

Wellbeing Insights



Move for Life

Building Vitality With Meaningful Movement

The new year often brings a sense of possibility — a chance to reset and become a better version of ourselves. Each year, many people set a goal to exercise more, yet maintaining an active lifestyle can be a real challenge. Behavioral research helps explain why, revealing how motivation works on a deeper level and what it takes to stay on track. Here are two key reasons for this:

1. *Emotion drives behavior more than logic.*

“Better health” is a rational argument, but it’s not emotionally compelling. We’re far more likely to choose activities that feel enjoyable and avoid those that don’t. You don’t need to be a behavioral scientist to notice that humans naturally gravitate toward pleasure.

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Move for Life

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2. We're wired for immediate gratification.

Future-oriented goals, like improved health, are too abstract to spark consistent action in the moment. You may rely on willpower for a few weeks or months, but eventually the desire to feel good right now takes over. When that happens, people often blame themselves for lacking discipline. When in reality, it's simply human nature.

We can use this science to our advantage. By exploring how different forms of movement provide immediate, meaningful

benefits (whether emotional, social or psychological), we no longer rely on willpower alone. The mindset shifts from "I need to do this" to "I want to do this."

It begins with self-reflection. If short-term feelings fuel motivation, start by identifying how you want to feel. Think back to activities you've enjoyed in the past, even in childhood. What made them enjoyable? Then consider what activities might evoke those same emotions or experiences.

Here are some examples of desired feelings or benefits and the types of activities that may satisfy them:

The Why for Movement	You Might Try
Connect to child-like joy	Roller skating, trampoline park, jump rope, fly a kite
Interact socially with others	Recreation league sports, group walks or hikes
Tune into body and mind; a meditative or cathartic experience	Yoga, tai chi, hiking, swimming
Sense of adventure or adrenaline rush	Rock climbing, rafting, skiing, snowboarding
Self-expression	Dancing, ice skating
Release energy and get out of your head	Running, biking, kickboxing, tennis
Connect with nature	Walking, hiking, gardening, rafting
Have fun; let loose	Any activity you find fun; it's different for everyone

A few tips as you create your own list of whys:

- Don't limit yourself to one. Most people are motivated by several emotional needs that movement can help meet.
- Focus on the desired benefit, not intensity. It's easy to overlook low-intensity activities, but they can be incredibly supportive for both physical health and emotional wellbeing.
- Build quality before quantity. Your list may be long. Start with one or two activities and give yourself permission to experiment. Reflect on paper or mentally, on how you feel during and after each session.
- When something works, plan for sustainability. Whether that means scheduling time or making a financial commitment, put structures in place to help prioritize what you enjoy.

Once you identify the true "whys" behind your desire to move and discover the activities that meet those needs, you're on your way to a lifetime of meaningful, sustainable movement.





ON THE MENU

Farro

Farro, an ancient wheat grain that's been cherished for thousands of years, is making a modern comeback as a nutritious and versatile food. If you want to enhance your diet with more whole grains, farro is an excellent choice that provides several health benefits and can be easily incorporated into your cooking routine.

Farro is a term for three different varieties of wheat, einkorn, emmer and spelt. Although in the U.S. it's usually emmer that's labeled as farro. Its high fiber content promotes digestive health and can help maintain stable blood sugar and cholesterol levels. Farro also contains antioxidants that fight inflammation and can potentially reduce the risk of chronic diseases like cancer.

This grain is sold dry and prepared by cooking it in water or broth until it's soft and chewy. The unique texture and nutty flavor pair well with fresh produce and is a good alternative to other grains such as rice, quinoa, buckwheat and barley.

Farro's versatility makes it easy to add to various dishes, for example:

- **Soups:** Add to soups and stews for extra texture and nutrition.
- **Side Dishes:** Use it as a base for a side dish, mix it with sautéed vegetables or a protein of your choice.
- **Breakfast:** Cooked farro can be enjoyed as a warm breakfast cereal, topped with fruits, nuts and a drizzle of honey or maple syrup.
- **Bowls:** Create nourishing grain bowls by combining farro with roasted veggies, greens and your favorite protein.

To maintain its freshness and quality, store uncooked farro in an airtight container in a cool, dry place for up to six months. Keep cooked farro in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to five days or frozen for up to three months. It's important to keep farro away from moisture to prevent mold growth and spoilage.

One-Pan Farro Risotto

Ingredients:

- 1 cup pearled farro
- 2 1/4 cup vegetable broth (or chicken broth)
- 1 cup frozen peas
- 1/2 cup grated parmesan cheese
- 8 oz. mushrooms, cleaned and sliced
- 3 green onions, chopped
- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- 1 tsp. chopped garlic
- 1 tsp. sweet paprika
- 2 sprigs fresh thyme, leaves only
- Salt and pepper

Directions:

- In a deep skillet, heat 2 tablespoons of olive oil over medium-high heat.
- Add green onions, mushrooms and peas. Sauté for 3-4 minutes and stir in fresh garlic.
- Add farro, sweet paprika, thyme and a little salt and pepper. Cook for 4-5 minutes, stirring regularly.
- In a separate pot, boil the broth. Add the boiling broth to the farro mixture.
- Bring everything to a boil, then lower heat to medium-low. Cover and cook for 20 minutes until the liquid is absorbed.
- Remove from heat and add grated parmesan. Serve warm and enjoy!

Mix It Up:

- Top your dish with a refreshing herb like mint or basil.
- Swap in seasonal produce.
- Skip the cheese to make it dairy-free.

Roll Up Your Sleeves This Winter: Celebrating National Blood Donor Month

January marks National Blood Donor Month, a tradition since 1970. Every winter, blood banks across the U.S. face a serious challenge: holidays, travel, illness and bad weather all contribute to a sharp drop in donations. In fact, many centers enter the new year with only one to two days' worth of supply.

The need for blood remains constant: every two seconds, someone in the U.S. requires a transfusion. The American Red Cross, for example, has reported inventory levels at their lowest in decades, with critically low reserves of key blood types.

If you're healthy and looking to make a meaningful impact in the new year, donating blood is one of the most powerful ways to give back. One pint can save up to three lives. And because blood can't be manufactured, we rely entirely on volunteer donors.

Getting started is simple:

- Use the Red Cross Blood Donor App, visit [RedCrossBlood.org](https://www.redcrossblood.org), or call 1-800-RED CROSS to book an appointment.
- Ask your employer about sponsoring a blood drive or see if they may already have one planned.
- Reach out to your local hospital or blood center for donation opportunities.

Overcoming common fears:

Many potential donors worry about needles, time, or feeling unwell. But blood donation is safe and rigorously regulated. You'll receive a basic health screening (temperature, pulse, hemoglobin), and the process typically takes under an hour.

What if you're not eligible to give blood?

There are still ways to help. Some people are better suited to donate plasma or platelets using a process called apheresis. Eligibility varies, but many who are deferred temporarily can return later: cold or flu symptoms, recent illness, or even certain lifestyle factors may just require a brief waiting period. If you're permanently deferred, you can still contribute by volunteering, spreading the word, or even organizing a drive.

This January, let your health resolutions turn into lifesaving action. Whether it's your first time or you're a seasoned donor, now is the moment to roll up your sleeve and help rebuild the blood supply. You truly could be the reason someone gets a second chance at life.



Your Guide to Building an Emergency Fund

Imagine waking up one morning to discover your car won't start, and the repairs cost more than a month's rent. Or maybe it's a medical bill you didn't expect, or a broken furnace in the dead of winter. Facing these kinds of bills can be overwhelming, but an emergency fund turns a crisis into a manageable setback. Instead of resorting to high-interest credit cards or borrowing from others, tapping into dedicated savings keeps your finances and your peace of mind intact. Building this fund from scratch, even with small, steady deposits, creates a buffer against life's surprises and brings lasting resilience and confidence to your financial life.

How Much Should You Save?

You'll often hear that you should aim for 3-6 months' worth of living expenses in your emergency fund. It's a wide range because there's no one-size-fits-all answer. Your personal target will depend on factors like job stability, dependents, and whether you own a home. Start by listing your essential monthly expenses, multiply by at least three, and use that as your starting goal.

If saving several months' worth of expenses sounds intimidating, break it down. Set a smaller goal of \$1,000 and re-evaluate. Saving just \$20 per week gets you to \$1,000 in a year. Emergency funds aren't built overnight, so celebrate small wins along the way!

Where Should You Keep It?

Your emergency fund should be easy to access and liquid versus invested, but not so easy that you'll be tempted to dip into it for non-emergencies. Good potential options include:

- A separate savings account at your bank
- An online high-yield savings account
- A money market account

Consider accounts that are FDIC or NCUA insured for safety.

How to Build Your Fund

1. **Make Your First Deposit.** Getting started, even with a small amount, makes your goal feel real and encourages consistency.
2. **Automate Your Savings.** Set up automatic transfers from your paycheck or main bank account. Many banks and apps now offer easy automation tools, including round-ups from your purchases.
3. **Find Painless Ways to Save.** Review your monthly subscriptions — do you need every streaming service? Use a grocery list to avoid impulse buys. Even small changes, like cutting out one takeout meal a week, can add up quickly. Use budgeting apps to track "subscription creep" and help identify more savings.
4. **Apply Windfalls.** If you receive a bonus at work, a tax return or other unexpected money, use a portion towards funding your account.
5. **Stay the Course.** Use your emergency fund only for true emergencies, not planned expenses or splurges. Treat it as a financial safety net — essential, but not a catch-all account.

Celebrate Your Success

Every milestone is worth celebrating. Reward yourself with a small treat when you reach your first goal. Once your emergency fund is in good shape, consider setting up a separate account for fun or future expenses.

In today's world of rising costs and economic uncertainty, building an emergency fund is more important than ever. Setting clear goals and taking small, consistent steps will strengthen your overall finances and help you weather life's surprises with confidence.

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