

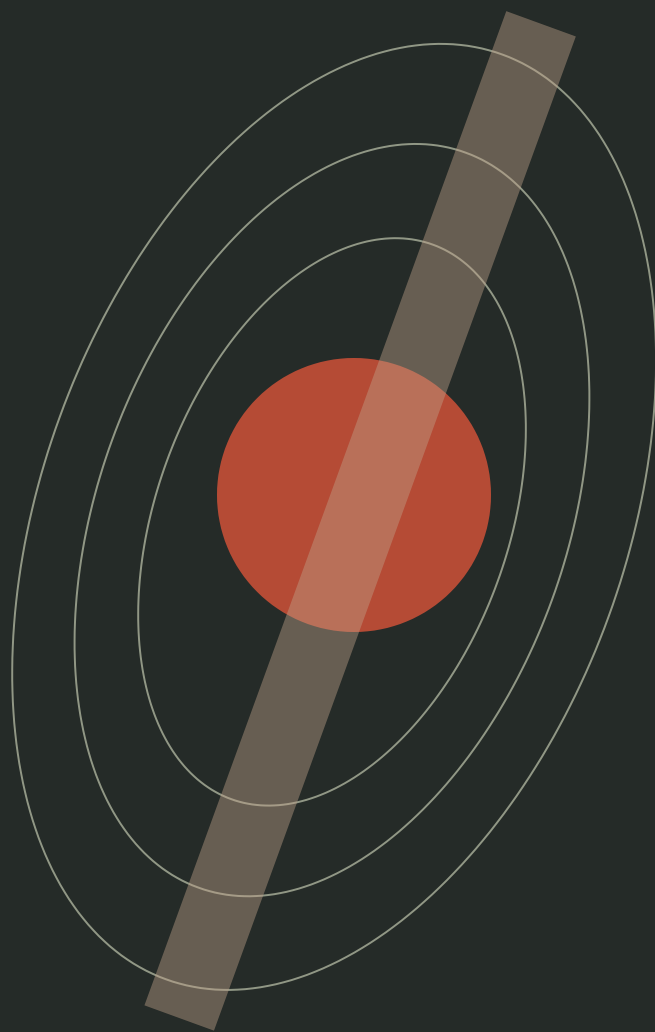
Issue

by J W / H O L L O W A Y

THE WELLNESS EDITION

The art of beginning *again.*

Not a new you.
A more deliberate way to live.



SMALLER HABITS.
ROOM FOR REST.
THE ART OF NOTICING.

SCIENCE / SELF / CREATIVITY
JWHOLLOWAY.COM

A NOTE TO THE READER

A magazine for the whole human.

What would wellness look like if it made more room for living?

Issue begins with that question. Not with a perfect body, an impossible morning routine, or a promise that one purchase will change everything.

This first edition brings everyday health into conversation with attention, imagination, and the choices that give a day its shape. The aim is not to prescribe an ideal life. It is to offer a few useful ways to participate more fully in the one you have.

Read slowly. Question the claims. Try one idea that fits. Leave room for pleasure, uncertainty, and your own experience.

Research summaries are marked with source numbers. Essays and practical invitations are editorial reflections, not clinical protocols.

Issue — BY JW HOLLOWAY

Wellness / psychology / the art of living

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THE ART OF LIVING

The art of *beginning again.*

An invitation to stop auditioning for a different life and begin inhabiting this one.

I imagine a notebook opened to a blank page. Beside it, a pair of walking shoes. A guitar leaning against the wall. None of these things is impressive on its own. None can promise transformation. But each offers a place to begin.

A beginning need not arrive with a declaration. It can be a paragraph written before the kettle boils, a meal made with care, a quiet refusal to turn another evening into unfinished work.

There is a kind of ambition that treats the present as an obstacle. It asks you to hurry toward the person you ought to become. This issue proposes another kind: ambition that pays attention to the person doing the becoming.

What can that person afford today? What does the body allow? What responsibilities are already waiting at the door? A practice that ignores these questions may be beautiful on paper and impossible by Wednesday.

Beginning again is not a verdict on the last attempt. You are allowed to keep what helped and revise what did not. The plan can change without turning the person into a failure.

Some days, the right beginning is active: stepping outside, cooking, making the call. On others, it is quieter: asking for help, allowing recovery, deciding not to make exhaustion into an achievement.

Let the notebook hold one honest sentence. Let the camera find one overlooked detail. Let a modest action be modest, without requiring it to prove your worth.

These pages are not a demand to improve every corner of your life. They are an invitation to choose one corner and give it a little care.

You do not have to announce the beginning. You can simply begin.

The plan can change.

The person does not have to become a failure.

RESEARCH / WITHOUT THE COUNTDOWN

Small enough to repeat.

There is no universal day on which a new routine becomes effortless.

What the research says

In a study by Phillippa Lally and colleagues, 96 volunteers chose an eating, drinking, or activity behavior to repeat daily in the same context for 12 weeks. Participants recorded the behavior and rated how automatic it felt. [1]

The results showed substantial variation in habit development. Repetition in a consistent setting was associated with increasing automaticity; missing one opportunity did not materially alter the process in this study. [1]

This was a relatively small, self-reported observational study, not proof that every routine follows the same timeline. It does not establish a universal deadline or promise permanent behavior change. [1]

What to do with that

Use the research as permission to experiment, not as another number to fail. Instead of asking whether you are “finished” building a habit, ask whether the chosen action is becoming easier to fit into your day.

AN EDITORIAL EXPERIMENT

Choose a repeatable beginning.

Name one action. “Read one page” is easier to recognize than “become more disciplined.” Choose something meaningful, not merely something easy to count.

Give it a familiar moment. Try linking that page to the end of lunch, or a line of writing to the moment you sit at your desk.

Make a smaller version. On a crowded day, one sentence can stand in for a longer writing session. This is an entry point, not a claim that all activity doses are equivalent.

Review the fit. After a week, ask what helped, what interrupted, and whether the action or its timing needs revision.

A useful question: *What could I repeat without first needing an exceptional day?*

FROM INTENTION TO EVERYDAY LIFE

Build the return. *Not just the routine.*

A plan for the interrupted day belongs inside the plan.

YOUR STARTING SENTENCE

After *this familiar moment*,
I will do *this specific action*.

01 / NOTICE

Choose the cue.

Look for a moment that already happens: finishing breakfast, closing the workday, or putting the evening dishes away. Avoid building the whole plan around a rare pocket of free time.

02 / DEFINE

Choose the action.

Write down what you will actually do. "Practice one chord change" is concrete. "Become a musician" is a direction, not tonight's instruction.

03 / RETURN

Choose the restart.

Decide what happens after an interruption. Return at the next suitable opportunity. Review the obstacle without adding a punishment or an obligation to make up every missed minute.

A working example

After I clear the dinner table, I will write for five minutes. On an unusually busy evening, I will write one sentence. When the evening is unavailable, I will return at the next suitable session.

This is a planning example, not a scientifically validated five-minute dose. Choose a different action or schedule when it better fits your circumstances.

My familiar moment:

My specific action:

My plan for returning:

BODY / A STARTING POINT, NOT A TEST

Begin where your body is.

Walking, wheeling, dancing, and ordinary movement belong in the conversation.

150–300

MINUTES / WEEK

Moderate-intensity aerobic activity

2+

DAYS / WEEK

Muscle-strengthening activity

WHO recommendations for adults; these are weekly goals, not instructions for a first session. [2]

Keep the direction. Adapt the entry.

WHO recommends 150–300 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity per week, or 75–150 minutes of vigorous activity, or an equivalent combination. Strengthening all major muscle groups on at least two days a week is also recommended. [2]

Some activity is better than none. Starting with a smaller amount and increasing gradually can be appropriate, particularly when returning after inactivity. The activity should fit a person's abilities and health circumstances. [2]

Our invitation is to begin with a version of movement you can realistically repeat. That might mean a short walk, an accessible seated session, or a comfortable stretch of wheeling.

A modest first appointment

Choose a safe place and a suitable activity. Put a brief session on the calendar. Five comfortable minutes can be a starting appointment; they are not equivalent to the full weekly recommendations.

Notice the practical details. Was the route accessible? Was the time workable? Would a companion make the experience more enjoyable? Those observations can guide the next attempt.

Adapt, do not compete.

Ask a qualified clinician or exercise professional for guidance when a medical condition, symptoms, injury, or uncertainty makes activity choices difficult. Do not push through chest pain, faintness, or unusual shortness of breath.

FOOD / CARE WITHOUT THE PUNISHMENT

Less punishment. *More nourishment.*

Let a meal be an act of care, not a referendum on your character.

Begin with what could make the next meal more nourishing and more possible.

WHO describes healthy diets through four principles: adequacy, balance, moderation, and diversity. It emphasizes variety across foods such as vegetables, fruits, pulses, whole grains, and suitable protein sources, while limiting foods high in free sugars, sodium, and unhealthy fats. [3]

Healthy eating can take different forms. Personal needs, cultural food traditions, local availability, and everyday circumstances all matter. Fresh, frozen, and canned produce can contribute; WHO advises avoiding added sugars or excess sodium in frozen or canned choices. [3]

Rather than attempting a total kitchen reinvention, choose one meal you already know how to make. Then ask what you could add or adjust to make it work better for you.

There is no need to turn every ingredient into a moral category. A sustainable approach must have room for your budget, your traditions, and the pleasure of sitting down to eat.

A MEAL TO MAKE YOUR OWN

The everyday bowl.

Start with a familiar base.

Rice, another grain, or a food you already enjoy.

Add a protein source.

Beans, lentils, tofu, eggs, fish, or another suitable choice.

Bring in vegetables.

Use what is affordable, available, and appealing.

Finish with flavor.

Try herbs, spices, citrus, and a dressing you enjoy.

An editorial meal idea, not a prescribed portion plan. Adapt it for allergies, medical needs, preferences, and appetite.

The question for this week: *What is one nourishing meal I would happily make again?*

SLEEP / MAKE SPACE, NOT ANOTHER SCORE

Make room for the night.

Consider a boundary around bedtime—not another performance target.

7–9

HOURS A NIGHT

NHLBI's general adult sleep guidance.

Individual needs and circumstances vary. [4]

Protect the opportunity to sleep.

The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute recommends allowing enough time for sleep, keeping a regular sleep-and-wake schedule, and using the period before bed for quieter activity. A cool, quiet, dark bedroom can also help. [5]

Caffeine can interfere with sleep, and its effects can last up to eight hours. The timing that works for one person may not work for another. Review afternoon and evening caffeine rather than treating a late coffee as automatically harmless. [5]

For a first experiment, select one boundary. It might be finishing work earlier, dimming bright lights, or leaving the final part of the evening free from demanding tasks.

Choose something within your control. Then give it a chance to become familiar before redesigning the whole evening.

A quieter closing ritual

Set down tomorrow's first task on paper. Put away one object that signals the end of work. Choose a small, undemanding pleasure: a few pages, gentle music, or simply a little silence.

The purpose is not to force sleep on command. It is to create a less crowded threshold between the demands of the day and the opportunity to rest.

Sleep difficulties are not a character flaw.

Caregiving, shift work, and illness can complicate rest. Persistent sleep problems deserve professional attention; improving habits does not replace assessment or treatment. [5]

MINDFULNESS / WITHOUT THE MIRACLE CLAIMS

You do not have to *empty your mind.*

A brief invitation to notice what is here.

Awareness, not a blank page.

NCCIH describes mindfulness as attending to the present moment without judgment. Meditation and mindfulness are varied practices, not a single intervention with one predictable effect. [6]

Research suggests possible benefits for some outcomes, but study quality, methods, and results differ. A brief exercise in a magazine should not be presented as equivalent to a studied clinical program. [6]

Nor is meditation right for everyone at every moment. Some people experience distress or other negative effects. Do not use it to replace professional care or delay seeking help. [6]

That leaves room for a modest invitation: spend a little time noticing rather than trying to improve the moment.

Let the moment
be observed
before it is judged.

AN OPTIONAL ONE-MINUTE PAUSE

Stay with this moment.

Find a comfortable seated position. Keep your eyes open or softly focused.

Notice one place where your body meets a surface: your feet on the floor, your hand on the chair, or your back against its support.

Listen for one nearby sound. Then one farther away.

Let your breathing remain natural. There is no need to hold it, deepen it, or match a count.

When a thought arrives, notice that too. Then gently return to a sound or a point of contact.

The duration is an editorial suggestion, not a proven treatment dose. Stop if this feels uncomfortable or distressing; looking around or choosing another activity is a valid response.

FIELD NOTES / PHOTOGRAPHY, WORDS & ATTENTION

The art of noticing.

A creative practice does not have to produce something you can sell, display, or defend.

ONE PLACE. THREE DETAILS.

A different way of seeing.

Take a familiar place: the view from a window, a table after breakfast, a patch of pavement near the door. Stay with it long enough to notice something that did not announce itself.

A shadow dividing a wall. The pattern left by water. The small drama of a leaf turning toward the light. You do not need to travel far to practice looking closely.

A photography invitation

Make three photographs of the same subject. In the first, explore light. In the second, explore texture. In the third, change your distance or angle.

A phone is enough for this exercise. No camera is also enough: draw three small frames and sketch what you would include.

A writing invitation

Choose one detail and begin with "I notice..." Write three concrete sentences before using an abstract word such as beauty, sadness, or hope.

Then ask what the detail suggests without insisting that it must symbolize something. Sometimes a cup is simply a cup. Sometimes its chipped edge opens a memory.

Keep the work private for a day. Decide later whether it belongs in a photograph, an essay, a poem, or nowhere beyond your notebook.

These are creative invitations, not claims that making art treats a medical condition. Their purpose here is exploration.

A PRACTICAL INVITATION

A week of returning.

Not a transformation deadline. A chance to discover what fits.

Choose a comfortable pace. The invitations below are optional; you can repeat one instead of doing all seven. Do not sacrifice sleep, adequate food, recovery, or needed care to complete a checklist.

- | | | |
|-----------|---|--------------------------|
| 01 | Choose one beginning.
Write a specific action and the familiar moment after which you will attempt it. | ☐ |
| <hr/> | | |
| 02 | Make space for movement.
Try a brief, appropriate activity. Notice what made the time and setting workable. | ☐ |
| <hr/> | | |
| 03 | Make one meal your own.
Choose a familiar meal and one nourishing addition or adjustment you would enjoy repeating. | ☐ |
| <hr/> | | |
| 04 | Give evening a boundary.
Pick one small change that protects the opportunity to rest, without trying to force sleep. | ☐ |
| <hr/> | | |
| 05 | Practice noticing.
Pause for a comfortable moment, or notice three details around you. Skip inward-focused attention if it feels distressing. | ☐ |
| <hr/> | | |
| 06 | Make something small.
Write a paragraph, take a photograph, sketch an object, or play a little music without a performance target. | ☐ |
| <hr/> | | |
| 07 | Review, do not grade.
What helped? What was too much? Choose one practice to carry forward and one thing to simplify. | ☐ |

THE PRACTICE I WANT TO KEEP:

Keep the useful part. Leave the perfect week behind.

FOLLOW THE EVIDENCE

Read. Question. *Look closer.*

Numbered references identify the basis for health and research statements. Practical exercises are editorial suggestions unless stated otherwise. Web sources checked September 18, 2026.

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About this issue

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No outside experts were interviewed for this issue.

A note on health information

General education for adult readers, not individual medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Adapt suggestions to your needs and abilities. No independent clinical review has been performed. Consult a qualified professional about personal health concerns. Sources do not imply endorsement.