

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.

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