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Wise & Well

Welcome to the Wise & Well newsletter, where we promote whole-person well-being each month and highlight health-related topics to help you be your best.



Making Self-Improvement Stick

A new year offers each of us the opportunity to start fresh — to set new goals, recalibrate priorities or establish some helpful new habits. It’s a time when we can take stock of our lives, re-evaluate life choices and focus on what we truly want, like personal growth or other meaningful changes. Whether it’s finally pursuing that passion project, forming healthier daily routines or simply being more present with loved ones, the new year is a great time to reflect on how we want to show up differently and lay out a plan to become a better version of ourselves.

Although temporal landmarks like New Year’s Day motivate aspirational behavior, a phenomenon coined by researchers as “The Fresh Start Effect,” many people have trouble keeping their New Year’s resolutions. For most of us, by mid-February, the sweet comfort of old, familiar patterns starts to creep in, and our enthusiasm for change starts to wane. That’s because making your self-improvement stick and successfully affecting long-term change is challenging. There are, however, proven strategies grounded in behavioral science that can help transform resolutions into new sustained lifestyles and mindsets.

Award-winning behavioral scientist Katy Milkman wrote an article for CNN Health based on her book, *How to Change: The Science of Getting from Where You Are to Where You Want to Be*. Most effective for smaller, concrete goals, she lists out these five ways for sticking to resolutions.

Strategies for Making Change Last

- 1. Make detailed cue-based plans outlining exactly when and where you will act** to increase accountability and the likelihood of following through with your change. For example, if your resolution is to go to the gym at least three days a week, make sure that you specify when exactly you will go, e.g., “I will go to the gym on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 6:00 a.m.”
- 2. Consider stakes or penalties like cash bets or social announcements** to motivate sticking to resolutions through built-in costs for failure. Incentives have the power to change our decisions, but penalties are even more motivating.

3. Keep it fun by incorporating elements of pleasure into the habits themselves to intrinsically drive persistence and make it sustainable. If your exercise routine is not fun, it is unlikely you will keep up with it.

4. Cut yourself some slack and allow for the occasional exception without writing off the entire resolution. If you stay up late watching your favorite show and miss your Wednesday workout, give yourself a get-out-of-jail-free card and pick up the next day.

5. Get by with a little help from your friends.

By pursuing resolutions collaboratively with peers, the group increases its chances of success due to mutual support, motivation and the ability to learn tips and tricks from one another. For example, if you’re just starting at the gym, get a workout buddy or ask questions of other gym-goers as they pop up. Learning how others achieved success and trying out their methods increases the chances of your own success.

While the optimism of a fresh start often fades by mid-February, with science-based strategies, lasting change is always within reach. Approaching resolutions as inviting experiments in living a more fulfilling life can set the stage for personal growth and meaningful progress. However, important keys to that approach are self-compassion, permitting for some flexibility, leveraging social supports, and, above all, finding pleasure in progress. With consistency around these supportive tactics, you can make self-improvement stick and become your best in ways that ripple outwards to the benefit of everyone you come in contact with.

References:

[cnn.com](https://www.cnn.com)

pubsonline.informs.org

Additional Resources

Upcoming Wise & Well Webinar — Register Now!

Making Self-Improvement Stick: Strategies for Thriving In our Modern World

When: Tuesday, January 16 | Noon – 1:00 p.m. ET

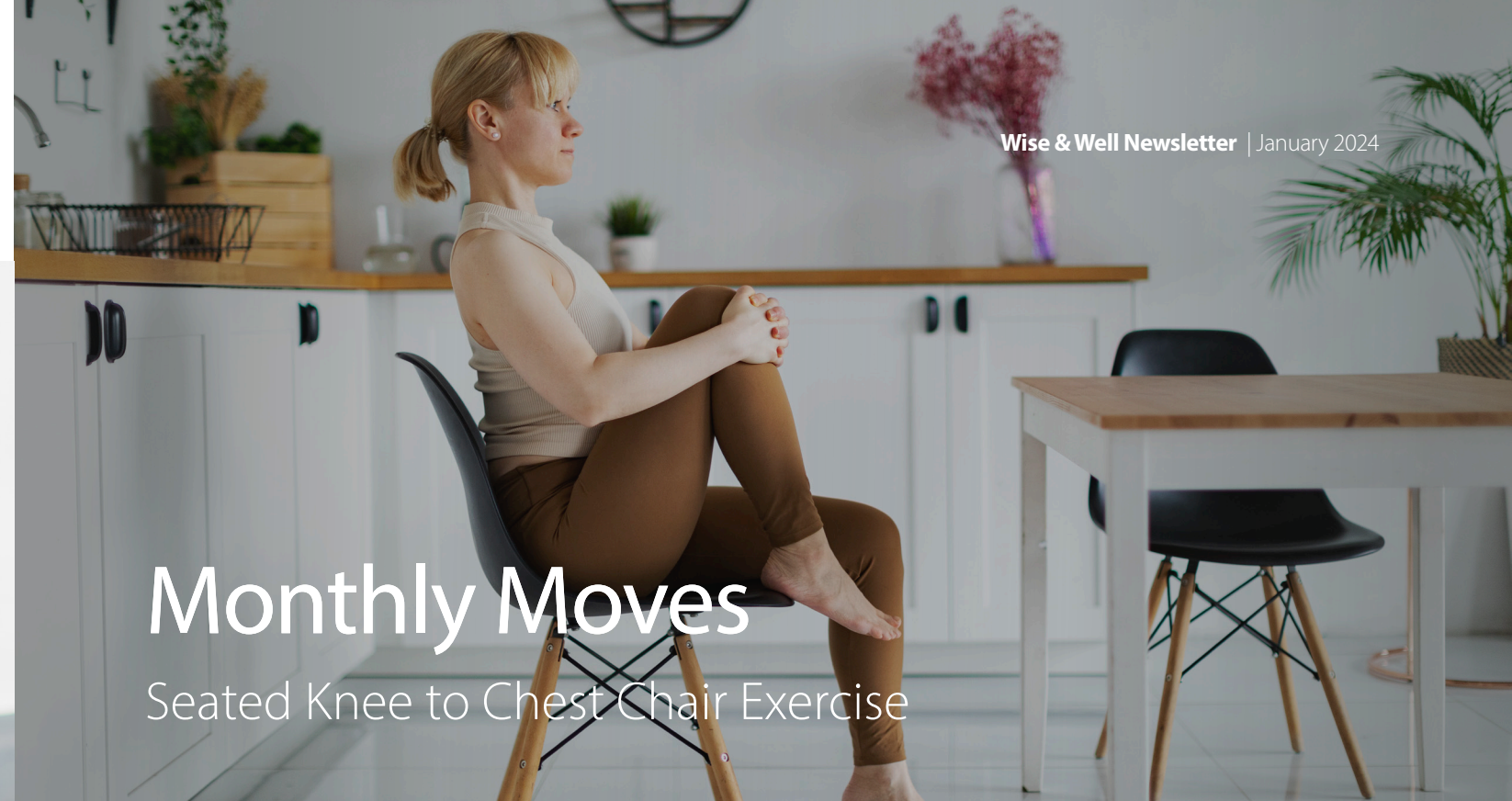
In today's world of non-stop notifications and work-life overlap, modern day stressors and lifestyle are leading to burnout and unfulfillment. This webinar will empower attendees with the knowledge and tools to make the changes necessary to thrive, both personally and professionally.

The webinar includes:

- The five fundamental building blocks of happiness and resilience
- Using mindfulness techniques to manage the negative thoughts that hold us back
- Rewiring our brains for positivity and resilience through neuroscience
- Evidence-based research from the leading scientists who study human flourishing
- Customizable, "toolkit" (workbook) to put building blocks into action

And more!

To register, [click here](#) or scan the QR code below. For more information about the webinar, view the [Employee Flyer](#).



Monthly Moves

Seated Knee to Chest Chair Exercise

This exercise helps stretch your hamstring and glutes, which are large muscle groups that need to be flexible to prevent injury. Flexibility also reduces stiffness and pain, allowing you to perform day-to-day activities.

To perform the exercise:

- 01** Sit up straight in your desk chair with your left foot firmly on the ground.
- 02** Grasp the back of your right knee and slowly pull it toward your chest until you feel a stretch.
- 03** Hold the position for 30 seconds and then repeat with your left leg. Perform 30 repetitions in total.

Tap [here](#) for a video demo.

Source: [vivehealth.com](https://www.vivehealth.com)



Rosemary Roasted Salmon with Asparagus and Potatoes

When you want a healthy, filling meal, you can't beat a dish centered on salmon. For this healthy dish featuring potatoes, Yukon Golds are great because they get crispy on the outside but completely creamy on the inside. A brush stroke or two of balsamic glaze provides a rich color and a sweet finish to the roasted salmon.

Ingredients

- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh rosemary
- 2 teaspoons minced garlic
- 1 ¼ pounds Yukon Gold potatoes, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 teaspoon salt, divided
- ¾ teaspoon ground pepper, divided
- 1 pound asparagus, trimmed
- 4 (5 ounces) skinless salmon fillets, preferably wild
- 1 medium lemon
- 2 tablespoons balsamic glaze
- ½ teaspoon whole-grain mustard

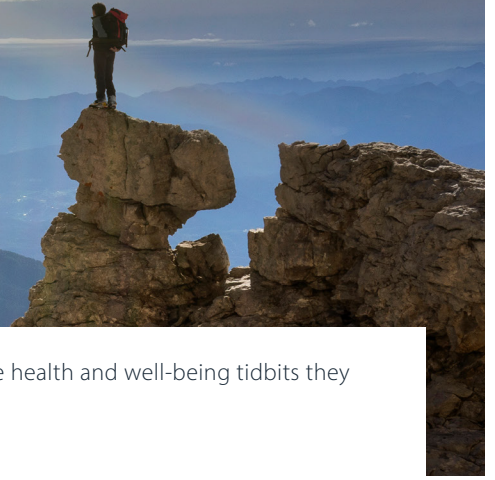
Directions

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees F.
2. Stir together oil, rosemary and garlic in a small bowl. Place potatoes in a large bowl and toss with 1 tablespoon of the oil mixture and 1/2 teaspoon each of salt and pepper. Arrange the potatoes in an even layer on a large-rimmed baking sheet. Roast until lightly browned and tender, about 20 minutes. Push the potatoes to one end of the pan.
3. Place asparagus in the large bowl and toss with 1 tablespoon of the oil mixture, 1/4 teaspoon salt and 1/8 teaspoon pepper. Arrange the asparagus on the other end of the baking sheet. Roast until the asparagus is bright green, about 3 minutes. Push the vegetables to either end of the pan, leaving space in the center.
4. Brush salmon with the remaining 1 tablespoon oil mixture and sprinkle with the remaining 1/4 teaspoon salt and 1/8 teaspoon pepper. Place the salmon in the center of the pan. Thinly slice half the lemon and tuck the slices around the salmon and vegetables. Roast for 5 minutes more. Cut the remaining lemon half into wedges.
5. Whisk balsamic glaze and mustard in a small bowl. Brush 1 tablespoon of the mixture on the salmon. Continue roasting until the salmon is just cooked through and the vegetables are tender, about 5 minutes. Drizzle the vegetables with the remaining sauce. Serve with the lemon wedges.

Source: [eatingwell.com](https://www.eatingwell.com)



Tips



Try sending our Wise & Well Tips of the Week to your employees for quick, easily digestible health and well-being tidbits they can incorporate into their daily lives.

– Your Wise & Well Team

Even though January typically comes with significant New Year's resolutions, there are always smaller opportunities to make some positive changes. Consider a few of these to feel instantly successful:

January 5

Take a Look at Your Physical Environment

This week, take stock of your space. Are there papers and receipts you need to file or throw away? Are your magazines or catalogs piling up? Take just 10 minutes a day for the next five days to work on straightening up your paperwork. You'll be amazed at what you can accomplish in such a short time.

January 12

Buy a Plant

Throughout the week, look for opportunities to fill your living or work space with plants. Not only will you be creating better air quality for your home or office, but nurturing a plant can help you emotionally as well. While you're at it, buy a nice pot to plant it in, and place your new plant somewhere where it will give you joy.

January 19

Spend Time with a Friend

This is especially true for people who spent more time with family than friends over the holidays. Seek out a best friend this week and set a time for lunch, a movie, a walk in the park, or anything else that comes to mind. It doesn't matter what you do together, as long as you spend time with each other. Not only will you get a sense of companionship and camaraderie, but you'll be going a long way towards stress relief.

January 26

Take a Television Break

This week, try reading a book, working on a craft project or playing a game. Write a story. Take a walk. Involve your family and friends to come up with creative and fun things you can do for this no-TV.

Source: passionforbusiness.com

January Is Making Self-Improvement Stick Month

Three Ways to Boost Self-Improvement

The start of a new year serves as an opportunity to set new goals and commit to better habits. The small habits you prioritize now can lead to huge gains!



1. Take breaks from digital screens.

Balance your free time by minimizing screen time. Get creative, hang out with friends, explore nature or read a book.



2. Start a journal.

Daily journaling can help you set goals and explore thoughts and emotions in a more creative and secure way.



3. Clean your space.

A clean space can be a huge mood booster. Spend 10 minutes a day clearing out old receipts or clothes.

Source:

[cnet.com](https://www.cnet.com)

[passionforbusiness.com](https://www.passionforbusiness.com)

[berkeleywellbeing.com](https://www.berkeleywellbeing.com)