully explored in a contemporary, Western context. Briazu notes that nearly all Middle Eastern clients (92%) describe fragrance as a ritual rather than a product, mirroring perfumery's historical role as an act of opulence, intention and spiritual presence. These clients are often the quickest to adopt Torti's layering methods,

recognizing the structural and historical parallels immediately.

What makes this particularly interesting is how layering is adapting to modern contexts—whether that is new demographic demands or environmental pressures.

Traditional men's fragrances, long embedded in daily life, family rituals and prayer in the Middle East, have always involved the layering of multiple scents. Today, this practice is evolving in more fluid and experimental ways. Influencer Fahreen Laskar, who divides her time between London and Dubai, [observes](#) this shift, noting that "everything is unisex now, from the more muscular, leathery, strong notes women are wearing, to men embracing scents that were once considered strictly feminine, like rose."

Modern audiences are only one part of the story. Fragrance layering is also being shaped by environmental and climate factors. Climate already affects how scents diffuse, maintaining core notes or diluting them, but new stressors such as pollution, humidity, heat and increased rainfall are accelerating innovation.

Strategic foresight consultancy The Future Laboratory, in collaboration with agency collective Together Group, highlighted in their joint [Indian beauty report](#) how brands are designing for extreme climates across the region.

While most innovations are currently in cosmetics, skincare and haircare, fragrance is becoming an increasingly important part of that conversation.

Discussions around layering techniques that endure in challenging weather, as well as weather-specific layering formulations, are on the rise, and formula innovations are likely to follow soon. Dual-purpose products already exist that combine fragrance with functional environmental protection, highlighting consumer interest in multi-layered, weather-ready solutions. For example, Skylar’s Boardwalk Delight Scent-Screen Mist merges perfume with SPF30 sun protection, while Sol de Janeiro’s Rio Radiance SPF50 scented body spray offers tropical fragrance notes alongside broad-spectrum UV defense.

Some newer perfume lines are also explicitly tailoring formulations for extreme climates. Indian indie brand Qaani emphasizes that all its blends are “crafted for Indian weather,” specifically tested for heat, humidity and long wear, showing how climate-conscious fragrance innovation is becoming a tangible part of the layering conversation.

Smellmaxxing

The era of the single signature scent is giving way to “smellmaxxing,” as consumers craft personalized, flexible scent identities. “One growing trend is the concept of creating your own “scent profile,” which means moving away from the idea of having just

one signature scent,” notes Mona Kattan, CEO of Kayali and co-founder of Huda Beauty. “There’s something empowering about choosing multiple scents and layering them according to your mood each day. It allows you to express different sides of your personality and build a fragrance wardrobe that you can mix, match and experiment with.”

This is influencing both product development and marketing. Chriselle Lim, creative director at Phlur, notes that layering has shaped the masstige label’s approach: “When we’re creating new scents, we think about how they might interact with existing ones in our wardrobe,” Lim explains. The strategy has driven projected sales of \$150 million and contributed to Phlur’s acquisition by TSG.

Interestingly, younger consumers are leading the shift, even though they may have less disposable income. “Young shoppers are not necessarily looking for their signature scent anymore,” says Matthew Berkson, co-founder of Maison Louis Marie. Loyalty to a single perfume is declining. Boston Consulting Group found that 73% of Gen Z and Millennial respondents regularly use three or more scents, while a 2,000-person Unilever survey reported that 29% of Gen Z respondents layer fragrances.

Younger consumers are regularly combining two or three fragrances to create their own signature scent, and companies like Maison Louis Marie have embraced this by offering layering suggestions. (Credit: Maison Louis Marie)





Louis Vuitton's Pure Perfumes layering set pays homage to Middle Eastern traditions.. (Credit: Louis Vuitton)

Visual platforms like Instagram, TikTok and Pinterest, increasingly recognized as legitimate search engines for younger consumers, have recorded a rise in searches for fragrance layering. Pinterest's 2026 Predictions [report](#) noted a 125% increase in “perfume layering combinations” and a 75% increase in “scent layering”, while TikTok influencers like [@paulreactss](#), who has 2.4 million followers, are continuing to drive awareness and experimentation around fragrance layering with their edu-tainment videos.

Brands, too, are responding on multiple fronts. Younger challenger brands, such as Selena Gomez's Rare Beauty, are leaning into layering in a way that feels natural for a brand built around Gen Z values, offering products like [layering balms](#) that let consumers personalize scent according to “mood, performance and identity.”

At the same time, legacy luxury brands are moving into this space, signalling that fragrance layering is a serious market opportunity. Louis Vuitton's [Pure Perfumes](#) layering set pays homage to Middle Eastern traditions, while Jo Malone London's recent [campaign](#), fronted by *Bridgerton's* India Amarteifio, celebrates layering as both art and storytelling.

But as Karen Gilbert, perfumery educator and host of [The Perfume Making Podcast](#) notes, it's not all about “maxxing.” She says: “There is also a growing ‘scent minimalist’ movement that's interesting—people who layer two or three carefully chosen scents rather than owning fifty bottles. It's more intentional, less about collecting.”

Mastering the Art of Scent

Building on the rise of fragrance layering, younger consumers are not just experimenting, but confidently upskilling. [According](#) to Boston Consulting Group, 60% of Gen Z and Millennial respondents view themselves as fragrance “experts,” reflecting a generation that is comfortable curating and combining scents on their own.

As Gilbert explains, “you've got 20-year-olds explaining how to layer Ariana Grande with Glossier instead of waiting for a counter assistant to guide them toward a £200 bottle.” She adds that “people are treating fragrance the way they treat cooking or cocktails—something you can learn, get better at and share with others.” Gilbert also notes the growing engagement with her “How I Layer My Fragrances” videos.

Platforms like TikTok amplify these behaviors, creating vibrant communities where users share tips, tutorials and inspiration, turning scent exploration into a participatory hobby. As beauty creator [@funmimonet](#) explains, “[fragrance] is a hobby you can enjoy without having a specific skill. You don't have to be a makeup artist or know how to do makeup. You don't have to have perfect skin. You don't have to look a certain way.”

This growing confidence has catalyzed a surge in masterclasses and scenting workshops, transforming perfume creation from an exclusive craft into an accessible experience. London's [Experimental Perfume Club](#), for example, hosts

blending consultations and masterclasses, helping participants uncover their unique olfactory profiles. Similarly, Massimiliano Torti's recently opened London space offers bespoke sessions where shoppers can learn the art of scent layering firsthand. These experiences democratize fragrance knowledge, empowering consumers to become active creators rather than passive users. CEO and co-founder Nina Simona Briazu notes: "Torti aims to provide the tools and knowledge that allow a new generation to approach scent with awareness, respect and individuality, rooted in ancient traditions." She adds that they see "educating the sense of smell" as a "privilege and a responsibility."

Gilbert suggests the movement is evolving so quickly that "knowing how to build a scent could become as common as knowing your way around a wine list."

Persona Cocktailing

Fragrance layering is evolving beyond individuality and experimentation. Consumers aren't just mixing scents for personal expression—they are seeking fragrances that enhance mood, influence social perception, and respond to specific emotional or situational needs.

This shift is driven in part by the rise of functional fragrance. Valued at \$10.78 billion in 2024 and projected to reach \$11.43 billion in 2025, functional fragrances combine science and sensory enhancement to deliver emotional, psychological or social effects. When functional fragrances intersect with layering, a new form of scent experimentation emerges in which consumers are remixing fragrances for different personality facets, social personas or situational contexts, effectively creating a "fragrance wardrobe" that can be adapted regularly.

One brand leading this space is Fascent, with its six-piece fragrance wardrobe. "The way we see it, we all have one personality, but with many facets. It was important to us to really showcase and elevate every facet you have," Fanny Descamps, founder of the brand, told *Beauty Independent*. For newcomers to niche perfumery, Fascent's website features a quiz developed using Olfactory Stimulation Therapy and Memory Reconstruction (OSTMR), guiding users to fragrances that align with their personality, mood, emotions and sensory expectations.

An area to watch is dating and social signalling. Next-generation pheromone- and aphrodisiac-inspired perfumes are marketed to elevate aura and

Fascent features a six-piece 'fragrance wardrobe' and an online quiz to guide users to fragrances that align with their personality, mood, emotions and sensory expectations. (Credit: Fascent)





Diptyque's Les Essences de Diptyque collection asked perfumers to imagine the aromas of scentless natural elements such as coral reefs and mother of pearl. (Credit: Diptyque)

intimacy. Coupled with layering, this could lead to micro-coded fragrances, where scents are remixed to target specific personality types, social contexts or attraction goals—a sophisticated evolution of both fragrance layering and functional perfumery.

Layered Storytelling

Fragrance layering is extending beyond the nose and into marketing and cultural expression. In a world oversaturated with literal visuals and prescriptive messaging, brands are inviting layered engagement, encouraging consumers to explore scent as a personal, intellectual or cultural experience rather than prescribing a fixed meaning. With over three decades of experience in aromatherapy, Lasse Eriksen, development manager at FarrisBad, a Nordic spa hotel, told GWI, “I see scent as a silent storyteller, one that communicates on a level deeper than words or visuals.”

Artists and perfumers are bringing this approach to life in diverse ways. Talents from film and fragrance collaborated on [1+1 Ansongo](#), a scent born from a creative matchmaking project by perfume revue *Nez*. “It’s about opening up the industry as a cultural and creative subject, not just a luxury business,” Jeanne Doré, founder and editor-in-chief of *Nez* told [Wallpaper](#).

Other notable partnerships include [Molton Brown](#) working with punk poet John Cooper Clarke, Bottega Veneta [collaborating](#) with Chinese poet

Yu Xiuhua, and British fragrance house Earl of East [inviting](#) musician Bon Iver to do a blind smell test that inspired a custom scent aligned with his latest album.

Diptyque’s Les Essences de Diptyque collection asked perfumers to imagine the aromas of scentless natural elements such as coral reefs and mother of pearl. Alexandra Carlin, creator of *Corail Oscuro*, [explains](#) to *Harper’s Bazaar*: “Coral doesn’t have a scent, but it does have an atmosphere, color and form, all of which nourishes a vision,” aiming to capture the duality between water, light and the coral’s red hue.

THE FUTURE

Multi-Category Layering

Much like we’ve seen with other multi-category innovations—wellness-infused bodycare, functional haircare and mood-boosting skincare—fragrance could become part of a broader, cross-category layering ecosystem. In fact, experts are already suggesting layering is expanding. According to a [recent article](#) in *Business of Fashion*, “the trend is also lending itself to expansion into new categories including hair perfume, deodorants, body sprays and perfume oils.”

Carla Seipp, fragrance and beauty strategist adds, “the product formats we are seeing, from bodycare

to hair mists, are all more focused on fragrance—I see Sol de Janeiro and Phlur being big proponents of this—which means consumers are naturally more likely to layer scents, since their personal care products are already more fragrance-infused.”

This aligns with the growth of some of these categories as standalone markets. The global hair perfume market, for example, is projected to grow from \$13.4 billion to \$24.2 billion over the next ten years, [according](#) to Future Market Insights.

In the future, we could also see fragrance drive more unconventional crossovers, particularly with skincare. Historically, fragrance has sometimes had negative associations in skincare due to concerns around sensitive skin. But what if the categories remained separate yet designed to complement one another? Imagine a perfume intended to layer over bodycare, or even partnerships between fragrance and laundry detergents—moving beyond skin to create complementary clothing fragrances.

Seipp adds, “clothes will become another way to infuse our daily lives with scents. Until recently, there were very few players in this space, like the Laundress x Le Labo collaboration. Now we have MFK, Homecourt, Snif, Laundry Sauce and Dedcool all participating in the category.”

She also adds that the pre-and-post application categories could be one to watch—think “fragrance enhancers” or “fragrance primers”.

Olfactory Architecture

As we’ve identified, fragrance layering doesn’t just live on the skin. It can also shape entire spaces, enhancing mood, narrative and ritual in wellness environments.

In spas, saunas and treatment rooms, layered scents could be used to guide clients through an immersive journey, much like the Aufguss sauna ceremonies, a popular European ritual that involves pouring water infused with essential oils onto hot stones and then using a towel to wave the heat and aroma throughout the sauna.

In fact, experts from *Professional Beauty* [suggest](#), given the 157% increase in searches for “layering scent combos”, we are likely to continue seeing salons, spas and wellness retreats adopt new layering strategies in treatment rooms, reception areas and retail spaces.

FarrisBad’s Eriksen tells us how scenting has shifted from single, building-wide aroma to dynamic, location-specific strategies. “Instead of a uniform



British fragrance house Earl of East recently collaborated with musician Bon Iver to create a custom scent aligned with his latest album. (Credit: Earl of East)



fragrance across the spa or even the whole resort, we now create layered scent journeys tailored to each room or ritual, from the fresh, invigorating notes of a lobby, to soothing herbal layers in treatment rooms, to deeper, grounding aromas in relaxation areas,” he explains.

In general retail or the home, Eriksen suggests strategies could also shift beyond one scent per space to zoned scenting or layered ambient fragrance that evolves through the space or day. Achieving this may require new technologies that prevent olfactory fatigue, where the brain stops registering a fragrance altogether. Estée Lauder Companies and start-up Exuud have developed a smart fragrance delivery system that releases aromatic molecules in controlled bursts, mimicking the way flowers emit scent. This precision preserves delicate top notes and prevents desensitization.

But what about cultural spaces? Scents are being infused alongside cultural references to create truly multi-layered experiences, and Seipp suggests “we will continue to see fragrance integrated into arts and exhibition spaces.” For example, a recent Monet exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum featured three ambient scents by Joya Studio designed to complement the artwork,

while *Perfumes of Ancient Egypt Through Ages*, hosted by the Egyptian Museum in Cairo last year, provided a story of ancient fragrances via virtual reality technology, infused with specific olfactory elements.

Imagine if these scents were layered to guide visitors through the narrative of the exhibition, evoking different moods, themes or even historical context.

Scent as Social Currency

Scent is a natural connector. “Scent has a subtle yet profound ability to bring people together,” says FarrisBad’s Eriksen. “In communal spa rituals, layered aromas can foster trust, warmth and empathy, creating environments where conversation flows naturally and shared rituals feel deeply intimate.”

This social aspect extends beyond traditional settings. At British Beauty Week 2025, Grace Vernon, head of global foresight, trends & Boots Ignite at Boots & No7 Beauty Company, noted that teen boys are now clubbing to purchase luxury fragrances and then decanting them—a form of sharing, trading and performing identity through scent.



A recent Monet exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum featured three ambient scents by Joya Studio designed to complement the artwork. (Credit: Joya Studio)

The AI-powered ScentChat from IFF was developed to enable real-time communication between consumers and fragrance creators using platforms like WhatsApp—and could potentially allow direct co-creation with consumers in the future. (Credit: IFF)



But social connection is just one possibility. Curating your own scent combinations could also become a way to participate in micro-communities, showcase expertise and express facets of your personality, almost as a form of social currency.

Just as people swap playlists or fashion tips online, “scent swaps” or layering mixes are emerging as a form of social currency in fragrance circles. “The category’s most fervent enthusiasts aren’t just talking about perfume—they’re scent-swapping, scent dating and more,” [reads](#) a recent *WWD* article.

Intelligent Layering/Layered Intelligence

Technology is poised to play an increasingly important role in the evolution of fragrance layering.

We’re already seeing progress in translating scent across physical and digital spheres. For example, Estée Lauder partnered with Google to explore AI-assisted fragrance recommendations. “If a year ago I would have said to people, ‘Can we use AI to help you with scents?’ they’d be like, ‘Well, you can’t smell your iPad,’” [says](#) Brian Franz, chief technology, data and analytics officer at Estée Lauder, which includes brands like MAC and Bobbi Brown. By combining AI engineers with fragrance expertise, the team was able to develop models capable of predicting scent preferences.

Perfumery educator and host of *The Perfume Making Podcast*, Karen Gilbert predicts further tech integration. “I think we’ll see apps that suggest layering combinations based on what you own, and AI ‘scent assistants’ that help you create custom blends,” says Gilbert. “The data’s already there; someone just needs to build it properly. They probably already have.”

And she’s right; the field is still young but burgeoning. [Aromoshelf](#), for instance, is an AI-driven virtual perfume organizer that allows users to capture scent impressions, plan layering combinations and manage their fragrance wardrobe—similar to fashion wardrobe apps like [Save Your Wardrobe](#) or [Whering](#).

Looking ahead, these systems could become more reactive and mood-responsive. In fashion, platforms like [Daydream](#) use AI to create “mood-based styling,” adjusting recommendations based on how users feel in the moment. In fragrance, new tools such as [IFF’s ScentChat](#) are already enabling real-time consumer feedback during creation, translating responses into ideas for perfumers—and, as the company suggests, could potentially allow direct co-creation with consumers in the future. Taken together, this points toward a future of dynamic layering, where scent combinations evolve in real time to match mood, context and personal preference.



As climate volatility becomes the defining condition of our century, disaster readiness is becoming a form of preventive self-care. (Credit: Community Brigade)

Ready Is the New Well

Preparing for Climate Disaster Is the New Preventative Wellness

Just as preventive medicine once transformed healthcare, disaster readiness is becoming the next evolution of everyday resilience, where having a disaster plan is as essential as having a fitness plan—and the implications for the global wellness economy are vast.

By Cecelia Girr and Skyler Hubler

INTRODUCTION: SURVIVAL AS THE NEW WELLNESS FRONTIER

Wellness has always promised protection—from disease, from burnout, from the slow erosion of mental health. But the next wave of wellness will promise something different: survival itself.

As climate volatility becomes the defining condition of our century, disaster readiness is becoming a form of preventive self-care. From wildfires in California to deadly floods in Indonesia, extreme weather is shifting from an occasional disruption to the background hum of modern life. As this reality sets in, individuals, communities and industries are waking up to the fact that being well now means being ready for the worst.

This shift reframes preparedness—long dismissed as the domain of paranoid doomsday “preppers”—as a foundational aspect of holistic wellbeing. It connects mental resilience, physical readiness and

community interdependence into one continuum of care. Just as preventive medicine once transformed healthcare, disaster readiness is now becoming the next evolution of everyday resilience, where having a disaster plan is just as essential as having a fitness plan.

The implications for the global wellness economy are vast. Gyms and fitness studios will double as emergency shelters; wellness retreats will teach readiness; and demand for disaster-proof architecture will surge. But perhaps the greatest opportunity lies in the industry’s ability to hold both sides of the psychological spectrum at once—supporting people who live in chronic fear of what might happen, while also caring for those navigating the emotional fallout of what already has. As disasters become inescapable, the most forward-thinking companies will prioritize practical, proven solutions that put people’s minds at ease.



By amplifying every fire, flood and storm in real time, social media has made the climate crisis feel omnipresent—even to those who haven't lived through a disaster themselves. (Credit: Adobe Stock)

FUELING THE TREND

What's Driving the Rise of Readiness

Extreme weather is accelerating. While 2024 set a grim benchmark with 151 record-breaking climate disasters globally, 2025 has continued that pattern of frequent extremes. Industry analysts project that 2025's insured climate-related losses could reach around US\$145 billion globally. Scientists also say that 2025 is set to be the world's second or third-warmest on record, potentially surpassed only by 2024's record-breaking heat.

Social media is making disasters more visible. By amplifying every fire, flood and storm in real time, social media has made the climate crisis feel omnipresent—even to those who haven't lived through a disaster themselves.

The human cost of climate emergencies. Over the past 10 years, weather-related disasters have caused some 250 million internal displacements—equivalent to around 70,000 displacements per day. Climate change is expected to cause 250,000 additional deaths every year from 2030 to 2050.

A lack of risk reduction efforts from the top. Studies show that every \$1 spent on disaster risk reduction delivers an average return of \$15 in terms of averted future disaster recovery costs. Despite

this, less than 1% of public budgets are allocated to disaster risk reduction globally, putting more pressure on individuals to proactively prepare themselves.

Declines in preparedness funding. Cuts to foreign aid—including disaster-relevant financing—are hampering the ability of vulnerable nations to prepare for and respond to climate disasters. The UN has warned that aid funding for dozens of crises around the world has dropped by a third—worth billions of dollars—driven in part by reduced contributions from countries like the US and the UK.

Mental health impacts are mounting. A global survey by the University of Bath found that 75% of young people consider the future “frightening,” while nearly half say climate anxiety affects their daily functioning.

Technology is democratizing preparedness. AI-powered projects like Google X's Bellwether now predict floods and fires before they occur. Early warning apps like Yureka Call and Watch Duty give millions of everyday users real-time alerts for earthquakes and fires.

Social media normalizes survival literacy. On TikTok, the hashtag #DisasterPrep has surpassed 700 million views, transforming practical preparedness into mainstream lifestyle content.

ASPECTS OF THE TREND

THE THREE PILLARS OF READINESS

1. Mental Resilience: The Psychology of Being Ready

To understand the importance of readiness, we have to understand just how deeply the climate crisis is affecting our mental health. Environmental anxiety, grief and existential dread have become chronic states for millions, especially the young. Psychologists refer to this phenomenon as eco-anxiety: the emotional distress caused by environmental change and anticipated catastrophe. It was officially recognized as a public health concern by the World Health Organization in 2022.

These psychological impacts are unfolding on two different fronts—one anticipatory, and one lived. On one side are those experiencing anxiety and helplessness about disasters that *might* happen. On the other are survivors coping with post-disaster trauma—the lingering fear, grief and dislocation that follow catastrophes already endured. Together, they cover a spectrum of psychological strain that’s reshaping how we think about wellbeing in an age of instability.

Living in Fear: The Rise of Eco-Anxiety

Even if people haven’t yet experienced disaster firsthand, the threat feels imminent. Psychologists describe this condition as a blend of dread, guilt and helplessness—feelings amplified by nonstop disaster coverage and an overwhelming sense of powerlessness.

Jeffrey Schlegelmilch, director of the National Center for Disaster Preparedness at Columbia University and author of *Rethinking Readiness: A Brief Guide to Twenty-First-Century Megadisasters*, says this is partially the disaster industry’s fault. “After the 9/11 years, the messaging was very much ‘if you don’t do what I say on Friday, you’ll be dead by Tuesday,’” he says. “But fear doesn’t drive preparedness; it drives paralysis. We can’t sugarcoat the risks, but we can communicate them in more productive ways that empower people to act rather than freeze.”

That idea of empowerment is already shaping the next generation of wellness responses, as seen in models like the Good Grief Network. The program runs small-group circles that help participants move from overwhelm to action. Rather than pathologizing fear, the program reframes it as something to engage with, showing participants that taking positive action can be its own form

Calgary-based Refugia offers workshops and immersive retreats that directly address the holistic impact of climate grief and eco-anxiety. (Credit: Refugia)





Retreats focusing on eco-anxiety can help people create space to process emotions around climate change. (Credit: Adobe Stock)

of relief. Similar forms of community-based processing are emerging across Europe and Africa, where [climate cafés](#) offer casual, judgment-free spaces for people to speak openly about their fears while also learning concrete adaptation skills, from water storage to evacuation planning. Retreats have a key role to play as well. One leader in the space is Calgary-based [Refugia](#), which offers workshops and immersive retreats that directly address the holistic impact of climate grief and eco-anxiety. Their approach is based on a simple belief: if we don't first create space to process our emotions around climate change, we'll never be able to respond to it with clarity or intention.

At the same time, governments and digital platforms are stepping in to meet demand for more accessible, everyday support. In Scandinavia, several national health agencies now operate free, government-funded hotlines staffed by counselors trained specifically in eco-anxiety—an acknowledgment that climate distress has become a mainstream mental-health concern. The rise of digital tools like [Genjo](#) reflect a similar understanding. The app offers mindfulness practices that help users navigate the emotional weight of environmental change, including guided meditations, breathwork and micro-lessons that break down the A to Z of what's happening to our planet and why.

The emerging consensus is that the best way to manage eco-anxiety is not to deny it, but to channel it. Yale researchers [have found that](#) individuals who engage in this kind of proactive preparedness—

even small actions like assembling a safety kit or attending a local training—report markedly lower levels of depression and anxiety than those who do nothing. In this light, readiness itself becomes a kind of therapy.

Living Through It: Trauma and Recovery After Disaster

If eco-anxiety is about anticipating harm, climate trauma is about surviving it. Around the world, tens of millions of people have already been displaced by floods, fires and storms, leaving them significantly more likely to experience PTSD, depression and sleep disorders, often compounded by the loss of homes, communities or loved ones.

Thankfully, trauma care is starting to be woven into national wellness frameworks. In Australia, mental health services established after the 2019–2020 Black Summer bushfires have evolved into [climate trauma clinics](#) that blend therapy with environmental reconnection. Efforts include free counselling for those affected, programs that train emergency service personnel in trauma-informed care and psychological first aid, and extra support for emergency service workers who are witnessing the worst of it. Further inspiration can be found in the Caribbean, where the devastation of Hurricane Beryl led to a rise in [post-disaster psychosocial support services](#). In addition to traditional talk therapy, these interventions helped victims heal through familiar activities like games, sports and art, creating safe spaces for them to decompress without the pressure to verbalize their trauma.

Mental health players are also stepping in and positioning their services as a psychological lifeline. After the 2025 Los Angeles wildfires, Headspace offered [free subscriptions](#) to all LA County residents as part of the region’s official recovery resources, emphasizing mindfulness and nervous-system regulation as essential coping tools in the face of climate catastrophe.

For the wellness industry, there’s an urgent need to serve both those living in fear and those living with loss. Imagine a continuum where the same brand that teaches practical resilience before a hurricane also offers trauma care afterward. Wellness spaces—from digital communities to brick-and-mortar spas—can become sanctuaries for both prevention and recovery, integrating proactive education with compassionate response. To be “ready” now means protecting the mind as much as the body.

2. Individual Readiness: From Prepping to Preventive Care

So, what does being ready actually look like? Preparedness used to conjure images of bunkers, canned beans and conspiracies. But as disasters grow more frequent, survival literacy is expanding beyond the fringes and moving into the mainstream. In the US, self-identified preppers have [doubled](#) since 2017 to over 20 million people. And this time,

it’s suburban parents and wellness enthusiasts, not just survivalists, driving the movement. Prepping has even crossed ideological lines, with [liberal enclaves normalizing preparedness](#) via mutual aid Slack groups and medicine stockpiles.

This widespread attention is being fueled by messaging from the top, as government leaders proclaim that the bare minimum of readiness is shifting upward. Japan’s annual Disaster Prevention Day now involves over five million citizens practicing evacuation drills. And the EU formally launched its [Preparedness Union Strategy](#) in March 2025, advising all 450 million residents to stock a three-day household survival kit.

Beyond policy, preparedness is also seeping into the cultural zeitgeist, evolving into something more design-conscious, lifestyle-oriented and even aspirational. We see this across social media, where creators like Sari Sanchez (AKA [@prettyinprep](#), 52k followers) share videos breaking down everything from tsunami warning signs to how to build the perfect “bug out bag.” She’s not your stereotypical prepper who shouts conspiracies and has a beard; she’s just a regular girl trying to make preparedness part of everyday life.

Fashion companies are now catering to the growing prepper crowd, too. Bosai.plus [offers](#) a sleek jacket with hidden pockets designed to hold

Costco has started selling an apocalypse meal bucket featuring an emergency supply of 132 meals that can last up to 25 years in storage. (Credit: ReadyWise)





*In the Philippines, a new board game called *Master of Disaster* is teaching kids as young as five how to respond to earthquakes, typhoons, floods and fires through scenario-based play. (Credit: *Master of Disaster*)*

essential supplies, as well as a fashion-forward hat with a built-in solar-powered charger so you can charge your phone during an emergency. And perhaps the clearest sign of growth is the fact that the trend has crept into mainstream retail. Costco’s “[apocalypse meal bucket](#)” is a prime example, offering an emergency supply of 132 meals that can last up to 25 years in storage, or until the big one hits.

Disaster prep is also getting gamified, turning a once-scary topic into something much more approachable. In the Philippines, a new board game called *Master of Disaster* is teaching kids as young as five how to respond to earthquakes, typhoons, floods and fires through scenario-based play. Players match the right response card to specific disasters, and complete challenges related to disaster risk reduction, where correct or wrong answers have corresponding consequences. The game is being used across schools, libraries and tournaments to make readiness part of standard curriculum.

If culture has made preparedness aspirational, technology is making it actionable. Traditionally, access to satellite data has been limited to researchers and professionals. But the increasing availability of open-access data from government satellites such as [Landsat](#) and [Sentinel](#), and free cloud-computing resources such as [Amazon Web Services](#) and [Google Earth Engine](#), are now making it possible for just about anyone to gain insight into environmental changes underway. This democratization of risk awareness is reframing

what “wellness tech” can do. The same consumers who track their sleep and heart rate are beginning to track air quality, fire risk and water storage.

For wellness brands, these conversations and tools are opening new frontiers. Health apps could merge biometric tracking with environmental data, giving users a fuller picture of how climate affects their wellbeing. Food brands can meet the growing appetite for long-shelf-life, nutrient-dense foods that don’t compromise on health. And wellness resorts could teach guests how to navigate nature’s extremes, like a mountain spa integrating avalanche awareness into guided hikes. As preparedness becomes recognized as baseline preventative care, every category will have a role to play.

3. Community Preparedness: Resilience as a Collective Sport

When we talk about preparedness, our minds often go straight to tangible solutions like emergency kits or earthquake alert apps. But research [proves](#) that social cohesion, not wealth or technology, is actually the strongest predictor of post-disaster survival.

“Data shows that yes, it’s important for you to have extra food and water on hand, but it may actually be more important that you play bingo with your neighbor every Saturday,” says Schlegelmilch. That’s because social bonds are proven to be the best form of protection. When disaster strikes, the first responder is rarely a firefighter or paramedic—it’s a neighbor.

Grassroots community organizing such as the Malibu community brigade can plug gaps in formal response. (Credit: Community Brigade)



Around the world, cultures with deep community ties are teaching the rest of us what resilience can look like. In Pakistan, when floods displaced 33 million people in 2022, neighbor-to-neighbor boat rescues often arrived before official aid. In the Philippines, the spirit of *bayanihan*—collective mutual aid—is woven into government response plans. And in Mozambique, communities use WhatsApp groups to send flood alerts in real time.

This kind of readiness is harder to cultivate in more individualistic societies, but signs of change are emerging. During the record-breaking 2025 Los Angeles wildfires, a grassroots group known as the Community Brigade demonstrated what's possible. The crew is made up of 49 local volunteers, most of whom have no previous firefighting experience but have been trained to help with evacuations, home inspections and spot-fire suppression, serving as a bridge between professional firefighters and the local community. On one night alone, the brigade logged roughly 5,000 volunteer hours during the Palisades Fire, helping evacuate residents even while some of their own homes were at risk of burning down.

Tyler Hauptman, one of the founders of the brigade, experienced the need for these neighbor-to-neighbor networks firsthand. After his parents lost their home in the 2018 Woolsey Fire, and his own house burned down in the Palisades Fire, he says that being part of the brigade has been the best form of therapy: “It’s given me an outlet to put all this energy—whether it be frustration, anger, sadness, grief—into something productive.”

The Malibu community brigade is a real-world demonstration of how local cohesion can plug gaps in formal response. There’s a cultural dividend, too. In a time when loneliness has been declared a public health crisis, communal preparedness offers purpose and belonging. And as Hauptman puts it, “what’s a better driver than protecting the place you call home?”

Local wellness spaces can play a powerful role in strengthening that same social fabric. Gyms, yoga studios and wellness centers already occupy a trusted place in people’s daily lives—spaces where neighbors gather, routines form and community is built. That trust positions them to become literal safe havens in times of crisis.

Disaster-Proof Real Estate

While local networks serve as a lifeline once disaster strikes, the built environment determines how much damage communities face in the first place. As climate risks escalate, this kind of resilient design is rapidly becoming a prerequisite for livability. Entire regions around the world are already sliding toward uninsurable status due to repeated flooding, wildfires or extreme heat, forcing communities to urgently rethink where and how they build.

Across the globe, architects and developers are beginning to design with a “when, not if” mindset. In San Francisco, the Casa Adelante affordable housing complex raises its ground floor above the floodplain, uses rooftop gardens and courtyard planters to capture stormwater, and employs



SuperAdobe homes are built from sandbags and earth and are being embraced in California for their fire-resistant properties. (Credit: SuperAdobe Homes)

centralized air filtration to protect residents from wildfire smoke. In Puerto Rico, the [Bayshore Villas development](#) was engineered for hurricane resilience, with underground cisterns capable of holding 70,000 gallons of stormwater, solar panels and generators to keep common areas running during outages, and impact-resistant materials suited for high-wind events. And after years of catastrophic fires, Malibu's [new high school](#) has been rebuilt as one of the most fire-resistant campuses in the country, designed to withstand ember storms that once would have destroyed it.

More grassroots efforts are underway, too. One of the most striking is the rise of [SuperAdobe homes](#), dome-shaped structures built from sandbags and earth, pioneered by the California-based nonprofit CalEarth and embraced by a growing community of DIY-ers. During the most recent wildfires, several SuperAdobe homes remained intact even as surrounding neighborhoods burned, serving as a clear sign of a smarter way to rebuild. The movement is not new—it started over 30 years ago and has long been embraced as a low-cost building strategy in places like Mexico, Iran, India, Chile and parts of East Africa—but it is quickly becoming a global template for climate-resilient living.

Finally, an even more radical approach can be found in structures that are designed to yield to, rather than resist, natural forces. On the waterfront at the northern edge of Manhattan, a [new athletic facility](#)

for Columbia University was engineered to flood intentionally, allowing stormwaters to pass through lower levels without destroying the building's core systems. Other wellness centers, many of which are located on the water, would be wise to take inspiration from this vision.

These innovations mark the beginning of what will soon become baseline expectations for wellness destinations and residential real estate alike. As beaches, deserts and other “escapist” destinations become more volatile, wellness resorts and retreat centers will increasingly gravitate toward cooler, higher-elevation environments—places that promise not only serenity but safety.

Homebuyers, too, are beginning to assign premium value to resilience features. Think filtered air systems for smoke season; heat-reflective materials and shaded courtyards to manage extreme temperatures; backup microgrids for energy independence; gray-water recycling; natural buffers that absorb storm surges; and landscaping designed for wildfire defense. Where wellness real estate once emphasized spa amenities and open-air living, it will now emphasize climate-proofed design.

In this next chapter, weather-proof builds become their own form of community care, ensuring that the routines, relationships and wellness rituals that hold communities together can persist long after disaster strikes.

THE FUTURE

Readiness as a Wellness Revolution

Wellness has always evolved in response to the defining anxieties of the time. The 1980s gave us fitness culture to fight disease. The 2000s gave us mindfulness to counter burnout. The 2020s brought immunity and longevity to soothe pandemic trauma. Now, the 2030s will be defined by resilience.

Here are our key predictions for what's next:

Preparedness as a social flex: As readiness becomes a mainstream wellness value, showing that you're "disaster-literate" will soon carry social currency. Much like fitness trackers or sleep scores, readiness will evolve into a visible marker of responsibility and control.

Emergency preparedness EDU: Education will be one of the most dynamic frontiers of the readiness economy. Outdoor retailers like REI already offer emergency preparedness workshops, but this training will soon spread far beyond government programs or niche classes. Expect to see wellness brands, fitness studios and community centers introducing "resilience education" as part of their programming, making preparedness as common as physical education classes or nutrition workshops.

Wellness brands will fill readiness infrastructure: Wellness spaces are hyper-local, deeply trusted and already wired for behavior change, which makes them natural candidates for the next generation of resilience infrastructure. In the coming years, we'll see gyms, wellness resorts and meditation centers designed with dual functions in mind: cooling centers during heatwaves, safe spaces to work through climate trauma, or information hubs partnered with alert apps like Watch Duty.

Knowledge transfer from frontline communities: Much of the world's most innovative preparedness thinking is already happening in the places hardest hit by climate change, from the Amazon to Somalia. In the years ahead, Western communities will begin adopting these models, reversing traditional aid

dynamics. Expect to see local mutual-aid networks modeled after African drought cooperatives or South Asian flood-response groups, as lived experience from the Global South becomes a blueprint for global resilience.

Community readiness as a cultural marker: The way a community organizes around risk will soon become a marker of identity, much like local food movements or sustainability certifications. We might see towns and neighborhoods brand themselves as "Firewise," "FloodSmart," or "Seismically Sound." At the same time, migration toward "climate havens"—regions with lower exposure to extreme weather—will accelerate, further redefining where and how wellness communities grow.

Climate trauma becomes its own wellness category: As more people live through evacuations, displacement and loss, climate trauma will evolve into a distinct and rapidly growing mental health category. Imagine therapy centers that specialize in climate-related PTSD, spas offering nervous-system repair treatments, support groups for first responders, and community gatherings focused on post-disaster healing.

Key Watchouts

Across these opportunities, businesses must ensure that safety doesn't become a luxury. The ability to prepare for disaster—to stock emergency supplies, retrofit homes or access real-time alerts—is still largely linked to income and geography. If wellness brands position readiness as an aesthetic lifestyle rather than an accessible necessity, they only risk deepening existing inequalities.

The second watchout is tonal: preparedness cannot be built on panic. Fear-driven marketing might spark clicks, but it erodes trust. The challenge for brands will be to communicate urgency without exploiting anxiety. This means rejecting dystopian tropes and instead empowering people to take action calmly and confidently. Because in the end, readiness isn't just about surviving disaster—it's about creating a culture of collective care.



Global destinations like Chenot position skin health as a pillar of longevity tourism (Credit: Chenot)

Skin Longevity Redefines Beauty

Move Over Anti-aging: Innovations in Skin Regeneration Usher in a New Era

Skin longevity reflects a new paradigm in skincare, one rooted in preservation rather than reversal. By prioritizing long-term skin health, resilience and function, it reframes beauty as an ongoing, proactive practice informed by science, biology and whole-skin wellbeing.

By Claire McCormack

INTRODUCTION

Even the casual beauty consumer has likely noticed a shift in recent years around how brands are talking about aging. The once ubiquitous term “anti-aging” has fallen out of favor with both companies and consumers and is being replaced with alternatives like “well aging,” “healthy aging,” “regenerative care” and the buzzy “skin longevity.” The latter is transcending the realm of marketing speak to become a legitimate beauty vertical that merges skincare, wellness and biotech to deliver diagnostics, preventative care and visible results that are more than skin deep.

As Anne Colonna, global head of advanced research at L’Oréal Groupe [says](#), “Skin is one of the largest organs, and it has a key role in protecting our body. Because skin has a key role in health, it’s really important to maintain healthy, youthful-looking skin as we age.”

“Let’s acknowledge that we are living through a profound transformation, a true ‘longevity revolution,’” details Delphine Viguier-Hovasse, L’Oréal’s chief innovation & prospective officer. “This revolution is reshaping our understanding of aging and opening unprecedented opportunities for innovation.”



At his New York City Skin Longevity Clinic, Pietro Simone offers regenerative treatments inside his Exosome Dome which enhances beauty and wellbeing benefits with the integration of LED light, ozone/oxygen therapy, PEMF and sound immersion.

What is “Skin Longevity”

As an emerging field, it’s hard to find one universally agreed upon definition for the term. Dermatologist, scientist and founder of luxury skincare brand Macrene Actives, Dr. Macrene Alexiades, defines it as the skin’s ability to maintain its health, structure and function over time. It encompasses preserving the skin’s integrity, cellular function and regenerative capacity over time.”

Traditionally, the word longevity, when used in the beauty realm, refers to the ability of products like perfume or color cosmetics to be long-wearing. Skin longevity conjures the wellness world’s definition of longevity—not only a long life, but a long life lived healthily and well—and brings it into the very visual world of beauty.

Longevity protocols usually include making sure all organs are functioning optimally. Exercising and eating well to maintain heart health, getting sufficient sleep and intellectual stimulation to maintain brain health, and so on. Skin longevity brings our largest organ into the fold.

While skeptics dismiss skin longevity as a clever rebrand of the long-maligned term “anti-aging,” advocates argue that skin longevity represents a meaningful philosophical and scientific shift that reframes skincare not as a tool to reverse time,

but as a holistic, proactive practice focused on maintaining the health, resilience and functionality of the skin over the long term.

Aging is inevitable. What can be influenced is how the skin ages. Skin longevity approaches skincare through a wellness lens, treating skin as a diagnostic tool and a reflection of overall health rather than a cosmetic surface to be “fixed.” The emphasis is on preserving cellular function, supporting regeneration and extending the skin’s healthspan, rather than erasing wrinkles or chasing youth.

This shift mirrors broader changes in wellness culture, where longevity has become a dominant framework for thinking about health. According to trend analytics firm Spate’s Popularity Index, the term “skin regeneration” is up nearly 94% since 2024, with brands like Medicube that offer regenerative topical products like its PDRN range going viral across social media. Spate found that consumer interest in longevity has exploded across beauty, wellness and healthcare, expanding the definition of the term far beyond lifespan alone. In beauty, especially skincare, that expansion is manifesting as science-driven products, regenerative treatments and integrated protocols that combine technology, biology and touch.

FUELING THE TREND

Increasing Lifespan And Healthspan

One of the most obvious forces driving skin longevity is the demographic reality that people are living longer. They also want to look and feel their best for as much of that extended lifespan as possible, are more educated than ever about what they can do to achieve that goal and are willing to spend to get there. With life expectancy rising and retirement increasingly delayed, consumers are no longer satisfied with short-term, often invasive cosmetic fixes. They're looking for preventative care they can start at a younger age and real solutions that help their skin remain healthy, strong and functional well into old age.

At the same time, wellness culture has turned millions of consumers into amateur biohackers. From tracking sleep and glucose levels to experimenting with supplements and red-light therapy, people are actively trying to optimize how they age. Figures like Bryan Johnson, the Silicon Valley entrepreneur that turned his personal longevity experiment into biohacking beauty, wellness and personal care brand Blueprint, have helped push longevity into the mainstream. Skin, as the largest organ and one of the most visible markers of aging, has naturally become part of that conversation.

The beauty industry's own reckoning with the term "anti-aging" has further accelerated the shift. In 2017, *Allure* famously [banned the phrase](#) from its physical and virtual pages, citing its role in perpetuating ageism and unrealistic expectations.

Many beauty brands soon followed suit, though others—and the industry as a whole—has struggled

At her New York City practice Koh Aesthetics, Dr. Darby Koh pairs microneedling with skin longevity treatments like exosome therapy, skin boosters, biostimulators and more.

to find language that speaks to consumers' desire to look their best without implying that aging itself is a flaw. To this day, consumers shopping for wrinkle-fighters or pigmentation treatments still do so by searching for "anti-aging" products.

Skin longevity is an evolution of anti-aging. It acknowledges the desire for aesthetic improvement while reframing skincare as a science-based, holistic approach to prevention, maintenance and health optimization.

Janine Knizia, founder of e-commerce store-cum-Paris treatment studio [Muse & Heroine](#) and Haute Regenerative Skincare says, "Longevity is genius because the consumer wants to live longer and healthier no matter what age they are. It can be the 25-year-old woman or it can be the 75-year-old man. They are all interested."

Dr. Darby Koh, founder of New York City practice [Koh Aesthetics](#), describes this evolution as a move toward aging well rather than anti-aging. The focus, she says, is on skin quality—texture, tone, elasticity and resilience—rather than erasing lines or chasing an artificial ideal of youth.





As part of its Longevity Integrative Science initiative, L'Oréal has developed the "Wheel of Longevity for Beauty," a framework that decodes skin aging at the cellular, molecular and tissue levels.

The popularity of plastic surgery has had a two-fold impact on the rise of skin longevity. On one hand, consumers are increasingly turning to regenerative and longevity-focused treatments to delay or avoid invasive procedures, like deep plane facelifts, altogether. On the other, those who do undergo surgery are using longevity treatments to optimize healing, improve outcomes and maintain results over time. This includes treatments with infrared light as an integral part of the recovery process. Longevity, in this context, becomes both preventative and supportive.

Innovation and Technological Advancements

Scientific and technological innovation has given skin longevity real credibility—and significant investment momentum. In the treatment room, new devices and protocols are enabling practitioners to work at deeper biological levels than ever before. Advances in skin diagnostics now allow estheticians and clinicians to assess how “old” skin is biologically, not just chronologically, often in real time during appointments. This data-driven approach reinforces the idea that aging is not a fixed process, but one that can be influenced through targeted intervention early on.

L'Oréal's Longevity Integrative Science initiative examines how cellular activity, intercellular communication and inflammation drive skin aging. One concrete innovation out of the initiative is L'Oréal's patented Cell BioPrint, a “lab-on-a-chip” device that can diagnose a person's biological skin

age and predict how they will respond to specific ingredients in just five minutes. “This allows consumers to see the invisible biology within their skin, empowering them to make informed, personalized decisions about their skin health journey,” Viguier-Hovasse details.

Viguier-Hovasse explains Longevity Integrative Science is the backbone of L'Oréal's take on longevity. She says, “Our research is anchored on the 10 hallmarks of skin aging based on the Lopez-Otin hallmarks of aging. This deep cellular, molecular and tissular understanding of the root causes of skin aging has allowed us to develop a new breed of diagnostics, new active ingredients and topical products, new beauty devices [and] beauty supplements promoting skin health from within.” One such device is L'Oréal's LED face mask unveiled at the CES earlier this month.

After 15 years of dedicated research that led to more than 40 scientific publications, L'Oréal has also developed the “Wheel of Longevity for Beauty,” a framework that decodes skin aging at the cellular, molecular and tissue levels. Powered by its proprietary Longevity AI Cloud, the system analyzes more than 260 skin longevity biomarkers to map the pathways that influence skin vitality and youthfulness—down to infinitely small, invisible changes. This level of biology-driven bio-mapping is a first for the beauty industry and signals how seriously major players are taking the category.

Increased Investment

At the same time, innovation in topical and at-home products has exploded. Science-backed beauty brands have become investor darlings in recent years, raising tens of millions of dollars as venture capital flows into biotech-driven skincare.

OneSkin, a skin and scalp care brand built around longevity science, raised \$7 million in 2024 and \$20 million in 2025. AI-driven biotech company Debut secured \$20 million to fast-track AI ingredient discovery in skin longevity, while luxury brand Timeline, which creates patented topical and ingestible skincare, raised \$66 million in Series D funding in 2024, led by L'Oréal's venture capital arm BOLD with participation from food giant Nestlé.

Timeline has invested over \$50 million in scientific research, allowing the brand to develop its Mitopure supplement—Timeline's proprietary form of postbiotic Urolithin A—as well as its range of premium skincare containing the “longevity powerhouse” ingredient. Timeline's chief marketing officer, Federico Luna, says that inner-plus-outer product combination is key to the clinical results the company has achieved. He adds, “I think that's

what it's going to take to crack skin longevity specifically, because, even just from a penetration standpoint, there's only so far you can go topically. There is real biology that supports this idea of the combination of the two.”

New Opportunities

Major biotech innovations in other categories are also shaping demand for skin longevity offerings. The widespread adoption of GLP-1 weight-loss drugs has left millions of consumers grappling with sagging skin, volume loss and hair thinning, issues that traditional skincare does little to address effectively. Skin and hair longevity treatments, with their emphasis on regeneration and tissue support, are increasingly positioned as solutions to these side effects. With even more effective weight loss drugs like Retatrutide on the horizon, these consumer needs will only become more acute.

Finally, the premiumization of beauty and wellness has played a crucial role in skin longevity's rise. As consumers become more comfortable spending more on premium topical products and high-ticket treatments, expensive skin longevity protocols once reserved for elite medical spas have gained global traction.

Founded by a team of female PhD scientists, skin and scalp health brand OneSkin is centered around longevity science that targets senescent cells—the cells that accumulate in skin over time and contribute to inflammation, collagen breakdown and visible signs of aging. OneSkin raised \$20 million in funding in 2025.



ASPECTS OF THE TREND

At its core, skin longevity represents the wellness-ification of beauty. For years, spas have been quietly evolving into wellness and longevity centers, offering IV therapy, full-body red-light treatments and advanced aesthetics under one roof. Skin longevity fits neatly into this evolution, acting as a bridge between inside-out beauty and clinical skincare.

Much of what falls under the skin longevity umbrella takes traditional inside-out beauty concepts—nutrition, supplements, lifestyle—and pushes them further, integrating them with cutting-edge treatments. Around the world, clinics and treatment centers are offering holistic longevity programs that combine wellness therapies with regenerative aesthetics, all framed around optimizing long-term skin health.

Innovative skin treatments are central to this shift. Regenerative procedures are rising in popularity compared to strictly aesthetic interventions like neurotoxins and fillers, though many consumers combine the two. Treatments involving exosomes, stem cells and growth factors are increasingly common, designed to stimulate repair and cellular communication rather than simply adding volume.

Boosting a microneedling, radio frequency, laser or other ablative skin treatment with a professional topical product like AnteAGE's MDX Exosome Solution can make healing happen three times faster. Dr. Robert Knight, lead scientist at AnteAGE parent company Cellese Regenerative Therapeutics, says exosomes are like “cellular nostalgia.” He goes on, “Exosomes eliminate the middleman of growth factors for faster and lasting results by reminding cells to behave the way they used to.”

Skin Longevity Goes Global

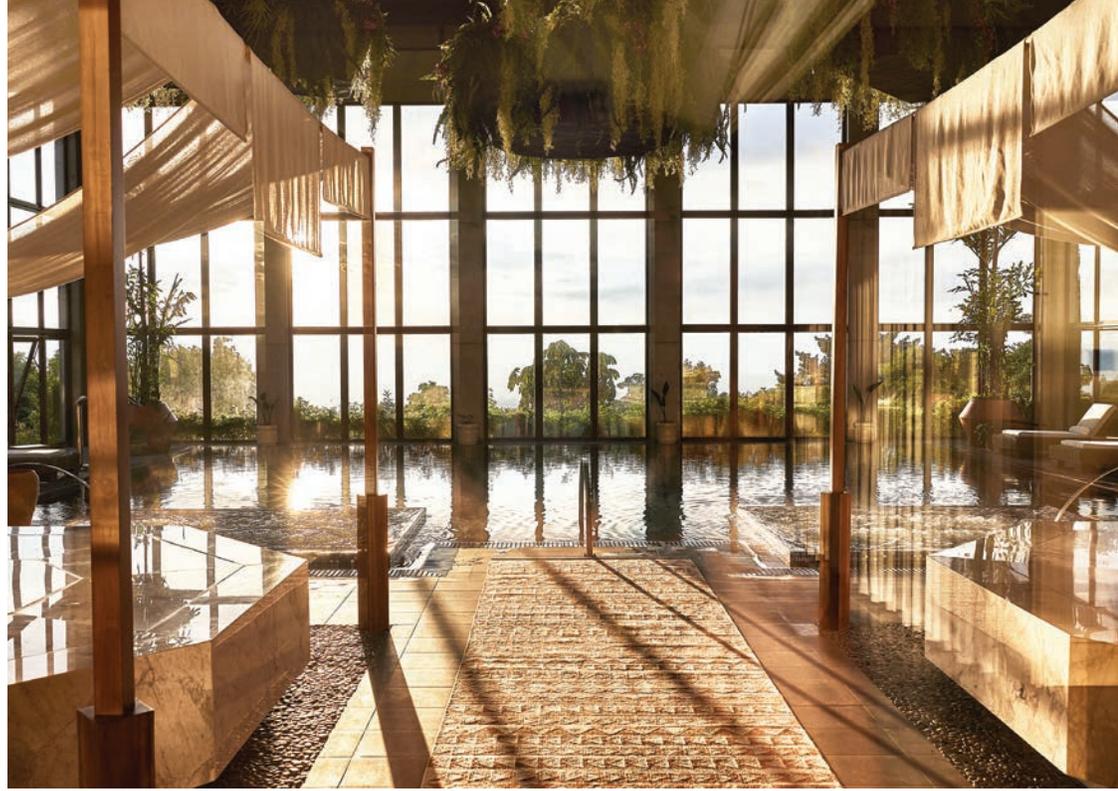
South Korea has become a hotbed for innovation around skin longevity treatments. Beyond exosomes, skin boosters such as Rejuran, which uses polynucleotides to repair damaged cells, and biostimulators like Sculptra, PLLA and Ultracol are gaining global traction for their ability to improve skin structure over time.

Korea's Elasticlab, the only company producing an elastin booster, highlights how niche and advanced this space has become. It's not just doctors making the trip to South Korea; a cottage industry of aesthetic and medical tourism is forming as consumers are traveling to the country to experience these advanced regenerative skin treatments.



Benev parent company ExoCoBio is a global leader in exosome-based regenerative aesthetics for skin and hair, holding 54 patents and 15 scientific publications.

In 2025, Estée Lauder partnered with Hacienda AltaGracia, Auberge Resorts Collection in Costa Rica to debut its first Skin Longevity Institute in the Americas within the resort's picturesque Casa de Agua Spa.



K-beauty products have also brought skin longevity innovation to topical skincare available at retail. Dr. Koh calls out Korean skincare not available in the US such as Be.Answer, which offers a premium skin booster that can be used topically after energy-based devices or as part of advanced skincare protocols, and Theoria's EGF repair cream as examples of biotech-driven formulas entering the global beauty market.

Luxury spa and hospitality has embraced the trend as well. Spas around the world are building multi-day, full-body skin longevity protocols that blend treatments, recovery, nutrition and more. [Pietro Simone's new skin longevity playground](#) in New York City, featuring an "Exosome Dome" treatment room, reflects this integrated approach.

Global destinations like Chenot Health & Wellness Retreats across Europe and Asia, and picturesque destination spa Clinique La Prairie in Switzerland among others, all position skin health as a pillar of longevity tourism.

Similar to L'Oreal, Estée Lauder is making moves in the skin longevity space. The beauty multinational partnered with Auberge Resort Collection [Hacienda AltaGracia](#) in Costa Rica to [debut its first-ever Skin Longevity Institute](#) in the Americas within the resort's world-renowned Casa de Agua Spa. Additional residencies are to be announced.

Estée Lauder has also partnered with China Duty Free Group to launch a Skin Longevity Institute retail concept at the Global Beauty Plaza of the Sanya International Duty Free Shopping Complex.

Skin Longevity At-Home

While professional treatments remain aspirational, at-home products and devices are putting skin longevity into consumers' hands. LED devices designed for nearly every body part have become ubiquitous, with brands like [HigherDOSE](#) bringing red-light therapy into the mainstream. Skin tools once reserved for spas and clinics, such as [Celluma Pro](#) LED facial devices and full body infrared panels are now popping up in consumers' homes.

Biotech-focused skincare brands are also fueling adoption. Companies like [Timeline](#) and [AV Laboratories](#) are formulating products grounded in deeply researched cellular science, while skincare brands sold in retailers like Sephora and Bluemercury have eagerly adopted skin longevity language and science for their latest launches. Consumer skincare introduced in the last year include [Tatcha's Longevity Memory Cream](#), [Phytomer's Perles Des Mers Longevity Cream](#), [Planktos Reviving Face Cream](#), [Goop's Youth-Boost NAD+ Peptide Rich Cream](#), [Auro Wellness's Copper Peptide Serum](#) and [Aramore's range of NAD+ topical and ingestible products](#).



Auro Wellness' new Copper Peptide Serum supports the skin's natural ability to repair oxidative stress and age-related decline thanks to GHK-Cu, a naturally occurring tripeptide found in human plasma that decreases with age.

The Rise of Scalp & Hair Longevity

Scalp health has become a central focus of the hair care category, and an over \$20 billion industry. The same inside-out, regenerative philosophy that skin longevity brings to the epidermis is being applied to holistic hair health. This includes addressing hair loss and even graying.

For 60 years, Philip Kingsley's UK and US clinics have worked with clients on an inside-out approach to scalp and hair health as the foundation of hair longevity, helping prevent and fight hair loss. Anabel Kingsley, brand owner and president of Philip Kingsley, says, "Longevity is about protecting, preserving, optimizing and treating. Your hair follicles are mini organs. With your scalp being skin, what ages and damages skin elsewhere will also have a deleterious impact on your scalp, the hair follicles it houses and subsequently the quality of hairs they produce. Hair longevity is about you, and your hair and scalp, being the best possible versions of themselves in the long run. It involves taking early steps to ensure you future-proof your strands and scalp, as well as being proactive in combatting changes when they occur."

Dr. Koh, who travels to South Korea regularly to scout out new skin innovations, reports that Korean biotech company ExoCoBio is exploring hair repigmentation through new exosome technology. Treatments combining scalp microneedling with topical exosomes that have been shown to reverse hair graying exemplify how skin longevity principles are being adapted for hair.

THE FUTURE

The Future of Skin Longevity

Despite the major buzz around it, skin longevity is still in its infancy. The category barely existed a few years ago and is evolving at a pace that suggests it will look markedly different even a year from now. With major investments in research from large companies like L'Oréal fueling innovation, skin longevity will continue to flourish as a concept and legitimate category at the intersection of beauty and wellness.

L'Oréal's Viguier-Hovasse says, "We are at a defining turning point. The cross-pollination of biology, technology and AI is opening horizons that seemed like science fiction just years ago.

However, it is vital to remain grounded and use the democratization of these breakthroughs as our compass, with responsibility at the core."

As beauty and wellness continue to merge, innovation in longevity-focused skincare is likely to accelerate, driven by advances in biotech, diagnostics and personalized treatment protocols. Some industry experts believe these innovations will lead to a paring down of products used, with people needing less items to achieve their skin goals. Dr. Nayan Patel, founder of clinical beauty and wellness range Auro Skincare says, "What I want to see in the future is a skincare routine that

is absolutely so simple, doesn't take more than a couple of minutes at the most, and you have beautiful skin."

A New Age of Prevention

The science behind skin longevity unlocks new opportunities for holistic preventative care. Experts agree that consumers will increasingly seek out these proven preventative solutions, earlier than ever before. Just as Muse & Heroine's Knizia notes how the term "skin longevity" appeals to a much wider swath of consumers than anti-aging does, that will manifest as an increased interest in prevention options. Kingsley details, "As wellness and beauty become more intrinsically linked, it is expected to see a rise in the consumer seeking more preventative care and brands looking at tools, treatments and formulas that can help to assist that, especially as people look to maintain the benefits of clinical treatments at home."

Timeline's Luna imagines a near future where healthcare becomes an integral part of the skin longevity playbook. This includes dermatologists and other healthcare professionals playing the key role of science interpreter for patients

without advanced chemistry degrees. He adds, "You're going to see brands, you're going to see dermatologists, you're going to see labs. Down the road maybe Quest Labs has a skin longevity panel."

Men represent another major growth opportunity. As male consumers increasingly engage with beauty, wellness and aesthetics, skin longevity offers a framework that aligns with performance, health and prevention—values that resonate strongly in men's wellness culture.

The widespread use of weight-loss medications are also poised to shape the future of the category. As physicians become more aware of these drugs' impact on patients' skin and hair, preventative topical and in-office treatments may be prescribed alongside and/or bundled together with weight-loss drug regimens to mitigate or even prevent unwanted side effects.

Ultimately, skin longevity reflects a broader cultural shift in how consumers think about aging. Rather than fighting time, the goal is to fully understand and work with individual biology to preserve optimal function, resilience and vitality for as long as possible.

Timeline has invested over \$50 million in scientific research, allowing the brand to develop ingestibles and topical skincare containing Mitopure, the brand's proprietary form of "longevity powerhouse" ingredient Urolithin A.





The Festivalisation of Wellness is being fueled by the innate human need for joy, self-expression and community. (Credit: Retreat Yourself)

The Festivalization of Wellness

A New Wave of Healthy, Wild, Cathartic Wellness Raves and Gatherings

Inspired by festival and rave culture, these energetic, community-driven gatherings prioritize collective experience over individual optimization, participation over perfection, and joy over discipline. By making wellness social, expressive, and culturally relevant, these events are redefining health as a shared, identity-shaping experience rooted in belonging and sustainable joy.

By Megan Whitby

INTRODUCTION

The stereotypical perception of wellness used to be black and white—a solitary, restrictive pursuit focused on short-term pain for long-term gain. Now, the dawn of communal wellness is flipping this definition on its head and breathing life, color, liberation and vibrancy into the industry. This shift has sparked the festivalization of wellness and inspired a global wave of gatherings transforming wellbeing into a shared, playful and intuitive experience, drawing inspiration from festivals, raves and immersive cultural events.

While the wellness industry has been moving toward social connection and community for several years—through everything from retreats

and “third spaces” to the boom in saunas and wild swimming—this moment marks a distinct new chapter. Gathering itself is being reimagined, as full-scale festivals, raves and other mass experiences receive a health-forward, wellness-driven rewrite.

Anchored by joy, movement and connection, these community events—ranging from grief raves to mass sporting occasions—offer deeply restorative, social and memorable experiences. And in a world weighed down by conflict, economic pressures, climate anxiety and mental health challenges, these gatherings provide welcome relief. More to the point, they create offline spaces that satisfy a growing human need: connection.

Strong social bonds are a bedrock of long-term health and are among the strongest predictors of longevity—even more powerful than quitting smoking or exercising daily. They improve mental wellbeing and reduce inflammation, thereby lowering the risk of serious conditions. On the other hand, loneliness—now recognized as a global health crisis—raises the likelihood of depression, cardiovascular disease and premature death. Combine this with young people’s global rejection of alcohol and rising health awareness, and these new styles of wellness gatherings are uniquely positioned to answer some of the globe’s most pressing health challenges.

Importantly, the joy these gatherings provide isn’t fleeting—it’s sustainable joy, offering pleasure without hangovers, comedowns or guilt, while delivering measurable mental and physiological benefits. Pleasure is linked to boosted immune function, resilience, cognition and the activation of feel-good hormones like dopamine, oxytocin and serotonin. Humans also tend to find more pleasure when completing activities together and

“happiness thrives in the company of others”, according to a large-scale US study of 40,000+ participants. Additionally, habits form through repetition and context cues, and research shows that when behaviors are more rewarding and enjoyable, people are more likely to repeat them and form habits out of them. Collective, pleasurable experiences like wellness raves therefore not only boost wellbeing in the moment but also increase the likelihood that positive behaviors are repeated, potentially translating into enduring lifestyle change.

Looking ahead, this wave of festival-focused wellness gatherings is poised to make experiential wellbeing both mainstream and experimental. Participants are shaping culture, testing new forms of connection and reimagining what it means to thrive collectively. As this trend grows, it promises to transform how we experience joy, community and personal growth. It invites everyone to explore, belong and invest in long-term wellbeing—and champions shared happiness as the ultimate luxury.



International run club Midnight Runners celebrated its 10-year anniversary in 2025, as demand for social run clubs continues to surge. (Credit: Ed Sharpe)

Global Wellness Day illustrates the festivalization of wellness in action—transforming wellbeing into a public, celebratory experience for all ages every June. (Credit: Global Wellness Day)



FUELING THE TREND

- Mental health is declining across the globe, affecting people of all ages and backgrounds, with young people facing significant pressure. Key factors include shrinking economies, increasingly competitive job markets and the rapid digitization of daily life—all of which are amplifying stress and anxiety. The isolation of COVID lockdowns only intensified these struggles, leaving many seeking meaning, connection and community more urgently than ever. Loneliness has remained an ongoing issue ever since, with the WHO declaring it a public health threat in 2023. What existed as a challenge before the pandemic has now become a driving force behind the search for collective wellbeing and shared experiences.
- The rise of communal wellness is an instrumental force behind this movement, accelerated by the industry’s renewed focus on joy and pleasure and the birth of the post-pandemic “joyconomy.” As Six Senses wellness pioneer Anna Bjurstam observes: “The future of wellness lies in the understanding of the science of feeling good.” By reframing wellness as something pleasurable and best experienced with others—rather than solitary or restrictive—

these gatherings, and the industry at large, become far more compelling to consumers. This shift was reflected in behavior almost immediately after COVID. People sought to refill their cups while prioritizing health, giving rise to social wellness clubs like Remedy Place and a communal bathing renaissance pioneered by brands including Othership, Soak and Arc. Running clubs also experienced a revival, with interest still soaring and numbers at record highs in Europe. Wellness raves and festivals feel like the next evolution—humans gathering to move, connect and release. Interestingly, history proves this pattern of behavior isn’t new: after the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, Germany’s rave scene exploded. Time and again, after periods of division, humans instinctively crave unity.

- The US\$6.8 trillion global wellness economy is projected to climb to \$9.8 trillion by 2029. But as the market expands, people are still defining what wellness means to them. This is fueling demand for these new wellness gatherings because they offer access to experts, gifted practitioners and inspiring experiences with like-minded people within a single space. In an increasingly saturated market, these real-life encounters help people discover what resonates with them, shaping a more authentic relationship with wellness.

- The festivalization of wellness aligns with the rise of somatic practices—the practice of focusing on the physical sensations within your body, instead of your appearance. It’s no surprise people are looking to move out of their heads and into their bodies in a world where an average adult spends at least 7.5 hours daily looking at some type of screen. In turn, both dance and music are being re-recognized as powerful wellness tools which allow for spontaneity, catharsis and meaningful health benefits. A large-scale University of Gothenburg study, involving more than 15,000 participants, found that group singing synchronized heart rates and breathing patterns, increasing feelings of trust, social bonding and emotional safety. Meanwhile, a 2024 BMJ study found dance to be more effective against depression than CBT or common antidepressant medications. Crucially, dance and raves are also accessible, intuitive and open to all abilities. As Kesang Ball, co-founder of travel platform Trippin told Marie Claire, for marginalized communities dancefloors have long provided spaces for belonging and expression.
- Large-scale research shows that belonging to groups actually protects mental health. A population study in England found that older adults who belong to sport or exercise groups were significantly less likely to suffer depression over time, with non-group members experiencing nearly double the rates of clinical depression. Longitudinal evidence also shows that people engaged in multiple social groups tend to enjoy better wellbeing years later, as group-based involvement builds self-efficacy and reduces loneliness. Experimental work further reveals that synchronised physical action in groups can increase cooperation and social cohesion among strangers, providing a physiological basis for why these collective experiences feel so powerful.
- Wellness raves and festivals offer a breadth of formats and price points, reducing traditional barriers to entry. While early wellness festivals—often launched by luxury operators in remote locations—were perceived as exclusive, the model is now trickling into the mainstream. Today, offerings range from five-day immersive festivals in tropical paradises to low-cost, hyper-local experiences like morning coffee raves at neighborhood cafés.



Group singing has been proven to synchronize heart rates and breathing patterns, which researchers put down to increased feelings of trust, social bonding and emotional safety. (Credit: Pexels)

Thermal wellbeing operator Therme Group's inaugural *Bathe-ing DC* event consisted of a two-day community festival featuring a sauna village, cold plunges, aromatherapy, sound baths and more. (Credit: Therme Group)



ASPECTS OF THE TREND

Collective Release Events

Collective release raves are gatherings built around shared emotional and/or physical expression. They are often short-form, experiential and ritualistic, allowing participants to move, dance, cry or scream together, turning collective presence into catharsis.

London's Morning Gloryville was an early pioneer of the sober morning rave, gathering people before sunrise for coffee, live DJs and guided movement. A routine start-of-day ritual became an opportunity for embodied joy, mindful energy and community connection. What began in London has now inspired new iterations in Seoul, Delhi and Sydney in 2025.

As Lee Kyoung-hee told *The Korea Herald*, "When I was in my 20s, we drank too much at night. But this, meeting in the morning and taking care of health, is something I've never seen before. If this culture takes root, I think society will become healthier."

Some gatherings, like Antwerp-based Lucky Stride, layer these experiences onto exercise, pairing post-run coffee and pastry raves with movement, rhythm and social energy. Late-night sober raves, including Alive LDN, similarly blend music, mindfulness

and movement to foster connection. Meanwhile, women-only events like Mum's That Rave across the UK, Wild Women NEPA in Pennsylvania and Seven Sisters in Victoria, Australia, provide safe, inclusive spaces for women to explore cathartic release.

This space has expanded to include events explicitly focused on emotional processing. One of the most contemporary options is grief raves, which use movement and music to provide connection and an outlet for expression. Often free, most iterations invite people to dance, move out their pain and dedicate a song to someone or something they miss, address "personal bereavement or a breakup, or allow a few minutes to release some political rage, pain or fury in these ever complex times."

This has helped pave the way for crying clubs and scream gatherings, which aren't raves in the traditional sense, but still sit within the same cultural shift. These formats reflect a softening of how wellness is defined—moving beyond optimization towards emotional honesty.

Leaders in this space include mindful fitness rave concept Sanctum, which combines "movement, emotional release and spiritual awakening." Its formula strips away substances and spectatorship while preserving rave culture's energy. Originating in Amsterdam, Sanctum now runs globally, with

a cult following. Participants are encouraged to lose inhibitions, connect with others and process emotion through sound and movement via headphones. “We use our body as a vessel to express ourselves,” says co-founder [Luuk Melisse](#). “Sanctum has, very organically, become a safe space where people can laugh and cry and be themselves with each other—and the community aspect has become the main pillar.”

Oxford University researchers [found](#) that dancing in groups can help us tolerate pain better and foster friendships because it triggers the release of endorphins, producing both pain relief and a sense of social bonding. Additionally, synchronous dancing has [been shown](#) to enhance memory for fellow participants, likely by increasing shared attention and interpersonal engagement, further strengthening social connections.

Across formats, the common thread is permission: permission to feel deeply, move freely and experience joy or release without judgment. These gatherings demonstrate that movement-driven, music-infused experiences can delight both locals and guests, transforming everyday spaces into hubs of connection, joy and communal energy. They illustrate how wellness can be playful, socially relevant and emotionally resonant.

Fitness & Performance Festivals

The festivalization of wellness has had a major influence on fitness, and now some sports events are putting the body and exercise at the centre of communal celebration. The most prominent example is boutique competition [HYROX](#), which combines functional fitness with social energy. The event harnesses sweat and exertion to fuel shared joy, camaraderie and ritualized achievement. Each race involves an 8km indoor run, with each kilometer punctuated by a different functional fitness station. Launched in 2019 in Hamburg, the event took off in 2021 and is now under review as a potential future Olympic sport. In 2025, HYROX hosted 80+ races, drawing more than 550,000 athletes and 350,000 spectators worldwide. The event is attractive because it’s fueled by an inclusive spirit, with no qualification time required to enter. Plus, every race has start waves of all ages, meaning “that a three-hour athlete can cross the finish line at the very same time as a sub-60 athlete”. What sets these events apart is their dual appeal: participants push physical limits while simultaneously engaging in community and celebration. Cheering strangers along a marathon route, collaborating in an obstacle course or sharing victory with peers turns individual performance into collective wellbeing.



With no qualification requirements or finishing time restrictions, HYROX events are designed to welcome participants of all abilities. (Credit: HYROX)

An Oxford University study found that people exercising in groups experience mood and motivation benefits up to seven days later. (Credit: Pexels)



Brooklyn-based sports brand [Bandit Running](#) has channeled this spirit in its own way, launching an F1-inspired running race called the [Bandit Grand-Prix](#) in 2025. The team captured attendees' imagination by transforming a Brooklyn concert venue into an underground-style race space, complete with live music, brand activations and an F1-themed fan zone. By combining high-energy competition with immersive experiences, Bandit Running created a festival-like environment that engaged both athletes and spectators.

Beyond the physical, participants at these kinds of sporting events often report mental clarity, emotional release and a profound sense of belonging—benefits amplified by the festival atmosphere. A [2021 Oxford University study](#) involving more than 1,000 participants found that people exercising in groups experienced significantly higher pain tolerance and endurance than those exercising alone, with mood and motivation benefits lasting up to seven days post-activity. Researchers concluded that shared physical exertion triggers endorphin release more effectively through social bonding than solo exercise. “By exercising together, we’re building the social relationships we need to build happy and healthy lives,” said [Dr. Arran Davis](#), a postdoctoral researcher within the Social Body Lab. “Fatigue is ultimately determined not by our muscles but by

how we feel; our mind forces us to stop even when our muscles have something left to give. But this cautious system becomes a bit less careful when our social environments signal to us that we are safe.”

Additional examples include [Strong New York](#), a fitness and wellness festival blending group workouts, recovery and wellness zones, brand activations, expert panels and healthy food.

Though featuring an exhibition element—which isn’t new to the fitness industry—the central experiential element and communal spirit at these events set them apart.

These gatherings represent a clear opportunity to reimagine wellness within performance-focused environments. Gyms, studios and sporting brands can meet this growing appetite by integrating recovery sessions, mindful rituals and movement-based wellbeing alongside competition—enhancing energy, connection and enjoyment without diluting athletic intensity. Pop-ups or brand partnerships—from supplements to apparel—at mass events like HYROX could also introduce playful, experiential elements. As sport, wellness and community continue to intersect, these gatherings have the potential to evolve into multi-dimensional experiences where learning, recovery and social connection complement physical performance.

Immersive Multi-Day Wellness Festivals

As appetite for in-person experiences and wellness travel [climbs](#)—and with wellness tourism poised to surpass [\\$1 trillion by 2029](#)—multi-day operator-led wellness festivals are proving the perfect opportunity to deliver luxury, expertise and community in one immersive experience.

As a result, resorts and hospitality brands are following suit and transforming their global properties into immersive wellness playgrounds. Six Senses was one of the earliest adopters, hosting its now annual Alma festival, which invites guests to explore yoga, breathwork and meditation alongside social rituals. Meanwhile, [Soneva's SOUL Festival](#) in the Maldives blends luxury with self-discovery, offering experiences that range from starlit beach meditations to holistic culinary workshops. [SHA Wellness](#) recently [teamed up](#) with Harvest to host its first festival in Mexico, merging spa treatments, movement, nutrition workshops and expert talks into a seamless, experiential journey. In the UK, [Champneys Wellness Festival](#) balances wellness with cultural exploration, while established Greek retreat destination and spa [Euphoria Retreat](#) integrates local traditions with immersive programming for its take on festivals.

The appeal of operator-led festivals lies in structured freedom: guests have access to expert guidance and thoughtfully curated programming, yet choose how and when to engage. These events foster both social bonding and self-reflection, creating communities that often outlast the festival itself. Crucially, festivals should leave guests with practical tools, knowledge or wellness practices they can bring home. This ensures the experience isn't just memorable in the moment, but valuable long-term, reinforcing both wellbeing and brand affinity.

For a few days, guests are fully immersed, experiencing an operator's brand and values across every touchpoint. This is where a strong narrative matters: festivals offer the chance to tell a story, deliver meaningful insights and build loyalty. As hospitality legend and [Wild Origins](#) founder Neil Jacobs told attendees at the 2025 Global Wellness Summit: "The brands really making the difference are those that have a very defined narrative ... The minute you start to try and make everybody happy, you dilute that storytelling." Festivals allow brands to stand firm in what they believe in, engage guests creatively and cultivate both domestic and international loyalty.



Operator-led festivals like Alma by Six Senses foster deep connection, helping participants feel part of something larger than themselves. (Credit: Six Senses)

Retreat Yourself festival in South Africa brings together people from all walks of life through music, movement, wellness, food and shared experiences. (Credit: Retreat Yourself)



Understandably, not all operators will want to invest in large-scale festivals. However, pop-ups or workshop series can replicate elements of the experience, offering curated moments, tangible learnings and immersive interactions without the scale of a full festival.

Operators need to play an active role in facilitating the success of these events and set up the conditions for success. Just gathering like-minded people together won't be enough to build community—people will need support to connect. Stylus suggests helping visitors “overcome social anxiety and small-talk scepticism with cues that prompt engagement. Whether designated times and spaces for chatting, pre-event introductions or conversation starters, social spaces don't just happen—they require active intention.”

Wellness Festivals

For those dipping their toe into wellness, the festivalization trend has sparked standalone wellness festivals that offer playful entry points. They invite attendees of any level of familiarity with wellness to explore, experiment and discover what resonates without pressure to optimize.

Dedicated festivals like Retreat Yourself (South Africa), The Big Retreat (UK) and Move at The

Shed (US) sprung up during the early 2020s. They all blend movement, talks, creativity, food, music and nature, allowing people to float between experiences and find what feels good. Meanwhile, AIUa Wellness Festival (Saudi Arabia) has integrated culture and natural beauty in a desert setting since 2023, while Wonderfruit (Thailand) and Glow (Singapore) launched pre-2020 to merge festival culture with wellbeing, creating spaces that are part education, part celebration.

Some festivals focus on single modalities, creating immersive experiences around one practice. The first Bathe-ing DC, co-hosted by industry operator Therme Group, ran in 2025, turning thermal bathing into a cultural event; Liquid Sound in Germany hosts monthly spa raves with music and water immersion; and Saunaverse in London reimagines sauna rituals with music, scent and community. These experiences remain accessible yet deep, allowing attendees to engage fully without feeling overwhelmed.

For brands and operators, dedicated wellness festivals offer opportunities to connect with curious and engaged audiences. They show that wellness doesn't need to feel clinical or intimidating—joy, discovery and community alone are powerful entry points into long-term habits.



Wellness programming is increasingly being woven into iconic music festivals, including major events like the UK's legendary Glastonbury music festival. (Credit: Pexels)

Music Festivals Infused with Wellness

The good news for investors and brands? It's not necessary to build a festival from scratch to tap into the booming festivalization of wellness. Luckily, established music and cultural events are now openly embedding wellness programming.

In the UK, summer music festival [Lost Village](#) has introduced [friendship ceremonies](#) across its four-day immersive schedule, while [Wilderness](#) has expanded its offering with yoga, meditation and wellness workshops. In Central America, [Envision Festival](#) follows a similar format and also loops art and education into the mix, while teaching attendees how to live in harmony with Costa Rica's natural beauty. For brands, these events represent easy opportunities to collaborate and explore how wellness can be best integrated into festivals—be that through offering rapid facials, biohacking lounges, educational workshops or in-person experiences such as breathwork, mindful movement or functional music journeys.

The beauty of these hybrid events is that they're also opening up access to younger audiences.

[Camp Bestival](#) in the UK, a family music festival, has introduced wellness activities for children and teens, creating early touchpoints that can shape lifelong habits. As mental health challenges rise and screen time dominates, concern for young people's long-term wellbeing is growing. Integrating wellness into festivals—with children's events or more teen-focused coming-of-age experiences—provides an opportunity to embed healthy practices during formative years. Learning that music, movement and mindfulness can support emotional regulation early on enables young people to integrate these practices into their lifelong mental health toolbox. Experiential engagement at this age also leaves a lasting imprint, influencing future decisions as wellness consumers.

For operators and brands, working with existing festivals offers low-friction participation. Pop-up workshops, curated activations and wellness zones allow engagement without the need to run a full-scale event. Hybrid festivals blending music and wellness demonstrate that wellness can easily become a natural part of cultural celebration and social life.

THE FUTURE

The festivalization of wellness will continue to make waves in 2026 and beyond, with events growing in sophistication, scale and influence, across multiple formats—broadening to appeal to more consumers and offering them more personalized experiences.

Sport offers one of the most compelling frontiers, and the [Marathon Pour Tous](#) (Marathon For All) hosted after the Paris 2024 Olympic Games provides a significant example. In a major community initiative, runners of all abilities were invited to run the city's official marathon course following the games. This approach could be replicated worldwide before or after major sporting events, combining movement, recovery and social connection with a festival atmosphere. Athlete- or coach-led runs, fan-zone wellness activations and live music could help teams maintain momentum after a win. They could also provide emotional release after a loss and deepen engagement with supporters in meaningful ways.

Music festivals, too, are primed for deeper integration of wellness. Imagine spaces for collective creativity—group singing, collaborative music-making, or participatory sound experiences where attendees become part of the performance. Recordings could be shared post-event or transformed live by AI into artwork or poetry during the event, responding to pitch, rhythm or perhaps biometrics. Offering attendees these types of emotional artefacts that extend the festival's impact long after it ends will tie them to the moment and move them.

There is also room for more emotionally intelligent programming. Women's health-focused offerings, for instance, could see silent disco raves with different channels aligned to phases of the menstrual cycle—high-energy dance for expansive phases, and slower, cathartic experiences when hormones fluctuate. These types of events could evolve into globally synchronized wellness moments—such as mass breathwork, dance or singing around full moons or solstices—turning wellbeing into a collective ceremony. By acknowledging bodily

rhythms, wellness gatherings become more inclusive, personalized and responsive.

For brands and operators, the opportunity is clear. By supporting and hosting these types of experiences, they embed themselves in consumers' most memorable moments, harnessing the power of FOMO while creating long-term emotional resonance. Experiences like recurring seasonal raves, pop-ups or festivals can start to become annual pilgrimages, building loyalty through anticipation and shared ritual.

At the heart of the trend is a profound truth: community is the new luxury. As [Fitt Insider](#) has noted: "Community isn't something you buy, it's something you build." The most successful brands will move beyond transactions to create experiences that leave lasting impact, particularly for younger generations, where shared participation can shape identity, seed lifelong habits, and build deep emotional loyalty.

Ultimately, these evolutions point to a broadening and redefinition of leisure. As cultural needs around mental health, meaning and connection intensify, wellness festivals and raves are creating spaces for sustainable joy—shared release that leaves behind memories, renewed energy and a desire to return. True luxury is no longer exclusivity or excess; it is the ability to create experiences people feel part of and, importantly, want to revisit.



Female sports represent a burgeoning global economy that can be seen across every facet of the wellness space. (Credit: Hyrox)

Women & Sports: The Revolution Continues

More Women Become Empowered as Athletes as the Women's Sports Economy Booms

From superstar global athletes to a berth of new leagues, women's sports are on the rise—and brands would be smart to hop on this bandwagon.

By Amy Eisinger

INTRODUCTION

Talk to anybody about the recent global rise of women's sports and you'll probably hear the same thing: Finally. At last. It's about time.

Female athletes have been undervalued across almost every market for decades, and today's increased interest has been met with a mix of long-awaited relief and cautious optimism for the future.

From Kathrine Switzer who illegally ran the Boston Marathon in 1967, to tennis legend Billie Jean King winning the Battle of the Sexes in 1973, to the Spanish football federation president's non-consensual kissing of soccer star Jennifer Hermoso in 2023, female athletes have been confronting sexism and fighting for a seat at the table for decades.

This legacy sets the stage for where we are today: Female sports represent a burgeoning global

economy that can be seen across every facet of the wellness space. In fitness, female athletes, like rugby star Iona Maher, have championed body diversity, while others, like tennis star Naomi Osaka, have candidly shared their mental health journeys in moments of unprecedented vulnerability. Across the beauty space, dozens of female athletes have become brand ambassadors, while others—like tennis pro Sloane Stephens—have started their own body care line. Women's sports also touch real estate (with the boom of women's sports bars) and tourism (with the rise of travel for international sporting events).

According to a March 2025 report from Deloitte, global revenue for women's sports was US\$1.88 billion in 2024 and is projected to hit \$2.35 billion for 2025. North America is leading the charge—with 56% of global revenue in 2024 coming from this region—but other areas of the globe aren't far behind.



Strength training is great at any age, but it may be especially helpful for menopausal and post-menopausal women. (Credit: Adobe Stock)

This trend is playing out in multiple ways, all of which we'll address: the boom in women's sports leagues and organizations, female athletes as marketing powerhouses, the power in female fandom (including exponential growth for women's only sports bars), grassroots inspiration for amateur female athletes around the world, and a shifting cultural perception around weightlifting and the appearance of strong women.

Above all, the trend has made one thing clear: These female athletes, entrepreneurs, founders, and fans will reinvent the game—and rewrite their own rules along the way.

FUELING THE TREND

Although this trend has been a long time coming, our collective interest has accelerated in recent years.

"I really think that this moment is a product of the multi-factorial shift in the way we think about women's bodies," says Macaela Mackenzie, women's sports journalist and author of *Money, Power, Respect: How Women in Sports Are Shaping the Future of Feminism*.

Mackenzie points to changes in social norms around women's strength training, the rise in the cult of personality around certain female athletes, the explosion in leagues and high-profile news moments, like salary negotiations, as converging to create a perfect storm.

Data supports these insights as well:

- A slew of new longevity research has started to sink in: Strength training is great at any age, but it may be especially helpful for menopausal and post-menopausal women. A [meta-analysis from 2024](#) showed that resistance training was associated with a decrease in the severity and frequency of hot flashes in postmenopausal women. Other studies [have suggested](#) that strength exercises may be beneficial for improving bone density, metabolic levels and [reducing adipose tissue](#). The booming menopause market—which is [expected to reach](#) \$24.4 billion by 2030—now goes hand-in-hand with getting into the gym and lifting heavy.
- In 2022, the US Women's National Team [won a landmark lawsuit](#) against the US Soccer Federation that resulted in a promise of equal pay to the men's national team—and \$22 million in back pay. The ruling became a watershed moment for women's sports, opening the floodgates for other female athletes to demand more equitable contracts and better pay. The Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA), for example, is [currently negotiating](#) a deal for their 2026 season that would raise the average player's salary to about \$406,000 (up from the [current](#) \$102,000). And for the first time in their two-year season, the Professional Women's Hockey League (PWHL) Player's Association [voted to publicly disclose](#) athletes' salaries last summer, as a way to allow the players to better advocate for themselves.

- Between protein and creatine dominating the cultural conversation, women have started to take note in the gym. The desire to be ever smaller and thinner has been replaced by the growing trend to get stronger. Women’s interest in weightlifting has grown from 11% in 2019 to 14% in 2024, according to a [recent report](#), and everywhere you look on social media, gym-fluencers are touting strong, muscular female bodies—often as a way [to cope with the chaos](#) of a never-ending news cycle.
- Emerging from the pandemic, groups around the globe hungered for in-person sports and fitness once again. By 2024, gym memberships had outpaced pre-pandemic numbers, [according to Fortune Well](#). Additionally, grassroots sporting groups sprung up globally among women, especially in slower-paced, social-based sports, like pickleball, roller derby, flag football and ultimate frisbee. Newer competitions, like Hyrox, which combine 1KM racing with eight functional workout stations in an arena-like setting, are also surging in popularity. Over the past year, online searches for the term “Hyrox” have grown 233% and over

600,000 athletes are expected to participate this season alone, according to [AthleTechNews](#). (What’s more, Hyrox also [recently announced](#) they’re launching their first cruise in 2026.)

- Finally, a wide variety of fashion, beauty and luxury brands have started to capitalize on the value of hiring an ambassador athlete. Although this is a more traditional approach than some of the other trends on this list—luxury watch brands, for example, have long enlisted female athletes as the face for their products—more recent marketing campaigns are rewriting the playbook for using their ambassadors. According to sports and fashion journalist Daniel-Yaw Miller, the shift is entirely driven by the need for a wider, more global consumer base. Luxury brands needed to appeal to more consumers in order to stay relevant (and solvent). “It became an existential thing,” Miller explains. Whereas in the past, these brands might have had the choice to shy away from sports, now the opposite is true: Sports has become a “very important vehicle” for increasing brand awareness, says Miller.

Hyrox, which combines 1KM racing with eight functional workout stations in an arena-like setting, has seen female participation grow to 38% in 2024 up from just 24% in 2020. (Credit: Hyrox)





Ahead of the 2028 Olympics in Los Angeles, in which flag football will make its debut, the owner of the New York Jets announced a \$1 million donation to kickstart the largest collegiate women's flag football league in the US in 2026 (Credit: Adobe Stock)

ASPECTS OF THE TREND

The Boom of Women's Sports Leagues and Organizations

The cultural shift isn't happening in a silo. Momentum is growing behind a number of women's sports leagues, which are poping up at a record pace. There's the Professional Women's Hockey League (2023 launch), League One Volleyball (2024 launch) and the Women's Professional Baseball League, set to launch in 2026. Other new leagues, like SailGP, are not exclusive to female athletes, but are building in gender equity from the start.

There's also the high-profile, celebrity-backed Athlos, which returned to New York City for a second year on October 10, 2025. The venture, backed by Serena Williams's husband and women's sports advocate Alexis Ohanian, seeks to elevate women's track and field, a sport where some of the greatest pay inequities persist. Athlos is trailblazing in a few ways: hosting a head-turning long jump event in the heart of Times Square and closing the competition with a concert from Grammy-winning singer Ciara. Also worth noting, winning athletes were paid instantly, thanks to a partnership with CashApp. The message seems clear: Professional women's sports competitions will write their own playbook.

Other new leagues are also popping up. Ahead of the 2028 Olympics in Los Angeles, in which flag football will make its debut, the owner of the New York Jets announced a \$1 million donation to kickstart the largest collegiate women's flag football league in the US in 2026.

Existing leagues, like the nearly 30-year-old WNBA, are also capitalizing on growing momentum and skyrocketing popularity to negotiate better pay. As mentioned previously, the current Collective Bargaining Agreement (which at press time had been extended to January 9, 2026 in order to facilitate more discussion) hinges on increasing salaries for its players. The Women's National Basketball Player's Association has proposed a system that would offer salaries commensurate with a percentage of generated revenue, while the league has reportedly countered with a fixed minimum salary of more than \$220,000 and maximum salary of more than \$1.1 million with an annual percentage increase. Either option would be a significant raise, as most players currently make around \$102,000. However, all of the options still pale in comparison to a professional men's basketball player in the NBA, where the 2024-2025 season salary average was just under \$12 million. Although the focus has been on equal pay, interest in women's basketball has also spurred a slew of new developments, including a new \$150 million training facility for the Los Angeles Sparks set to open in 2027.

And it's not just North American markets. Project B, the Saudi-backed international women's basketball league, is reportedly building its roster as talks continue to stall within the WNBA. As a recent report by Deloitte notes, interest in women's soccer is exploding across Morocco, Japan and Australia, as well. For example, Deloitte notes that in a 2025 analysis where they examined the top 15 highest earning global soccer clubs, two Japanese clubs fell just outside the top 15, indicating growth potential.

The firm also notes that even interest in traditionally less popular sports, like cricket, is growing—and setting the stage for global fandom. (Thanks to the recent first World Cup title from India's women's cricket team, this acceleration may become even more palatable.)

Other leagues are also planning for expansion. Australia's Women's National Basketball League (WNBL) released an updated brand identity in May 2025; and Liga F, the women's national soccer league in Spain, has seen TV viewership climb by 90% during the 2025-2026 season, in part thanks to title sponsorship from Moeve Global.

And recently, billionaire philanthropist Michele Kang announced she will be pouring \$55 million into women and sports as part of the creation of the Kang Women's Institute, an organization within US Soccer's Soccer Forward foundation. Kang,

who owns the Washington Spirit, London City Lionesses and OL Lyonnes, has earmarked \$30 million specifically for youth sports and coaching programs.

The institute aims to address the gap in funding women's sports research—a vital need considering just how little research exists on the female athlete. Just take running, for example, one of the more well-researched fitness topics. “Most studies—about 70% to 80%—focus solely on men, while only 5% are done exclusively on women,” says Jinger Gottschall, the director of sports research for New Balance. “So we absolutely have to shift this paradigm.”

Funding research about female athletes is more than an existential question or moral obligation. There are real world applications. Emma Hayes, coach of the US Women's National Soccer Team and an advisor on Kang's initiative, points out that during her experience at Chelsea Women, three players suffered ACL tears. When they weren't fully recovered in six months—the time frame typically given to male athletes—physical therapists had no explanation. “We don't have as much testosterone, so we don't build muscle in the same way,” Hayes told Youth Sports Business Report. More female-athlete specific evidence could allow for more personalized training and recovery protocols, and much more.

Interest in women's soccer is exploding around the world. (Credit: Adobe Stock)



Power in Female Fandom

Of course, where would sports be without its fans? And where would those fans be without a place to celebrate together?

Enter: The Sports Bra, the first sports bar in the US to show only women's sports on all of its TVs. Opened in 2022 in Portland, Oregon, by chef Jenny Nguyen, the straightforward idea soon inspired others to follow suit.

Today, there are a half-dozen women's sports bars around the US, including Rough and Tumble in Seattle, Washington, Title 9 Sports Grill in Phoenix, Arizona and A Bar of Their Own, in Minneapolis, Minnesota. According to NBC News, the number of women's sports bars in the US is expected to quadruple by the end of 2025, jumping from six to about two dozen. Some spaces are also moving beyond exclusive bars as well. The Stoop Pigeon, for example, is set to open in 2026 in Philadelphia and promises to offer a women's sports bar by night, and cafe and collaborative coworking space by day.

In 2024, The Sports Bra received an investment from Ohanian's 776 Foundation to franchise across

the US, with plans to open locations in Boston, Indianapolis, Las Vegas and St. Louis. "We're serving fans nationwide who are hungry for spaces that not only champion women's sports, but create a community where everyone feels like they belong," Nguyen told the AP. "There is no better moment than this to open these places."

Internationally, other bars are also gaining traction. In Melbourne, Australia, The W Club (hosted within The Aviary) has become the only known women's sports bar in the country after the The Ladies League (the country's first women's sports bar) closed earlier this year. Pop-up women's sports bars during major sporting events also seem to be a way for groups to test the water. Set Piece Social, for example, is a London-based pop-up with ambitions to become the first UK-women's sports pub, and most recently hosted packed watch parties for the Rugby World Cup in September 2025. And during the Paris Olympics in 2024, The Matchless Six was a women's-focused pop-up in Toronto, Canada.

And if you think it's just women dropping in to watch women's sports—think again.



Opened in 2022, The Sports Bra was the first sports bar in the US to show only women's sports on all of its TVs. (Credit: The Sports Bra)

The number of women's sports bars in the US is expected to quadruple by the end of 2025, jumping from six to about two dozen. (Credit: A Bar of Their Own)



“At the beginning, when we first opened, we saw probably 95% girls and women and a lot of queer folks,” Nguyen told NPR in 2024. “But [after] that first initial wave of being open, we were really becoming a cornerstone of the community for all folks.”

The ability to watch women's sports has presented other challenges, due to inconsistent scheduling and a single season being handled by different networks. Nguyen joked that it became a “full time job” just trying to find all the games on TV. That's where ventures like the Whoopi Goldberg-backed All Women's Sports Network (AWSN) seek to close the gap. The AWSN is currently available across 65 countries and offers live coverage of leagues, including the UEFA Women's Champions League (soccer; Europe), Athletes Unlimited (softball, volleyball and basketball; US), FIBA (basketball; global) and the WNBL (basketball; Australia).

Financial growth and popularity seems largely beneficial, but there are concerns about the impact such popularity is having on fans. Consider the New York Liberty, a WNBA team based in Brooklyn, New York, who noted a nearly 100% increase in ticket prices year over year for season tickets, according to a spreadsheet shared widely across Reddit.

“As that team has become more popular and more financially viable, who suffers?” asks Frankie de la Cretaz, a journalist who focuses on the intersection

of sports, gender, culture and queerness, and author of *Hail Mary: The Rise and Fall of the National Women's Football League*. “The longtime fans are being priced out. And who are those fans? Those are the people of color and the queer folks that have been there from the beginning that are being priced out.”

De la Cretaz, who refers to the phenomenon as the “gentrification of the WNBA,” also notes a parallel in the neighborhood where the Liberty play—an area that also saw a significant rise in affluence and property value increase that consequently pushed out longtime residents.

Globally, other sports are also seeing massive growth in fandom.

Consider the Women's Rugby World Cup, which broke multiple records throughout the tournament held in September 2025. Overall, a record-breaking 444,465 tickets were sold—more than triple the number sold in New Zealand in 2022, according to Yahoo Sports. The final also broke records, with 5.8 million people watching across TV and streaming platforms, and more than 81,000 people watching in person at Allianz Stadium in Twickenham, London. The final became the second-most-watched one in World Cup history, regardless of gender, according to Yahoo Sports. And the players are taking note, too.

“Women’s sport is on the up,” Red Roses rugby player Meg Jones told World Rugby after winning. “We’re leading with compassion, leading with vulnerability and leading with love. That’s what humans want and I think we’ll keep doing that.”

Sarah Massey, the tournament’s managing director, also told The Guardian at the time that attendance was 100,000 more than their original objective. “It is three times the number that was sold for the last Women’s Rugby World Cup,” Massey told the publication. “It is an extraordinary milestone that even surpasses our best expectations.”

In October, the ICC Women’s Cricket World Cup 2025, held in India and Sri Lanka, also saw record-breaking viewership. Off the back of a landmark global partnership with Google aimed at bolstering global fandom and ticket sales for women’s cricket,

fans were able to secure pre-sale tickets using Google Pay for only 100 rupees (just over \$1). Viewership for the game ultimately reached 185 million on the app JioHotstar, which was about equal to the ICC Men’s T20 World Cup 2024 final, according to ICC Cricket. And that doesn’t include the additional 92 million who also watched via Connected TV.

We’ve reached an important tipping point: Fandom for female sports is no longer a group that needs to be searched for and found in niche message boards or social accounts—it’s everywhere.

Female Athletes Are Marketing Powerhouses

Athletes and celebrities are good at launching brands into the stratosphere and pushing products—that’s a basic marketing tenet. But the latest generation of female athletes is writing a new playbook, shaping business with more speed and savviness than ever before.

“It doesn’t hurt that many of the attributes crucial to success in the boardroom are central to the anatomy of any accomplished athlete,” Maria Sharapova, a five-time Grand Slam champion who was also named the global wellness ambassador for luxury wellness resort brand Aman in 2023, wrote in January 2025 for The Business of Fashion. “Just like in sports, business demands persistence, patience and resilience. Both successful athletes and strong business minds regularly navigate setbacks, provide and receive constructive criticism, lead with objectivity in making difficult decisions and celebrate small victories en route to larger accomplishments.”



Milani Cosmetics teamed up with athletes Jordan Chiles, Sabrina Ionescu, Chiaka Ogbogu and Mattie Rogers on an ad campaign for its setting spray ahead of the Paris Olympics. (Credit: Milani Cosmetics)

Fitness-focused hotel brand SIRO has brought British-Somali boxer Ramla Ali on board as an ambassador; she also designed the hotel's boxing fitness classes. (Credit: Siro)



The deals female athletes are signing today go beyond the expected athletic apparel or occasional luxury brand. Milani, the drugstore cosmetics staple, ran an ad campaign in 2024 that touted their makeup's ability to stay put through sweaty activities. The series was released two months before the 2024 Paris Olympics and starred four female athletes: WNBA champ Sabrina Ionescu, Olympic gymnast Jordan Chiles, volleyball star Chiaka Ogbogu and weightlifter Mattie Rogers.

Apparel brands are also cashing in. American tennis champ Coco Gauff debuted a limited edition six-piece collection with American Eagle during the 2025 US Open. The line was anchored by an oversized denim jacket emblazoned with the words: "Thank you to the people who didn't believe in me." The phrase comes from a now-viral moment when Gauff spoke to the crowd after winning the 2023 US Open. The jacket is emblematic of a larger trend: Athletes aren't just lending their likeness to an ad campaign, they're actively participating in the creative direction and, in this case, allowing their own words to propel a cultural conversation.

Take another example: British-Somali boxer Ramla Ali's partnership as an ambassador with fitness-focused SIRO Hotels.

"As a professional boxer, author and humanitarian, [Ali's] story resonates far beyond the ring," Mattheos Georgiou, senior vice president of

SIRO Hotels, says. "She represents determination, courage and the power of redefining what's possible, qualities that directly mirror SIRO's commitment to supporting individuals on their own performance journeys."

Ali is more than a face for the wellness-focused brand, she also designed SIRO Hotel's boxing fitness classes. "Our athletes play a guiding role in shaping SIRO's training philosophy. They share the routines, recovery methods and performance principles that underpin their own careers," Georgiou explains. The approach is a clear departure from simply pairing a face with a brand. Today's athletes are aligning with brands that reinforce their own values and strategic priorities and helping to shape campaign outcomes in the process. It's an approach that's paying off.

Guests at SIRO say that the classes feel "purposeful" rather than generic and that the structure, coaching and flow reflect real athletic insight, Georgiou says. As consumers increasingly literate on health and wellness topics, they recognize that the programming has been shaped by professionals who understand performance.

And of course, where there's money to be made, pharmaceutical companies won't be far behind. Decorated gymnast Simone Biles, for example, partnered with Eli Lilly's blockbuster GLP-1 drug, Mounjaro, in 2024. (Biles does not have Type 2

diabetes and does not take Mounjaro.) Tennis legend Serena Williams has been candid about her weight-loss journey while using another GLP-1 drug, Ozempic, in partnership with telehealth company, Ro.

But as is often the case for trailblazers, when an endorsement deal or contract isn't available, shrewd athletes simply create their own. Capitalizing on their social media fame or fresh off big wins, they're building new products for women leading busy, fit lifestyles.

Just take tennis star Sloane Stephens, who won the 2017 US Open and launched her own bodycare brand Doc & Glo in August 2024. The line, named as a tribute to Stephens's grandparents, offers products for "active individuals" that have all been pressure tested by athletes, according to the website.

Breakout rugby phenom, Ilona Maher, has a similar marketing strategy for her beauty line, Medalist Skin, which debuted right after Maher secured a bronze medal at the 2024 Paris Olympics. The move to start her own brand adds one more partnership to Maher's existing portfolio, which also includes partnerships with L'Oreal, Paula's Choice and Secret.

And then there's Allyson Felix. Not only is the track legend the most decorated athlete—male or female—in World Athletics Championships history, she's also become an advocate for mothers and is the founder of Saysh, a footwear company that launched in 2021 to meet the "unique needs of women's feet." And true to Felix's passion for maternal advocacy, Saysh offers a unique "maternity return policy." If your feet change size during pregnancy—a not-uncommon occurrence—they'll replace your running shoes free of charge.

Even sports that have historically leaned into luxury brands are starting to break out of their existing molds. Tennis—a sport that arguably might be closest to achieving gender equity—has served as a blueprint for athletic endorsements for years: Luxury watch brands are often seen on the wrists of center-court stars. But in recent years, those luxury brands have begun to think outside the classically affluent sport.

It's a shift that—like so many others—is being driven by the consumer.

"Fashion brands are starting to realize they can't afford to not speak to every single consumer and a broad base of consumers all around the world," says Miller, who also authors the SportsVerse Substack. "I think maybe one of the only ways to do that, aside from music, is the world of sports."

Equinox's new EQX ARC program includes personal training led by coaches trained in female physiology for every life stage, from pregnancy and fertility to menopause. (Credit: Equinox)



Togethxr, launched by athletes Sue Bird, Chloe Kim, Simone Manuel and Alex Morgan in March 2021, is responsible for the now-viral t-shirt 'Everyone Watches Women's Sports'. (Credit: A Bar of Their Own)



Prada, for example, sponsored the Chinese women's soccer team for the FIFA World Cup in 2023, while luxury beauty conglomerate Sephora became the official partner for Unrivaled (the off-season women's basketball league) in July 2025, and Coach announced an exclusive partnership for the latest WNBA draft. The move feels obvious, especially when considering the majority of the consumer base for luxury apparel brands is women's wear, notes Miller.

Observers need to look no farther than 2025's Met Gala star-studded red carpet, which was filled with athletes like Angel Reese, Simone Biles, Gabby Thomas and Sha'Carri Richardson. And in September 2025, *Rolling Stone Africa* shot a cover story with Canadian tennis star Vicky Mboko, while *Vogue China* featured breakout tennis champ Zheng Qinwen in October 2024—their first time ever featuring an athlete on the cover.

The former editor of *Vogue Paris*, Carine Roitfeld, has also taken note. In May, the editrix debuted PLAYERS, a bi-annual publication dedicated to the intersection of high fashion and sports.

And Roitfeld is hardly the only one to realize potential untapped media opportunities. The most well-known example, Togethxr, was launched by athletes Sue Bird, Chloe Kim, Simone Manuel and Alex Morgan in March 2021. The "media and commerce company" points to the ongoing media coverage disparities between men's and women's sports, and seeks to rectify that through a convergence of "culture, activism, lifestyle and

sports," according to their website. (The brand is also known for the now-viral t-shirt: "Everyone Watches Women's Sports" which was first popularized by Coach Dawn Stanley, who wore it during a University of South Carolina women's basketball game.) In addition to Togethxr, there's Re-Inc, a sports and media brand founded by soccer stars Tobin Heath and Christen Press; and boxing star Ramla Ali's SevenEightSix Entertainment, a production company.

Despite the historic and well-deserved interest in female athletes, it can still be a tough line to tow.

"When we do interviews with female athletes—and this is from community to university to elite to professional—there is an added level of stress," Gottschall says. "I think some people might categorize it differently, but it seems like there is more of a need to prove yourself," she adds. "There's potential for criticism in terms of everything, from attire to hair styles, and of course, wanting to be a positive role model for younger female athletes. Female athletes definitely feel a sense of pressure that we don't always see when we do these interviews with males."

That differentiation means each partnership must be considered even more carefully, especially knowing that female athletes have not only been subjected to higher levels of public scrutiny, but also unfairly sexualized by the media and through brand partnerships. It's a facet, like many other aspects of women's sports, that continues to evolve positively, if far too slowly.

Everyone Gets in on the Game

The increased attention on professional women's sports has had a trickle-down effect, leading to more amateur organizations and more participation from women at every age, but especially from younger women.

According to the 2023 State of Play report from the Aspen Institute, girls participation in sports is rising across the US, even as it declines among boys. Between 2019 and 2022, girls participation for ages 13-17 increased by 3%. National funding for women's fitness can make a real impact as well—as shown by This Girl Can, a National Lottery funded organization in the UK that is designed to show “real women” exercising as a means of encouraging and normalizing participation.

Hyrox, the fitness-as-competition model mentioned previously, has seen female participation grow to 38% in 2024, up from just 24% in 2020. Strength training for women is growing in popularity globally (a phenomenon we'll dig into a bit more in the next section), but a survey of over 37,000 women in 16 different countries found that 40% of them regularly engaged in strength training. A

year-end report from fitness tracker giant Garmin also found that, while the popularity of strength training has been growing steadily (over 20%) for the past few years, this year, women did 6% more strength training than men.

The explosion of interest in pickleball—a slower-paced, more social version of tennis—over the last few years has also ushered in a new group of female athletes who may have otherwise shied away from competition. As of 2024, 40% of pickleball players were female, and new facilities are still being built all the time, with over 16,000 available across the US at the start of 2025. The same Garmin report also found that pickleball, along with other racket-based sports like badminton, table tennis and racquetball, saw a 67% increase year over year, with women driving that increase. (Garmin users in Vietnam apparently swung their racket the most per capita, as well.)

Other grassroots movements continue to gain momentum. Las Amazonas de Yaxunah, commonly known as Las Amazonas, are an indigenous women's softball team in Mexico who have attracted international fame in recent years for playing barefoot while wearing traditional huipil



The explosion of interest in pickleball, which saw a 67% increase year over year, has been driven by women. (Credit: Adobe Stock)

A large-scale study from Cedars-Sinai and other global researchers showed that women who did strength training two to three days per week were more likely to live longer and have a 30% lower risk of death from heart disease than those who did not. (Credit: Adobe Stock)



dresses. Formed in 2018, the team initially faced misogynistic insults, but the ridicule has slowly turned to cheers, as the group has become famous throughout Mexico and the world.

Shifting From Smaller to Stronger

Out of the shiny spandex leotards and candy-colored sports bands worn by the cardio queens of the 1980s and 1990s, a different depiction of women's fitness took shape in the early aughts. Women no longer lost weight or flab, they “toned,” “sculpted” and “flattened.”

The messaging was the same, but now it was coded in something new: pastel hues, sun-kissed skin and wavy beach hair. Brands like the California-based Tone It Up and influencers like Australian trainer Kayla Itsines dominated social media with empowering messages for women—albeit while still pairing it with objectively normative imagery of thin (mostly white) women.

But in recent years, we've seen another shift.

Women are bulking up. They're opting for powerlifting over Pilates, boot camps over barre and CrossFit over cardio. And it's easy to see this shift in the fitness space as emblematic of a larger concurrent cultural conversation.

With the decline of body positivity, came body neutrality—a concept popularized around 2021 which invites people to neither view their body

with love or hate, but rather just allow their body to “be.” Instead of focusing on the aesthetics, body neutrality asks people to turn their attention to what a body can do.¹ Suddenly, instead of asking how small they could make themselves, women began asking the opposite: How strong? How muscular? How much weight could I lift?

Mental fortitude and physical strength have long been understood to have a positive relationship: Regular physical activity can lead to better mental health, and exercise therapy is regularly recommended as a way to improve people's wellbeing.² It's a relationship that is vital to weightlifting, in particular.

And the relationship might be even more beneficial for women—especially as they get older. A large-scale study from Cedars-Sinai and other global researchers showed that women who did strength training two to three days per week were more likely to live longer and have a 30% lower risk of death from heart disease than those who did not.³ The relationship becomes even more critical for perimenopausal and menopausal women, who are at an increased risk for osteoporosis.

“It's not going to be aerobic fitness that limits you in later life, it's going to be strength and power,” Stuart Phillips, a professor of kinesiology at McMaster University, [told the New York Times in September](#). (For what it's worth, at least one study indicates that high-intensity interval training, or

HIIT training, is the way to go for aerobic exercise later in life as well.⁴⁾

Scientists and doctors aren't the only ones espousing the benefits. Slews of influencers and fitness professionals have also been dogmatic about the way strength training has allowed them to escape diet culture and ditch pre-conceived notions about how their body needed to look. Casey Johnston—who goes by [@swolewoman](#) on Instagram—has long championed strength training as something that goes way beyond the physical.

“Lifting had laid bare all the lies I’d been told about how food and bodies worked,” Johnston writes in her memoir, *A Physical Education: How I Escaped Diet Culture and Gained the Power of Lifting*.⁵ “My body could feel good to be in, powerful even, instead of like an increasingly rickety abandoned building.”

Outside the US, other countries are also following suit. A 2023 China Fitness Industry Data Report revealed that women account for 55% of fitness consumers, while another report showed that women make up 59% of outdoor sports participants, according to [China Daily](#).

Women’s-only fitness spaces are also quickly popping up to meet a growing demand. China [reportedly](#) boasts 1,231 women-only gyms as of 2024. And in the UAE, real estate firm Arada [opened its first women’s-only space](#), FitnGlam, which is reportedly seeing over 3,000 new memberships annually—with plans for three more locations imminently. This is especially good news, since a [report](#) from January 2025 found that 50% of women in the KSA and UAE feel some type of “gymtimidation”—primarily due to unfamiliarity with equipment and concerns about exercising in front of others.

Brands and businesses are also popping up to support the growing interest. Centr, the brand founded by Chris Hemsworth, [launched an app-based training program](#) specifically for women in October 2025. The 12-week program, called The Foundation, is led by celebrity trainer, yoga teacher and strength expert Alex Silver-Fagan. In the past year, at-home smart fitness apparatus Tonal [introduced](#) a resistance-focused mat Pilates program, while fitness app Sesh [debuted](#) a four-week introductory strength program for women built for “real life.”



A 2023 China Fitness Industry Data Report revealed that women account for 55% of fitness consumers, while another report showed that women make up 59% of outdoor sports participants. (Credit: Adobe Stock)

Decorated gymnast Simone Biles—shown here at the 2023 Global Wellness Summit with GWS chair Susie Ellis—partnered with Eli Lilly’s blockbuster GLP-1 drug, Mounjaro, in 2024. (Credit: GWS)



And luxury fitness brand Equinox, after partnering with startup Function Health in 2024, has recently announced a new Women’s Health and Performance Initiative. Called [Equinox Arc](#), it will give members access to the biomarker testing offered by Function, and to group fitness classes, like “Stronger Women,” which will seek to build community alongside pumping iron, according to [FemTechInsider](#).

Existing brands like CorePower Yoga have also noted increased interest. According to internal data from the company, nearly all (95%) of their female clients were seeking strength training.

“When we launched Strength X, it became one of our highest-performing class types,” CorePower chief marketing and commercial officer Sarah Choi said during a conversation at the ATN Innovation Summit 2025. “There’s this outdated belief that women don’t want high-intensity strength-based workouts, but that just isn’t true anymore, if it ever was.”

The international popularity of superstar athletes like gymnast Simone Biles and breakout rugby star, Ilona Maher, have also helped to propel a positive conversation around women’s bodies: There is no definitive way for a female athlete to look. And although barriers to entry and sexism still abound, strong women aren’t going anywhere.

THE FUTURE

Beyond the sports bars, new leagues, major marketing deals and endless social media moments, there’s still real work to be done.

“My hope is, yes, of course, that women get equal pay, that women get equal airtime, that women get equal sponsorship opportunities. That’s all table-stakes,” says Macaela Mackenzie. “But what I really hope happens in this moment is that we get the sustained cultural shift around seeing women’s bodies not as objects of desire, but objects of strength and objects of capability.”

At the 2024 Paris Olympics, for example, women’s sports received only 43% of the news coverage—but generated 53% of total engagement across social content, according to [SportsPro](#) and [Deloitte](#).

One of the basic principles of economics is that you can often “follow the money,” but it simply hasn’t been true with women’s sports. In fact, for years, research has shown how investors and companies continue to leave money on the table by not investing in women’s sports, and current research indicates there is still an unmet demand across areas like merchandising.

“I still find it staggering how brands under-index still on female athletes considering how they’re the

ones leading the cultural conversation,” Miller says. “Brands would be wise to keep an eye on college athletes and track and field stars specifically,” he adds, noting that both of these areas are still widely under-represented when it comes to partnerships and media opportunities.

The change has been slow—and is still deeply rooted in sexism, de la Cretaz notes.

“It takes at least a decade for a franchise to be profitable—and that’s any franchise,” de la Cretaz says. “The difference is you have people willing to sink money into men’s teams and leagues that are losing for years and years and years before they see a profit. Whereas if a women’s league or a women’s team isn’t profitable right away, they kind of throw up their hands like, ‘Well, I guess there’s no money here.’”

That unrealistic expectation has hampered growth for decades. But now that there are viable examples to point to, “the floodgates open,” de la Cretaz adds.

Despite the progress, the issue of pay inequity persists. Although strides are being made, there

are still no women on the annual Forbes’ top 50 world’s highest-paid athletes list. And as a report from UN Women notes, although the winners of the 2023 Women’s World Cup were paid \$150 million (up 300% from the 2019 prize money), it’s still a paltry amount compared to the \$440 million the men’s team got in Qatar in 2022.

The future within the space will belong to the brands and companies that recognize the value in long-term relationships with athletes and authentic commitment to the fandom. Rather than straightforward logo-slaps or marketing campaigns that come once every two years to coincide with the Olympics, brands that engage in a steady drumbeat of support will succeed.

Boston-based New Balance, for example, has had a history of spotting young female talent—they signed tennis sensation Coco Gauff at age 14. As recently as October, the brand announced nine new deals with emerging female athletes across several sports including softball, track and soccer. Earlier in 2025, female-focused athleisure brand Lululemon teamed up with the PWHL for an apparel collection. The takeaway: If a brand is looking to



The Women’s National Basketball Player’s Association has proposed a system that would offer salaries commensurate with a percentage of generated revenue. (Credit: Adobe Stock)

Service-oriented groups like the Women's Sports Foundation are focused on empowering girls through athletics. (Credit: Women's Sports Foundation)



compete, the key is to spot nascent talent and take a bet on less popular sports, like hockey, volleyball or cricket, where there is still rising interest.

Looking to support college athletes, as Miller suggested, is prudent, but companies may also find a niche in sponsoring service-oriented groups like the [Women's Sports Foundation](#) or [Girls on the Run](#), both of which are focused on empowering girls through athletics.

According to a [McKinsey paper](#) from August 2025, we haven't peaked when it comes to women's sports. Between 2022 and 2024, interest in women's sports grew 4.5 times faster compared to men's sports. By 2030, a McKinsey analysis says

women's sports could generate \$2.5 billion in the US alone for rights holders.

Of course, measuring interest in women's sports through revenue, sponsorships and media coverage doesn't paint a complete picture. The cultural impact of women's sports equity carries an even greater potential: influencing the next generation of female athletes and leaders, uplifting communities of women and girls, and opening the door for countless jobs and career opportunities where women may not have seen an option for themselves before. Continued growth exists across nearly every facet of the market—and brands would be smart to get on board now before they're left behind.

Endnotes

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*Invisible yet omnipresent, microplastics have quietly infiltrated every corner of our lives.
(Credit: Adobe Stock)*

Tackling Microplastics as a Human Health Issue

We've Grasped the Severity of the Microplastics Crisis; This Year Is About Action

We have lived through decades of detox trends, many of them superficial. This moment is different. Microplastics are now measurably present throughout the human body and increasingly linked to inflammation, hormonal disruption, and cognitive strain. Detox is shifting from wellness rhetoric to a legitimate public health priority—one in which the wellness sector is positioned to move from awareness to action.

By Gerry Bodeker, PhD & Trent Munday

INTRODUCTION

An estimated 130 million metric tons of plastic waste enters the air, water, soil and human bodies every year. By 2040, that number will jump to 280 million metric tons—about a garbage truck's worth every second, according to [Breaking the Plastic Wave 2025](#), a new report from The Pew Charitable Trusts.

Microplastics originate from two main sources: **primary**, intentionally tiny particles used in cosmetics (microbeads) or manufacturing (plastic pellets) and **secondary**, resulting from the breakdown of larger plastic items (bottles, bags, fishing nets) due to sunlight (UV), heat and physical

forces (waves, abrasion). Microplastics also shed as fibers from synthetic clothes during washing, or as tire particles from roads, entering the environment as tiny fragments.

Invisible yet omnipresent, microplastics have quietly infiltrated every corner of our lives. Once seen primarily as an environmental concern, the plastic crisis has now crossed a new frontier—into our food, water, air and even our bodies. Scientists have discovered plastic particles in human blood, lungs and placentas. These discoveries redefine plastic pollution not only as an ecological issue but also as one of the greatest health and wellness challenges of our time.



Microplastics have been detected in human blood, lung tissue and even the placenta. (Credit: iStock)

As evidence mounts linking microplastics to inflammation, hormonal imbalance, cognitive disruption and fertility decline, the wellness industry faces both an ethical responsibility and an extraordinary opportunity. With its global reach, its influence over consumer habits and its alignment with sustainability and self-care, the wellness sector can lead humanity's collective detox—from awareness to action.

While some high-profile studies reporting microplastics throughout the human body and brain have recently been challenged for methodological limitations and potential contamination, the broader scientific community agrees that plastic pollution is pervasive and warrants urgent, rigorous research into its presence and potential health impacts.

The path forward calls for prevention, innovation and a new wellness literacy: one that unites environmental science, human health and global cooperation under a single banner—the wellness imperative.

FUELING THE TREND

The Human Crisis

While much media attention focuses on plastic pollution in the marine environment and on land, microplastics (particles < 5 mm) and nanoplastics (measured in nanometers) have been detected in human blood, lung tissue and even the placenta—

where they may interfere with nutrient exchange and fetal development.

Researchers recently identified plastic polymers in the human brain, suggesting that these particles can cross the blood-brain barrier, raising questions about long-term neurological effects. Alarming, a new paper published in February 2025 in *Nature Medicine* found that human brain samples in 2024 had 50% more microplastics than samples from 2016. “This stuff is increasing in our world exponentially,” toxicologist Dr. Matthew Campen told *The New York Times*.

The World Health Organization warns that plastic pollution now constitutes a “potential global health emergency” and the United Nations describes it as a “silent pandemic”—eroding planetary and human wellbeing simultaneously.

Rising Demand

Plastic consumption continues to climb, particularly for single-use items like food packaging, the single largest source of plastic waste globally. Roughly 36% of all plastic produced is used for packaging, much of it designed for one-time use. This includes food and drink containers, around 85% of which are discarded into landfills or become mismanaged waste.

Plastic is also entrenched in other industries. In agriculture, it appears in everything from seed treatments to mulch films, while the fishing industry contributes vast amounts through lost and discarded gear, with more than 100 million pounds of plastic entering the oceans each year.

Fashion is another major consumer, with plastics like polyester, acrylic and nylon accounting for about 60% of all clothing materials. When these synthetic clothes are washed, they shed tiny plastic fibers, known as microfibers, which are a form of microplastic. Laundry is responsible for releasing around 500,000 tons of these fibers into the ocean annually.

Increased Production

From 2005 to 2023, the traded volume of plastics increased by 48% globally (see graph). Production growth (around 52% by 2040) is far outstripping waste management’s capacity (26% growth). A report from the Pew Charitable Trust found that microplastic pollution will grow more than 50% through 2040, with health impacts from plastic production and waste increasing by 75%.

“This research shows that the impacts of plastic extend far beyond just waste in the environment,” says Winnie Lau, who directs Pew’s work for the preventing plastic pollution project. “Plastic has been found throughout people’s bodies and is increasingly linked to serious health risks, including heart disease, asthma and cancer.”

Environmental Crisis

Plastic pollution remains a major issue, with efforts to manage it struggling to keep pace. Roughly 9.2 billion tons of plastic have been produced since 1950, with more than 75% of that plastic waste discarded into waste systems. It’s currently estimated that between 19 and 23 million tons of plastic leaks into our lakes, rivers and oceans each year.

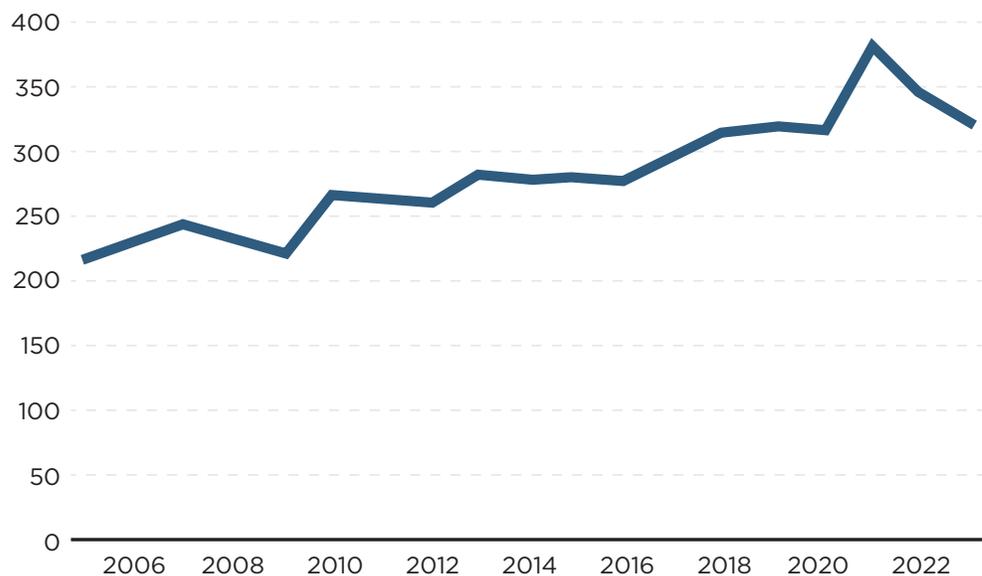
ASPECTS OF THE TREND

How Microplastics Enter the Human Body

Microplastics reach us through three main portals: ingestion, inhalation and skin absorption.

Ingestion: From seafood to bottled water, plastic has quietly entered the human diet. A 2024 study estimated that people who drink only bottled water may ingest 90,000 more microplastic particles per year than people who drink tap water. Even tea bags made of nylon mesh are reported to release billions of particles into a single cup. Sea salt, honey, beer and rice are all documented carriers.

EXPORT VOLUME OF PLASTICS (MILLIONS OF METRIC TONS), 2005-2023



The traded volume of plastics increased by 48% during 2005 to 2023. (Source: UN Trade and Development 2025. Trade in plastics database.)

Note: Data for 2023 can be an underestimate for not all economies have reported data yet

Plastic packaging and cooking utensils exacerbate the problem by shedding particles during heating and reuse.

Inhalation: Synthetic fibers—polyester, nylon, acrylic—shed microfibers into the air we breathe. These fibers dominate household dust. Indoor concentrations are typically higher than outdoor levels, making ventilation and textile choice an under-appreciated wellness factor.

Skin Contact: Though less studied, dermal exposure occurs via cosmetics, lotions and synthetic fabrics. Microbeads and acrylate polymers, once common in exfoliants and sunscreens, have been banned in 60 countries, but trace plastics persist under chemical aliases. These particles can enter pores or hair follicles, potentially accumulating in skin tissue.

Once inside, microplastics resist degradation. They can traverse biological membranes, lodge in organs and carry toxic chemicals—including bisphenols, phthalates and “forever chemicals” (PFAS)—deeper into the body. The body’s detox systems were never designed for polymers.

The Health Consequences We’re Only Beginning to See

The full health implications of microplastics exposure remain under investigation, but early findings are deeply concerning.

Inflammation and Oxidative Stress: Microplastics trigger inflammatory cascades and oxidative stress at the cellular level. Chronic exposure has been linked to metabolic disorders, insulin resistance and premature aging. Laboratory studies reveal mitochondrial dysfunction and DNA damage in microplastic-exposed cells.

Endocrine and Reproductive Effects: Plastic additives like BPA and phthalates are potent endocrine disruptors. A 2025 study found the first evidence of microplastics in human ovarian follicular fluid, calling it “an emerging threat to female fertility.” In animal studies, nanoplastics decreased sperm quality and embryo viability, mirroring global declines in fertility rates.

Cardiovascular and Neurological Risks: A 2024 study in *The New England Journal of Medicine* found microplastic fragments in 60% of carotid artery plaques from patients undergoing endarterectomy,



Studies have suggested that people who drink only bottled water ingest significantly more microplastic particles than those who drink tap water. (Credit: Adobe Stock)

Hospitality brands like Six Senses have piloted zero-plastic amenity campaigns. (Credit: Six Senses)



suggesting that plastic may contribute to arterial inflammation and atherosclerosis. [Nanoplastics have been shown to penetrate the blood-brain barrier](#), inducing neuroinflammation and altering neurotransmitter function. Such effects could explain emerging links between plastic exposure, cognitive decline and mood disorders.

Immune System Disruption: Microplastics may distort immune signaling by mimicking pathogens. Immune cells engulf these particles but cannot digest them, [resulting in a persistent “frustrated” immune response](#). The result: low-grade systemic inflammation, a driver of many chronic diseases.

The implications are staggering. Plastic—once valued for its inertness—now behaves biologically active, capable of interacting with the very systems that sustain human life.

The Wellness Industry’s Role and Responsibility

The global wellness economy, [valued at \\$6.8 trillion in 2025 and projected to reach \\$9 trillion by 2028](#), stands at the intersection of lifestyle, health and sustainability. It can either perpetuate the plastic crisis or become the engine of its solution.

Consumer Education: Wellness brands have the credibility to translate science into everyday action. Spas, retreats and health resorts can integrate educational touchpoints—from “Microplastic-Free Living” workshops to product labeling campaigns. [Six Senses](#) and [COMO Hotels & Resorts](#) have already piloted zero-plastic amenities and sustainability briefings for guests. By framing plastic reduction as self-care, not sacrifice, the industry can change consumer psychology.

Product Reformulation: Personal care and supplement brands can audit formulas for hidden polymers. Aveda, Lush and Weleda have phased out microbeads and switched to biodegradable packaging. The next frontier is eliminating microplastics in emulsifiers and encapsulation agents—the invisible plastics. “Microplastic-free” should become a wellness standard, as “paraben-free” once did.

Hospitality & Design: Hotels and spas can lead through material choices: glass dispensers, bamboo amenities and uniforms made of organic cotton or Tencel. The [Well Building Standard](#) and [EarthCheck](#) certifications now recognize plastic minimization as part of sustainable operations—linking wellness architecture with measurable health outcomes.

Advocacy and Policy Leadership: Industry leaders can align with the long-negotiated and highly contested [UN Plastics Treaty](#). By amplifying credible research and championing regulation, the wellness community can ensure its voice helps shape global plastic policy, not merely adapt to it.

During the seventh session of the [United Nations Environment Assembly \(UNEA-7\) held in Nairobi, Kenya](#), in mid-December 2025, environmental ministers and world leaders only adopted less than half of the resolutions presented to “advance sustainable solutions for a resilient planet.” These included the mining of minerals and metals, a stronger global response to wildfires and sustainability in sports, which was the only resolution with a brief mention of single-use plastics.



As evidence mounts linking microplastics to inflammation, hormonal imbalance, cognitive disruption and fertility decline, the wellness industry faces both an ethical responsibility and an extraordinary opportunity. (Credit: Adobe Stock)

The next phase of talks, also known as [Third Part of the Fifth Session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee \(INC-5.3\)](#) for developing a global, legally binding treaty on plastic pollution is scheduled for February 7, 2026 at the Geneva International Conference Centre.

The Economic and Policy Dimensions of Plastic Wellness

Microplastic mitigation is no longer a fringe environmental cause—it is an emerging economic frontier. In a 2025 report, [The Lancet](#) warned that the global health-related economic costs of plastics is now more than [\\$1.5 trillion each year](#).

Governments are responding. [The European Union plans to restrict 500 synthetic polymer types by 2030 under its “Green Deal Chemicals Strategy.”](#) Japan and South Korea have introduced taxes on virgin plastic production, while several African nations have banned single-use plastics altogether.

For the wellness economy, these shifts present both risk and opportunity.

- **Risk:** Brands reliant on cheap polymer packaging will face compliance costs and reputational backlash.
- **Opportunity:** Those embracing natural materials, refillable systems and regenerative supply chains will gain first-mover advantage.

Consumers are voting with their wallets: according to NielsenIQ, [73% of global consumers are willing to pay more for sustainable packaging](#). Plastic

reduction is thus not only an ethical stance but a competitive differentiator.

Wellness leaders—from retreat owners to skincare founders—can help shape the “plastic-lite” economy by modeling transparency, partnering with scientists and embedding plastic metrics into ESG reports.

FROM CRISIS TO ACTION: EMERGING SOLUTIONS

Primary Detoxification Organs

The human body uses a sophisticated, built-in network of organs to remove waste and harmful substances (toxins) naturally every day. The body’s natural filtration system relies on several key organs:

- **Liver:** The body’s main detox hub. It filters blood coming from the digestive tract, using enzymes to convert dangerous substances into harmless ones or water-soluble compounds that can be easily excreted.
- **Kidneys:** These act as high-performance filters, processing all your blood approximately 60 times a day. They remove waste products and excess nutrients, which are then expelled as urine.
- **Digestive Tract (Gut/Colon):** Toxins processed by the liver are often added to bile and sent to the intestines to be removed through feces.

- **Lungs:** They eliminate airborne toxins, gases (like carbon dioxide) and volatile chemicals (like alcohol byproducts) through breathing and coughing out phlegm.
- **Skin:** As the body's largest organ, it provides a physical barrier and can release certain water-soluble toxins through sweat.
- **Lymphatic System:** This network of vessels and nodes circulates lymph fluid to trap and neutralize microbes and cellular waste.

Medical wellness programs already offer procedures that focus on all of the above. These therapeutic procedures could be harnessed for microplastic removal and evaluated by using agreed measures for assessing levels of microplastics before and after treatment.

Dietary and Biological Defenses

Emerging studies indicate that dietary fibers may trap microplastics in the gut and expedite excretion. Probiotic bacteria such as *Lactobacillus* and *Bifidobacterium* can bind toxins from plastic additives, reducing inflammation. Antioxidants like vitamin E, quercetin and polyphenols protect cells from oxidative damage induced by nanoplastics. The message: nutritional wellness is environmental wellness.



Longevity company Lumati has released Lumati Detect, an at-home saliva kit to measure microplastic levels. (Credit: Lumati)

Testing Kits on the Rise

At-home testing kits to measure the levels of microplastics in the blood are becoming increasingly common, and consumers will be looking for solutions if they do test positive for high levels of microplastics. Longevity company Lumati has released Lumati Detect, an at-home saliva kit to measure microplastic levels, and Bryan Johnson's Blueprint sells a \$150 test. Meanwhile Arrow Lab, the company behind at-home microplastic test Plastictox, opened what it claims to be the world's first lab dedicated to microplastic research last year, built with stainless steel and rubber flooring to avoid plastic contamination.

New Frontiers in Detoxification

Early-stage medical research explores chelation-style therapies—natural clays, activated charcoal and chitosan—that may bind microplastics in the gastrointestinal tract for elimination. Massage and lymphatic stimulation are also being studied for improving lymphatic clearance in the brain, which could theoretically assist the removal of





London clinic Viavi offers the ApheriX service, which uses apheresis blood purification technology it claims will remove harmful substances, including microplastics, from the blood. (Credit: Viavi)

microscopic debris. While experimental, these approaches reflect a growing convergence between biomedical science and holistic wellness.

Medical wellness centers like [Viavi](#) and [Clarify Clinics in London](#) have already begun offering eye-wateringly expensive treatments—Clarify’s costs around [\\$13,000](#)—claimed to remove microplastics from the body. However, certain fundamentals need to be addressed before these can become standardized and valid treatment options.

The first is measurement. Currently, there is no consensus on the best method/s for counting microplastic presence in the blood and in organ systems. This is an opportunity for the medical wellness sector to come together and create consensus around measurement standards.

Another is the focus on [blood purification using plasma exchange, or apheresis](#), which grabbed headlines and sparked controversy last year when actor [Orlando Bloom revealed](#) he’d had a procedure to clean his blood of microplastics.

“Apheresis is typically used to treat conditions such as autoimmune diseases or abnormally high levels of blood cells or proteins,” says [Luiza Campos](#), a professor of environmental engineering at University College London. “Its use as a detox for microplastics, however, is scientifically unproven.”

But even if micro and nanoplastics can be removed through blood purification techniques, removing them from tissues and cells remains a bigger challenge. Reducing levels of microplastics in the blood does not guarantee the removal of microplastics from the brain, heart, reproductive system, etc. There is a challenge here for the medical wellness community: how to assess and remove microplastic presence in organ systems, tissues and cells? One solution may be to focus on activating the innate capacity of the body to eject waste material at the cellular level.

Traditional Therapies

[Two studies have examined the Ayurvedic cleansing program Panchakarma](#), suggesting it may help reduce harmful, fat-stored toxins in the body. Panchakarma combines warm oil massage, herbal steam baths, gentle elimination therapies and herbal preparations, alongside a light, nourishing diet, rest and appropriate exercise.

Researchers found that people who completed the program had significantly lower levels of certain industrial chemicals, including polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). In one study, toxin levels were lower than those found in non-participants. In another, following participants over time, PCB levels fell by 46% after treatment, along with a 58% reduction in a related pesticide compound.

The authors note that many people worldwide carry these fat-soluble pollutants and that further research is needed. They also suggest that traditional purification practices used across cultures—such as sweating, massage and elimination therapies—may help the body release stored pollutants by supporting the liver, kidneys and natural detoxification processes.

New Business Opportunities

As with any crisis, new business opportunities abound. In California, Loonen, a maker of purified, microplastic-free spring water sourced from mountain springs and transported in stainless steel, recently secured \$6 million in funding. The company was founded by venture investor and new mother Clara Sieg along with seasoned beverage operator David Kimmell, who were concerned about the lack of federal limits for microplastics in bottled or tap water. “After years in the beverage industry, I saw how little transparency existed, especially in bottled water,” says Kimmell. “Consumers believed they were getting something clean, but the sourcing and bottling practices behind most products told a different story.” Loonen has plans for distribution beyond California this year.

Founded in 2017 by a 24-year-old engineer, India-based Trishula was created to address the country’s plastic waste problem—India is estimated to use more than 120 billion plastic utensils each year—by producing edible spoons as an alternative to single-use plastic. The spoons are made from 100% natural flours sourced from Indian farmers and baked at high temperatures to make them sturdy. They come in a range of flavors—including beetroot, spinach, chocolate, mint and masala—and contain no preservatives or artificial ingredients. After use, they can be eaten or composted, as they are fully biodegradable and chemical-free. Since launching, Trishula has sold more than 300 million spoons, replacing around 120 metric tons of plastic waste. Costing as little as three cents each, they are now used by major brands such as Domino’s, and the company is expanding its range to include edible forks, straws and stirrers.

Even underwear is getting a makeover: new clothing brand EDN has launched a line of “human-centered, anti-plastic” underwear for both men and women, focusing on eliminating the endocrine-disrupting chemicals in plastic that can have an effect on reproductive health. “The very impetus

Loonen, a maker of purified, microplastic-free spring water sourced from mountain springs and transported in stainless steel, recently secured \$6 million in funding. (Credit: Loonen)





When synthetic clothes are washed, they shed tiny plastic fibers, which are a form of microplastic. Laundry is responsible for releasing around 500,000 tons of these fibers into the ocean annually. (Credit: Adobe Stock)

of why I'm involved in this, coming from fashion, was hearing my girlfriend and her sister talking about endocrine disruptors in your underwear, and needing to find something that was good," EDN co-founder Mac Boucher told [WWD](#). While the company makes no medical claims, the idea is that by eliminating plastic in the clothing that most closely touches your intimate areas, you can potentially support your reproductive health and hormone function. EDN also has plans to expand into plastic-free athleticwear and, eventually, products for the entire family. "We really believe that microplastics are the next invisible detractor to health that, as a society, we're going to completely divest from," co-founder Matthew Domescek told [The New York Times](#).

Plant-Based Plastic Alternatives

The [market for substitutes](#) is growing, but it is undersupported. In 2023, global trade in non-plastic substitutes reached \$485 billion, with developing countries experiencing annual growth of 5.6%. These substitutes, derived from mineral, plant and animal sources, are made of biodegradable, compostable or recyclable materials such as glass, seaweed and natural fibers. However, high tariffs, limited market access and weak regulatory incentives hinder the scale-up of these sustainable alternatives. [Significant growth](#) is driven by increasing environmental awareness,

regulatory support for sustainable materials and growing demand for eco-friendly packaging solutions. The market outlook is shaped by the rising adoption of bio-based alternatives across industries such as food and beverage, consumer goods and packaging.

[Researchers at Japan Agency for Marine-Earth Science and Technology \(JAMSTEC\) have unveiled a transparent cardboard made entirely from cellulose](#), offering a sustainable, biodegradable alternative to plastic packaging that is strong, waterproof and capable of holding hot liquids. It is thick enough to serve as a beverage container but also biodegradable. This material, produced by dissolving and coagulating cellulose, is notable for its transparency, strength (even exceeding polycarbonate) and ability to biodegrade in marine environments, providing a potential solution to plastic pollution. Derived from plants, the material is decomposable by microorganisms and is thereby expected to be a substitute for plastic containers at some point.

And in 2025, researchers from Texas A&M University found that polysaccharides from okra and fenugreek seeds can [remove up to 93% of microplastics from water](#). These biodegradable natural gums outperform many synthetic coagulants, marking a breakthrough for sustainable filtration—a bridge between agricultural wisdom and modern science.

THE FUTURE

The Road Ahead: A Wellness Imperative

Microplastics represent a crisis of connection. They blur boundaries between self and environment, matter and mind. To restore wellness, we must restore coherence between human and natural systems. This imperative demands interdisciplinary collaboration—between scientists who study microplastic toxicity, policymakers who regulate it, architects who design healthier spaces and wellness practitioners who translate knowledge into practice.

Global Policy and Collective Action

In 2024, 175 countries endorsed a UN resolution to draft a legally binding agreement to end plastic pollution by 2026. The treaty's framework emphasizes upstream reform—cutting production and redesigning materials—over downstream cleanup. This global cooperation mirrors the wellness philosophy of prevention rather than cure. The wellness community can serve as its cultural ally, communicating the treaty's vision to everyday consumers through storytelling and lifestyle innovation.

Strategic Focus for the Wellness Industry

The [Microplastics Watch Initiative](#) team members have brought together a set of perspectives and actions aimed to raise awareness and catalyze action. Prevention is the most actionable and universally relevant message. It translates complex science into practical behavior change for wellness professionals and consumers. Developing a “Microplastics in Daily Life” awareness toolkit for wellness centers, spas and coaches would help empower and educate the wellness consumer.

The Global Wellness Institute's Microplastics Watch Initiative also put together a [White Paper on Microplastics](#) last year, highlighting that the issue of microplastics remains “largely absent from wellness and healthcare programs,” despite direct links to inflammation, endocrine disruption and neurological health. Wellness destinations and brands can bring microplastics into the dialogue

by bringing awareness into existing wellness education, retreats and corporate programs through workshops like “Detoxifying Your Environment.”

Adopting “microplastic-conscious” solutions, such as filtered water, sustainable packaging and eco-linen products will also drive the conversation forward. Meaningful impact requires reducing microplastics “at the source” and aligning with global frameworks like the UN Plastics Treaty. Plastic exposure, like stress or pollution, must become a vital sign we monitor and manage. Wellness brands that take this seriously will lead the next era of trust.

We also expect to see more wellness clinics offering treatments aimed at removing microplastics from the body; it's important for the wellness industry to keep on top of the science behind these treatments and ensure they are based on measurable outcomes.

And while today's treatments are mostly focused on removing microplastics from the blood, a bigger challenge lies in how to remove them from organs like the brain, heart or reproductive system. The medical and wellness industries will have to work together to find solutions to this growing problem.

The brain is of particular concern, as research indicates that microplastics seem to collect in the brain at higher concentrations than in other organ systems. A deeper understanding of brain clearance is needed and could unlock new therapeutic avenues for autoimmune, neurodegenerative, neoplastic and psychiatric disorders. This is another area for the medical wellness sector to collaborate with neuroscientists and in clinical brain research.

Ultimately, tackling microplastics is about more than detoxifying the body—it is about redesigning civilization around the principles of regeneration and respect. The wellness movement was born from a belief in harmony between nature and humanity. Today, that harmony depends on whether we can unmake what we have made. The science is catching up. The solutions exist. What remains is the collective will to act—and in that action lies the next great chapter of wellness.



We're seeing a global uptick in residences marketed with a longevity focus as people increasingly prioritize health and long-term wellbeing. (Credit: SHA)

Longevity Residences

Healthspan Finally Hits Home

Longevity residences are emerging as the next frontier in wellness real estate, designed to support longer, healthier lives through the integration of preventive medicine, personalized diagnostics, biohacking, AI-driven health tools and wellness-driven living environments.

By Jane Kitchen

INTRODUCTION

Real estate is emerging as a critical delivery system for longevity—moving beyond amenities towards environments that support long-term physical, cognitive and emotional wellbeing. Fueled by rising life expectancy, an aging global population and a growing longevity economy, these communities blend advanced health technologies, diagnostics, access to medical care, therapeutic interventions and smart, health-optimized design with more traditional wellness real estate amenities like spa and fitness access, social connection and purposeful living.

Longevity is the biggest buzzword in the hospitality market, so it's no surprise that building homes and communities with longevity at their heart is the next step. Ultimately, although spending a week at a high-end health clinic can be a catalyst for lifestyle changes, our daily environment is the logical place to implement those changes for lasting effect.

"We're seeing a global uptick in residences marketed with a longevity focus," says Joanna

Frank, president & CEO of Fitwel, which provides certification covering all aspects of health, wellness and longevity. "This shift reflects a broader rise in demand as people increasingly prioritize health and long-term wellbeing. Longevity is no longer about extending life at the margins; it's about optimizing quality of life over time. People now understand that where they live directly impacts their physical, mental and social wellbeing."

Leading developments—ranging from The Estate's global longevity ecosystem to science-driven communities like Live Long Life in Eastern Europe, or those with a more holistic focus such as SHA Emirates in the Middle East—demonstrate how longevity can be embedded as a core philosophy rather than a superficial amenity.

"We are living through a fundamental mindset shift," says Kenneth Ryan, chief longevity officer for The Estate. "People are living longer, but they want to live *better* for longer. At the same time, science, diagnostics and data-driven medicine have made longevity actionable, personalized and measurable in ways that were not possible even a decade ago."

FUELING THE TREND

Demographic Shifts and the “New Life Stage”

Across the world, people are living longer. The population aged 65 and older is growing faster than all other age groups, especially since the global birth rate has been declining for the past 50 years, and by 2030, one in six people in the world will be over 60, according to the World Health Organization. The United Nations predicts the number of people aged 80 years or older will triple, from 143 million in 2019 to 426 million in 2050—a shift in demographics that will necessitate major transformations in healthcare worldwide.

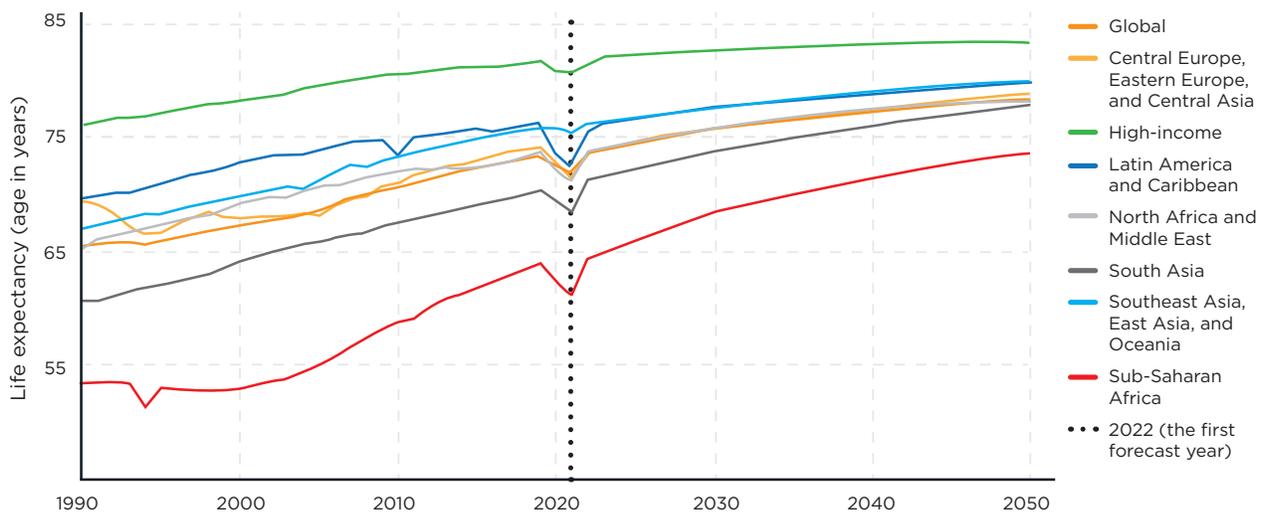
“For most of human history, life expectancy—normal, average life—lasted only 20 or 30 years, so you were lucky to make it to 40,” Wolfgang Fengler, CEO of the World Data Lab, says in his Ted Talk. “And it’s only in the last two or three hundred years—with the invention of penicillin, improved sanitation, health, nutrition—that people could live longer.” Fengler goes on to explain that the global population has expanded from just one billion in 1904 to more than eight billion today, with most

of the growth occurring between 1950—when the world’s population was 2.5 billion—and 2050, when it is projected to reach around 9.5 billion. “We are living in this unique time in human history where the world is shaping and reshaping itself with this dramatic population growth,” he says.

One of the most significant demographic shifts occurred in 2023, when the number of adults aged 50 and over surpassed the number of children under the age of 15 for the first time. This reflects the fact that today’s population growth is driven by increasing lifespan. Research published in *The Lancet* estimates that global life expectancy is projected to rise significantly by 2050—by +4.9 years for males and +4.2 years for females. This rise in average lifespan means that people are increasingly aware that they need to do more to protect their health for longer—and are willing to pay for it.

Dr. Joseph Coughlin, director of the MIT AgeLab and author of *Longevity Economy: Unlocking the World’s Fastest-Growing, Most Misunderstood Market*, told the BBC: “We’re now talking about a new life stage which is as long as the latter part of your adult life.”

GLOBAL AND SUPER-REGIONAL LIFE EXPECTANCY, 1990-2050



Source: <https://bit.ly/Forecasting21>, *The Lancet*.

If people will soon be regularly living to be over 100, longevity needs to be built into everyday life and everyday living. (Credit: LLLC)



The Global Wellness Summit has been talking about this for years. Back in 2022, at the Summit in Tel Aviv, [Dr. Michael Roizen](#), chief wellness officer for the Cleveland Clinic, said we are “entering a great age reboot,” where our actions can control our genetic inheritance and the way we function epigenetically. That same year, [Dr. Tzipora Strauss](#), who heads up [Sheba Medical Center’s Longevity Academic Center](#) in Israel, spoke about technology’s role in longevity medicine. “Babies that are born today will live at least 100 to 150 years,” she said. “We need to bring those babies not just lifespan, but healthspan.”

If people will soon be regularly living to be over 100, longevity needs to be built into everyday life and everyday living—and what better way to do this than to embed longevity into the places we live?

Economic Scale of the Longevity Opportunity

Between 2020 and 2050, the contribution of those aged over 50 to global GDP is projected to more than double, from \$45 trillion to \$118 trillion, according to research from AARP.

“The aging population is one of the most important trends in the world, and it’s a powerful force not just socially but economically,” Bill Novelli, founder of the [Global Social Enterprise Initiative \(GSEI\)](#) at Georgetown University’s McDonough School of Business, [told the Global Coalition on Aging](#).

This powerful economic force has brought an explosion of products and services marketed under

the banner of longevity. [Research from McKinsey](#) found that demand for products and services supporting longevity continues to grow, with up to 60% of consumers across markets considering healthy aging a “top” or “very important” priority. Importantly, the authors note, “longevity-focused products and services are not only for older consumers. There has been a cultural shift among younger generations to take a proactive approach to healthy aging rather than a reactive one.”

This shift has broadened the appeal of longevity products. As the Global Wellness Institute’s senior research fellow, Katherine Johnston, noted at this year’s Global Wellness Summit, “every single sector in the wellness economy is now marketing things under the banner of longevity.” But, she cautioned, “some of these are new offerings and some of them are the same old stuff under a different name.”

Convergence with Wellness Real Estate

Our health and wellbeing are intimately tied to where we live and how we live. [Research has shown that up to 80-90% of our disease risks, health outcomes and longevity depend on environmental and lifestyle factors rather than our genes](#). But the way homes and neighborhoods have been built over the last century reinforces lifestyles that make us sick, stressed and alienated.

“There is a growing recognition that environment shapes outcomes,” says The Estate’s Ryan. “The spaces we live in influence how we sleep, move, think, recover and age.”



Many real estate developments marketing themselves as longevity residences have partnered with companies like Fountain Life to offer their residents on-site access to premium healthcare. (Credit: Fountain Life)

Wellness real estate, first identified in 2018 by the Global Wellness Institute as places that are designed to optimize our health and wellbeing through design, is the fastest-growing sector in the wellness economy; it reached \$584 billion in 2024 and is forecast to double to \$1.1 trillion by 2029. The wellness real estate movement represents an important shift in focus that puts human health at the center of the conception, design, construction and operation of our built environments.

As longevity becomes an increasingly important theme within the wellness sector, a new wave of wellness residences is emerging under the banner of “longevity living.” However, a clear distinction must be made between developments that deliver genuine longevity-focused amenities and those relying primarily on marketing rhetoric.

“We are seeing a global increase in residences marketed as promoting longevity and wellbeing as a direct response to increased consumer demand for quality of life,” says Fitwel’s Frank. “We are seeing particularly strong momentum across EMEA and APAC, where consumers are prioritizing health as they choose where to live—and are willing to pay a premium for residences that can demonstrate they are truly health promoting.”

Capital, Innovation and Tech Billionaires

Longevity is increasingly viewed as the next frontier by investors, developers and policymakers. As a recent article in *Forbes* notes: “Venture capital firms, always on the lookout for the next big trend,

are increasingly turning their attention to the longevity sector.”

The article also notes that venture capital investment in longevity and anti-aging startups has been steadily increasing over the past decade: “In 2020, despite the global pandemic, the sector saw over \$850 million in VC funding globally. This figure more than doubled in 2021, reaching nearly \$2 billion.”

Firms including Cambrian Bio, Hevolution and Juvenescence are bringing investment to the sector, while investments from high-profile tech billionaires like Jeff Bezos, Peter Thiel and Bryan Johnson add both credibility and visibility.

Growth of Concierge Medicine

Concierge medicine—where a patient pays an annual fee or retainer in order to receive enhanced medical care—is growing across the world, as healthcare systems face unprecedented demand. This is due in part to the aforementioned aging population, but also to the rising prevalence of chronic disease, a physician shortage and a consumer focus on preventative medicine. Concierge doctors limit the number of patients they take on, which means patients see shorter wait times for appointments (often same or next day) and doctors are able to spend more time with each patient.

The global concierge market was valued at \$21.77 billion in 2025, and is projected to nearly double by 2034. In the US, Grand View Research predicts the

concierge medicine market will reach \$13.23 billion by 2030, growing more than 10% each year, but Asia Pacific is projected to have the highest growth, driven by increased disposable income and greater awareness of advanced medical options.

Many real estate developments marketing themselves as “longevity residences” have partnered with concierge medical service providers to offer their residents on-site access to premium healthcare. This ranges from traditional hospital systems like the University of Miami Healthcare system in Florida—which has opened a clinic within the SoLé Mia mixed-use development in North Miami—to ultra-premium, preventative services like Fountain Life, which has partnered with the luxury development Velvaere in Utah and Lake Nona in Florida.

ASPECTS OF THE TREND

Defining a Longevity Residence

As the conversation in the wellness sector increasingly includes longevity, a new breed of wellness residences has emerged, marketing themselves as “longevity residences.”

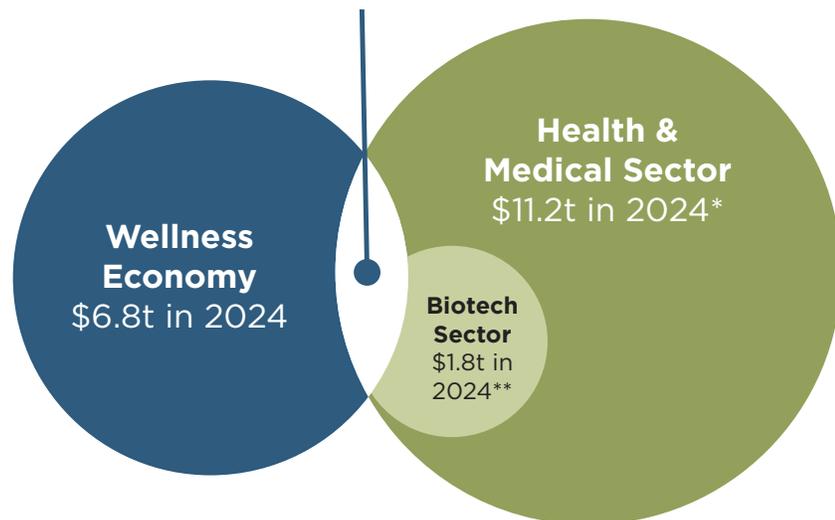
“A few residential projects are starting to tout a version of ‘longevity real estate’ by adding amenities like concierge medicine and diagnostic services for residents,” explains Katherine Johnston, senior research fellow for the Global Wellness Institute. However, she cautions, “it remains to be seen whether this is just a marketing differentiator, or whether it will have any real health impacts—especially given that these are luxury-level projects and are serving people who already have access to the best medical care.”

The Global Wellness Institute first identified Wellness Real Estate as a category back in 2018, when it released the pioneering report Build Well to Live Well, and defined lifestyle wellness real estate as “homes that are proactively designed and built to support the holistic health of their residents.”

Since then, wellness real estate has become the fastest growing sector within the global wellness economy, and the GWI released a new report in 2025, Build Well to Live Well: The Future, as well as a companion to the report, Build Well to Live Well: Case Studies.

But the question remains: is there a case to be made for a new breed of wellness real estate defined by its focus on longevity? As Johnston

THE LONGEVITY ECONOMY IS IN THE OVERLAP



Longevity lives at the intersection of the wellness economy, the health and medical sector, and the biotech sector. (Source: Global Wellness Institute)

*Estimate by GWI, based on the latest available (2022-2023) data from the WHO.
**Estimate from Grand View Research.



SHA has a long history of focusing on medical longevity through its original location in Spain and a second one in Mexico, but its expansion into the UAE marks its most significant residential component yet. (Credit: SHA)

proposed at the 2025 Global Wellness Summit in Dubai, longevity lives at the intersection of the wellness economy, the health and medical sector, and the biotech sector, so it makes sense that longevity residences would as well, as a subset of projects underneath the large and fast-growing wellness real estate umbrella.

Longevity Residences vs. Wellness Residences

Wellness residences optimize the built environment for long-term health, with a focus on things like air quality, water, light, acoustics, walkability and social connection. Longevity residences typically go a step beyond, offering preventative and diagnostic health services such as biomarker testing, biological age assessment and AI-enhanced screenings, as well as integrated longevity therapies such as hyperbaric oxygen, red light therapy, cryotherapy and neurofeedback. In addition, they may offer ongoing personalization through wearables and adaptive health plans.

“Wellness residences have historically focused more on marketing their amenities and services—gyms, spas, green space,” says Fitwel’s Frank. “With the evolution to longevity-focused residences, we see a holistic approach with health embedded into the systems and policies that shape the design and operation of residences as well as the amenities and service, resulting in daily experiences that support people throughout their lives.”

But, she notes, as all aspects of the built environment impact health outcomes, a longevity-

focused residence must also consider a holistic approach, including all of the things that wellness residences focus on, such as air quality, acoustic comfort, access to nature, movement, social connection, safety and adaptability over time.

“Whether a project is framed around wellness or longevity, the goal is the same: creating places that truly support people, not just today, but throughout their lives,” she says. “In practice, the best longevity residences don’t replace wellness— they operationalize it.”

And while longevity residences fall beneath the greater umbrella of healthy residences, the key differentiator is that longevity residences incorporate more medical and tech offerings to provide proactive, measurable and continuous health optimization rather than simple lifestyle enhancement.

“We see wellness residences and longevity residences as fundamentally different in intent, depth and outcome,” says The Estate’s Ryan. “Most wellness residences are lifestyle-oriented, focusing on environmental wellness and amenities such as beautiful design, traditional fitness studios and spas, yoga, healthy food, clean air and water. They help people feel good in the moment. Of course, they meet a growing consumer demand for healthier living and play a key role in the larger wellness ecosystem. Living in a longevity-focused environment removes friction. It makes proactive health, performance and vitality part of daily life, not something you have to manage separately.”

Isaac Jones, founder of Centagio, has a similar outlook: “Wellness residences are designed to support a healthy lifestyle; they focus on creating environments that help people feel better day to day—through clean air and water, natural materials, circadian lighting, movement spaces, nourishing food access and calming, biophilic design,” he explains. “The emphasis is on reducing friction to healthy habits and restoring balance in a world that often disrupts it. Programming tends to be experiential and lifestyle-oriented: movement, mindfulness, recovery rituals, community wellness events and access to spa or fitness amenities. I look at this as the foundation of wellness.”

“Longevity residences, by contrast, are designed to extend and enhance healthspan,” he continues. “They go beyond lifestyle support into measurable, personalized biological optimization. These environments integrate advanced diagnostics, ongoing biomarker tracking, precision nutrition, regenerative and preventive therapies, and continuity of care. The home itself becomes part of the longevity system—supporting sleep quality, metabolic health, cognitive performance and long-term vitality through both design and data. Programming is longitudinal rather than episodic, with health journeys that evolve over years, not weekends. These are the geeky cutting-edge, science based systems that help create sustainable transformation.”

Launched in 2024 by hospitality entrepreneur Sam Nazarian in partnership with motivational speaker and bestselling author Tony Robbins, international strategist Richard Attias and musician Marc Anthony—The Estate is pioneering the field of longevity residences. Its first urban location will be Los Angeles. (Credit: The Estate)

LONGEVITY RESIDENCES IN DEVELOPMENT (SELECTED EXAMPLES)

The Estate (Global)

The Estate—launched in 2024 by hospitality entrepreneur Sam Nazarian in partnership with motivational speaker and bestselling author Tony Robbins, international strategist Richard Attias and musician Marc Anthony—is pioneering the field of longevity residences, with ambitious global expansion plans: 15 residences and hotels in places like St. Kitts, the UK, Italy, Switzerland, the US and the Gulf region are planned by 2030, along with ten urban outposts.

“We are building a purpose-built longevity ecosystem—where hospitality, residential living, diagnostics, human performance and preventative medicine operate as one continuous experience,” Ryan explains. “The Estate longevity residences are conceived, designed and built to help people live better for longer. We don’t view longevity as a traditional amenity category—it is an organizing principle of our business model. Every decision is made through the lens of extending healthspan across decades. The Estate residences deliver longevity systems that are integral to residents’ daily lives and reshape how people live, age and perform over a lifetime.”





The Estate will incorporate AI-driven MEP systems, medical-grade infrastructure, cognitive performance zones, advanced diagnostics, human performance, biohacking and more. (Credit: The Estate)

The residences incorporate AI-driven MEP systems, medical-grade infrastructure, biophilic design principles, cognitive performance zones, healing materiality and spatial energy, and also offer things like advanced diagnostics, human performance, biohacking, MedSpa, performance and recovery, private coaching, therapeutics, full hydrotherapy experiences and continuous care from a network of doctors and specialists. The company has partnered with Fountain Life for its US locations and Clinique La Prairie for its urban outposts.

The Estate's residences are embedded within a clinically credentialed longevity infrastructure and designed through the lens of longevity—where architecture, lighting, materials and spatial flow actively support circadian rhythm, recovery, cognition and vitality, says Ryan. They are also connected to a global system of care, so a resident's data, preferences and protocols travel with them across The Estate portfolio.

“When we think about luxury in its new definition, customers want that access,” Nazarian told Nancy Davis at the [2025 Global Wellness Summit](#). “They want longevity—they want a better life.”

Elysium Fields (Australia)

[Elysium Fields](#) is a \$1.7 billion project in Melbourne with 1,700 residences that's been described as a “[haven for utopian living](#), offering residents access to groundbreaking anti-ageing treatments.”

Developed by [Gurner Group](#)—the company behind high-end wellness club [Saint Haven](#)—and designed in collaboration with US biohacker [Ben Greenfield](#), Elysium Fields will include a futuristic glass biodome and an on-site Elysian Reverse Ageing Medical Clinic with advanced medical diagnostics, which will offer residents procedures such as MRIs, brain scans and blood testing. Gurner's CEO and founder Tim Gurner told [Forbes](#) the project already has a “huge waitlist.”

“More than ever, our residents are prioritizing their health and longevity,” Gurner [said](#). “Not only do they want to live longer, but they want to live more full and enriching lives. So, their purchasing preferences are definitely reflecting this shift. It's no longer sufficient to have a large, state-of-the-art gym or sauna; it's about creating an entire ecosystem that helps you live better, recover faster and feel incredible every single day so that you can live your best life.”

Velvaere (Utah, US)

A 60-acre wellness community adjacent to Park City's Deer Valley ski resort, [Velvaere](#) has been conceptualized by Magleby Development as a ski-in, ski-out community with wellness and longevity at its heart.

Velvaere has [partnered with preventative health and longevity company Fountain Life](#) to provide residents access to early health screenings

and precision diagnostics. Owners at the community's 115 residences will have access to Fountain Life's state-of-the-art diagnostic testing, which can identify potentially life-threatening conditions such as cancer, cardiac, metabolic and neurodegenerative diseases at their earliest stages. Homes will be integrated with cutting-edge AI, and Fountain Life's team of scientists and physicians will also provide Velvaere residents with information and tools to make lifestyle modifications that will help them live longer, healthier lives.

"Fountain Life's mission aligns with our goal to provide support and cutting-edge technology within the home for peak personal performance and well-balanced lifestyles, making them an ideal partner," says Chad Magleby, CEO of Magleby Development.

Each residence also has a customizable Synergistic Sanctuary Space that features environmentally forward design and amenities, including a full treatment room with an Aescape robotic massage, steam shower, cold/hot plunge, Full Technogym and a HalolR Sauna.

Centagio (Global)

Rooted in the belief that wellbeing follows natural rhythm, balance and proportion, Centagio will bring together precision longevity science, regenerative medicine and six-star hospitality to create environments where people feel lighter, clearer and measurably healthier.

Described as "a new global benchmark in luxury wellness and longevity—designed for those seeking not escape, but transformation," Centagio has a global pipeline of residences, resorts and city hubs. These will include advanced AI and digital-twin technology to support hyper-personalization, and will be designed around human biology, using non-toxic materials, biophilic design and circadian principles.

"At Centagio, we see wellness residences and longevity residences not as competing ideas, but as different depths on the same continuum of optimal living. The filter we have is 'optimal living' or 'vital living,' which encompasses wellbeing, wellness, health-span and lifespan," says Isaac Jones, founder of Centagio. "Wellness residences help you feel better. Longevity residences help you

A 60-acre wellness community adjacent to Park City's Deer Valley ski resort, Velvaere has partnered with preventative health and longevity company Fountain Life to provide residents access to early health screenings and precision diagnostics. (credit: Velvaere)



live younger—longer. Centagio bridges the two by designing residences that begin with wellness as the foundation, then layer in longevity as an optional, personalized progression. This allows residents to engage at their own pace—starting with environment and lifestyle, and deepening into data-driven, regenerative longevity when and if they choose.”

While Jones says he sees demand across the globe for longevity residences, the company will initially focus on Miami, Dubai and Los Angeles.

Live Long Life Community (Slovenia and Croatia)

Combining advanced diagnostics, personalized health planning and biohacking therapies with sustainable, smart residences, Live Long Life Community is focusing initially on locations in Slovenia and Croatia and has a vision “to build Europe’s first fully integrated longevity-focused community blending science, wellness and vibrant social living.”

The company says that longevity is approached proactively, with science-backed tools that allow residents to actively measure, track and support

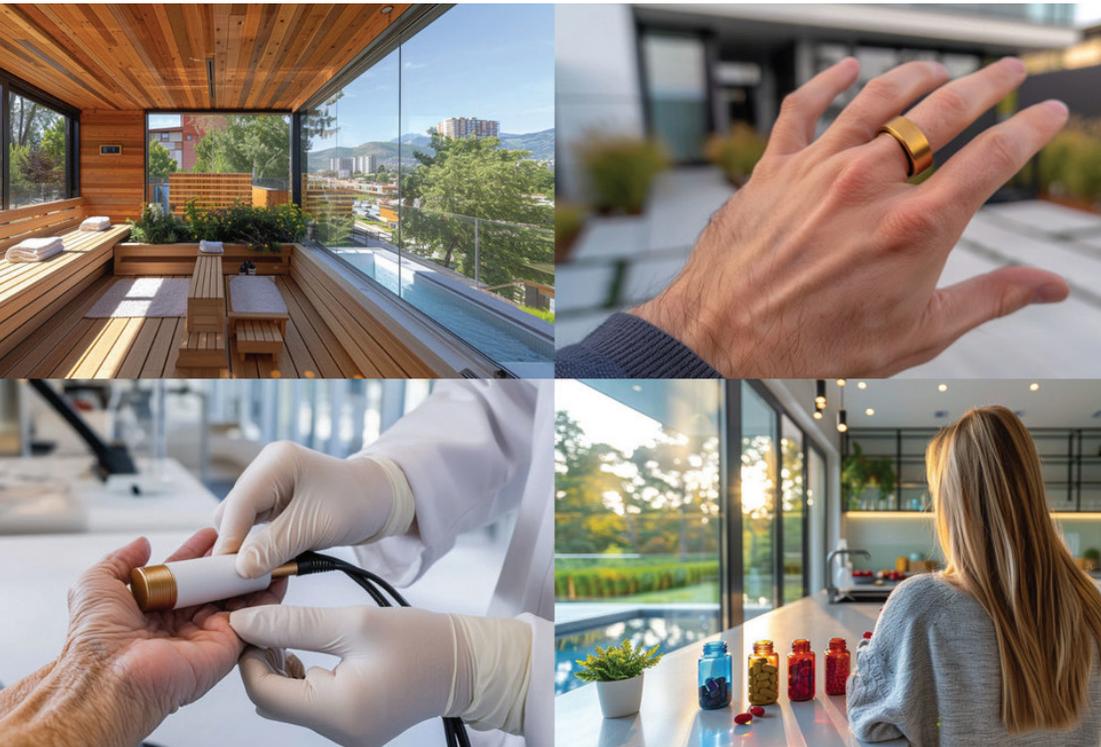
their own biology. Healthcare services will include a combination of integrative medicine, advanced diagnostics, preventive care, mental wellness programs and biohacking technologies.

Residences will include typical wellness real estate features such as air filtration, low-toxin materials, green spaces, organic gardens and circadian lighting, and are also designed to adapt as residents age, with future-proof features that evolve over a lifetime.

Additional offerings include hyperbaric oxygen, red light therapy, cold plunge and cryotherapy, peptide therapy, genetic and biological age testing, neurofeedback and brainwave entrainment, intermittent fasting coaching and wearable devices for residents.

SHA Emirates (UAE)

Opening in 2027, SHA Emirates Island at AlJurf is a 25-hectare island development situated midway between Abu Dhabi and Dubai that will bring together a SHA Wellness Clinic, a health resort and 150 residences, along with multiple pavilions dedicated to health and wellbeing. SHA has a long



Combining advanced diagnostics, personalized health planning and biohacking therapies with sustainable, smart residences, Live Long Life Community is focusing initially on locations in Slovenia and Croatia. (Credit: LLLC)

Medicalized longevity is a fundamental pillar of the SHA ecosystem, and the upcoming SHA Emirates will bring together a SHA Wellness Clinic, a health resort and 150 residences, along with multiple pavilions dedicated to health and wellbeing.
(Credit: SHA)



history of focusing on medical longevity through its original location in Spain and a second one in Mexico, but its expansion into the UAE marks its most significant residential component yet.

“Our dream is to create the world’s sixth Blue Zone—places which are recognized as having the highest concentration of centenarians,” SHA vice president Alejandro Bataller told *Spa Business*.

The location is not specifically branding itself as longevity real estate, but building residences alongside one of the world’s top medical wellness clinics and having a goal of fostering centenarians seems to fit the bill. One differentiator is that SHA focuses equally on longevity science and holistic wellbeing, as Zoe Wall, the company’s new group vice president of wellness, explained in an *interview with Spa Business*.

“Medicalized longevity is a fundamental pillar of the SHA ecosystem, but many brands have focused so heavily on medical interventions that holistic wellness has been left behind,” she says. “Yet for the past 20 years, SHA has been leading both sides of the spectrum.”

Tri Vananda (Thailand)

A purpose-built wellness community developed by Montara Hospitality Group in Phuket, Tri Vananda is backed by an investment of THB 6,600 billion

(US\$211 million) and will emphasize functional and integrative medicine, nutrition, cognitive health and mindfulness. With 30 biophilic-designed residential units currently under construction in the first phase of development, it has signed a deal with Clinique La Prairie to operate the resort.

Once complete, Tri Vananda will include 70 residential villas alongside comprehensive medical and wellness facilities for health diagnostics aimed at helping residents live longer, healthier and better lives through tailored programs. Wellness facilities at the Health Resort by Clinique La Prairie at Tri Vananda will include a medical center with state-of-the-art diagnostic equipment, active movement center with an Olympic-size swimming pool, a wellness restaurant for personalized nutrition, a holistic wellbeing center and a mindfulness center. Tri Vananda will also have a strong focus on multi-generational living, with programming and facilities for children and teenagers designed to help foster a life of wellbeing.

While Tri Vananda is marketing itself as a “regenerative wellness community,” its inclusion of a medical center with diagnostic equipment, together with the partnership with longevity pioneer Clinique La Prairie, means Tri Vananda easily sits in this new category of longevity residences.



Once complete, Tri Vananda will include 70 residential villas alongside comprehensive medical and wellness facilities for health diagnostics aimed at helping residents live longer, healthier and better lives through tailored programs. (Credit: Tri Vananda)

Modular Solutions

As demand for longevity-focused living grows, developers are increasingly exploring modular, “plug-and-play” wellness solutions that integrate advanced health and longevity amenities. One such example is [Rebirth Globe](#), which offers spaces for residents to access cryotherapy, IV lounges, EMS, neurofeedback and more.

For developers, these modular solutions create a differentiating value proposition: attracting health-conscious buyers, increasing property desirability and delivering measurable lifestyle benefits. Looking ahead, plug-and-play longevity rooms could expand into neighborhood or community hubs, integrating predictive health tracking, subscription-based access and AI personalization to make preventive wellness a core part of everyday life.

THE FUTURE

Longevity Beyond Luxury

At this point, most of the longevity residences in development lie at the luxury end of the spectrum, available only to the select few who can afford them—and therefore they will have little impact on longevity at the population level. However, that may change, as testing and diagnostics become less expensive and more readily available to the masses, especially as AI healthcare moves into the forefront. The market for the non-rich is where change is most needed.

“One of the key lessons from the spa industry—whose growth began at the luxury end—was the powerful trickle-down effect it created,” says Susie Ellis, chair and CEO of the Global Wellness Summit. “Many of the early guests at spa resorts were owners, CEOs or C-Suite executives, and when senior leaders personally engage with wellness, it often shapes how they lead their organizations, influencing the health of entire workforces. Wellness and longevity residences have the potential to create a similar, far-reaching impact.”

The latest [Build Well to Live Well: The Future](#) report from the Global Wellness Institute discusses how the growing housing supply gap and the expanding desire for healthy, affordable homes represents important opportunities for new kinds of wellness real estate and business models to emerge: “Developers can bring their expertise and partner with governments and communities to create options that will meet these needs and priorities across different price points and segments.”

The opportunities that lie ahead for governments to bring longevity principles into urban planning are exciting, and many of the principles of wellness architecture are inherently good for longevity, and can often be implemented without much cost.

“Amidst all of the hype about longevity, we should keep in mind that holistic and well-designed wellness real estate projects of all types have huge potential to benefit our health and longevity, by giving us access to things like walkable neighborhoods, social connections, nature, healthier environments and so much more,” says the GWI’s Johnston. “The

impacts are especially significant for underserved populations who often lack access to these things.”

As it often happens, the early adopters of longevity real estate are those who can afford it. But we’ve seen wellness real estate begin as a niche, luxury offering and very quickly move into areas like low-income housing, senior living and student halls, as more people learned about and embraced the principles.

The 83-year-old, not-for-profit company Mather has already been looking at ‘Ways to Age Well,’ through its Mather Institute, which serves as a resource for research and information about wellness, aging, trends in senior living and successful aging service innovations. We expect to see them pioneer new kinds of longevity living for the senior housing market as this sector grows.

AI’s Impact on Longevity Living

“The next evolution of wellness real estate will be homes that work with your body—spaces that track your biometrics, adapt lighting and temperature based on your sleep cycles, and offer built-in health optimization tools,” Gurner told *Forbes*. “It sounds futuristic, but that’s where we’re heading, and it’s incredibly exciting.”

AI-driven apartments that adjust lighting, temperature, sound and scent for circadian health, stress reduction, or cognitive stimulation may become the norm—and there’s great opportunity for real change and impact in things like senior living. Buildings designed for active aging, with accessible, adaptable layouts and smart fall prevention-systems can allow more people to age in place as they get older. Technology-enabled habit reinforcement, such as gamified health programs, social wellness challenges, or AI-guided daily routines could also be part of the next generation of longevity living.

As artificial intelligence accelerates breakthroughs in health and medicine, some futurists believe we are nearing “longevity escape velocity”—a theoretical tipping point where scientific progress adds more than a year to life expectancy each year, allowing people to outpace the aging process itself.

Long before that, opportunities for AI-driven personalized health plans that continuously adapt based on real-time data might make their way into broader community-level wellness infrastructure, such as shared neighborhood longevity hubs. We could see entire neighborhoods designed around predictive health analytics, integrating wearable devices, environmental sensors and AI to optimize everything from air quality to physical activity.

Expect to see more international ecosystem models, similar to The Estate, where residents can transfer between locations but maintain continuity of care and lifestyle. Partnerships with leading research centers, biotech startups and longevity-focused institutions could give residents access to cutting-edge therapies while furthering research, and smart data-sharing networks could track health outcomes at population level, helping communities measure and optimize their longevity strategies.

“We believe longevity residences are still in their earliest phase,” says Ryan. “In the next five years, longevity will move from a niche concept to a defining category of ultra-luxury living, with deeper integration of diagnostics, personalization and preventative care. In 10 years, longevity residences will be evaluated less by amenities and more by outcomes—how effectively they support healthspan, resilience, cognition and performance across life stages. In 20 years, we expect longevity to be fully embedded into how premium residential environments are conceived—where homes function as adaptive, data-informed living systems connected globally and continuously evolving with their residents.”

For now, we’re closely watching this new sector of wellness real estate. Many of these projects are still years away from realization, though the excitement around them is palpable. Meanwhile, continued investment in the basic tenets of wellness real estate—especially in projects for the other 99%—could have real impact on lifespan, healthspan and life quality.

As the GWI’s Johnston says: “I believe that investing in wellness real estate is one of the most important things we can do to promote population-wide longevity, whether we are labeling it as ‘longevity real estate’ or not.”

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Harvard-trained public health academic professor Gerry Bodeker, PhD, researches, advises and publishes on integrative medicine and wellness. He taught medical sciences at Oxford for two decades and is adjunct professor of epidemiology at Columbia. A Fellow of the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry, he's worked with UN agencies, advised *National Geographic*, and was senior consultant for Dr. Sanjay Gupta's CNN series *Chasing Life*. He chairs GWI's Mental Wellness Initiative and co-chairs GWI's Microplastics Watch Initiative.



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Amy is a writer, editor and digital creator who covers health and wellness. For the past 15 years, she's led creative teams at Well+Good, *SELF*, *New York Post* and *The Messenger*, and written for the *New York Daily News*, *The Washington Post*, *LA Times*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Glamour*, and *Allure*, among others. During her tenure at *SELF*, the brand earned multiple Webby Awards, MM+M Awards and several ASME nominations and one win. Amy is the author of the Substack *Way Beyond Well*, and has appeared as a guest on *TODAY*, *Good Day New York*, *Access Hollywood*, KTLA, and numerous podcasts and panels. She was also the host of the *Sweat With SELF* YouTube series. She graduated summa cum laude from the University of Florida with a double major in English and Classical Studies before receiving her MA in Journalism from New York University.



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Skyler Hubler is a journalist and senior cultural strategist at Backslash, the cultural intelligence unit of Omnicom Advertising Group. In her role, she works across categories to help today's biggest brands stay one step ahead of cultural change. She was also a staff writer on Backslash's debut zine, *ED\GE: Age of Wellness* and has proudly contributed to the Global Wellness Summit's annual trend report for five years.



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Jane Kitchen has a 20-year career in journalism, specializing in the spa and wellness industry. She is editor-at-large at *Spa Business* magazine and has traveled the world in the name of wellness—writing first-person features on the latest spa openings, interviewing some of the most influential people in the industry and examining trends shaping the marketplace. She is also the editor of the annual *Spa Business Handbook*, a key resource for wellness professionals, co-author of its annual *Spa Foresight* report and a regular contributor to the Global Wellness Summit's annual trend report.



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Claire McCormack is a senior editor at digital publication *Beauty Independent*, covering the beauty, wellness and personal care industries. She is a thought leader, writer and speaker on beauty and wellness business, trends and consumer behavior, with a deep expertise in the sexual wellness consumer goods market. Claire's work has been a featured expert in CNBC, *Adweek*, *The Washington Post*, *Business of Fashion*, WGSN, Stylus, the HBO documentary *Not So Pretty* and others.



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Beth McGroarty is vice president of Research and Forecasting for the Global Wellness Institute (GWI) and the Global Wellness Summit (GWS). She has directed the GWS's annual *Wellness Trends Report* for over a decade and authors *The Trendium*, a monthly analysis of emerging developments across the global wellness market. Beth also serves as editor of the GWI's research-focused *Global Wellness Brief* and oversees *WellnessEvidence.com*, the first online resource dedicated to the medical evidence supporting dozens of wellness approaches. She is frequently quoted in major global media outlets on wellness industry insights and trends.



HEIDI MOON

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With strong expertise in strategic business planning, management and communications, Heidi Moon is a trusted advisor in the business of wellness with three decades of experience in seven countries. She consults to, and has led, pioneering spas, integrative wellness centers and wellness real estate projects. As VP of Marketing & Communications for both GWS and GWI, she drives the global visibility of these two leading organizations, shaping narratives that influence the direction of the wellness industry. Heidi has an MBA from Columbia Business School and a BA in Economics.



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Trent Munday is a seasoned executive in the global wellness industry and currently serves as senior vice president of Mandara Spa, a division of OneSpaWorld (Nasdaq: OSW), a worldwide provider and innovator in the fields of wellness, beauty, rejuvenation and transformation across the globe. With over 30 years of experience across more than 30 countries, Trent's background spans both wellness and hotel operations, including leadership roles with renowned hospitality brands such as Six Senses and COMO Hotels & Resorts, where he was the opening general manager of Uma Ubud in Bali. Trent has written extensively for numerous hospitality, spa and wellness publications and is also the host of over 1,500 podcast episodes.



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Jessica Smith is a trends researcher, strategist and co-founder working at the intersection of beauty, wellness and culture. With over a decade shaping future-facing thinking, she has contributed strategic insight to global brands including LVMH, Estée Lauder, Lululemon, L'Oréal and Remedy Place. She is also the co-founder of MAYAH, a new personal care brand redefining body care across the full motherhood journey, built on clinically backed formulations and a cultural reframe of maternal wellbeing. Formerly a senior Strategic Futures analyst at The Future Laboratory, Jessica is a recognized authority on trends and consumer behavior. Her writing and insights have been featured in *Vogue*, *The Times* and *Harper's Bazaar*.



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Megan Whitby is a freelance journalist specializing in the global spa, wellness and hospitality sectors and brand manager at wellness music brand Myndstream. Based in London, she has spent the past seven years immersed in the wellness industry, developing a deep understanding of the global market, its key players and the dynamics shaping the sector. She began her career as assistant editor at *Spa Business* magazine, traveling internationally to cover concept launches, investment activity and market developments, gaining a front-row view of the sector from the ground up. This editorial foundation informs her current work in brand strategy and marketing, bringing a strong storytelling lens and commercial awareness to her role at Myndstream. With experience spanning journalism, brand management and wellness communications, Megan brings a 360° perspective on the global wellness industry, seeing how ideas, people and opportunities connect across the sector.

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