

I'm IN

Issue 4

Why Modern Fitness Marketing Sounds Scientific — and Isn't

I bought an Oura ring for sleep. Not for gadgets — for the language. Readiness. Recovery. Deep sleep. It implied precision could become improvement.

At first, the numbers reassured. Then something clearer emerged. My sleep wasn't broken. It was changing. With age, sleep lightens, deep sleep reduces. No wearable reverses that. Technology describes the pattern but cannot override physiology.

What helped wasn't the ring. A regular schedule, a cool dark room, less alcohol. That isn't technology — it's logic. And if the language persuaded me — someone trained to think critically about recovery — the issue isn't gullibility. It's structural.

Wellness marketing borrows words that imply precision. Engineered. Foundational. Optimised. Lifted from disciplines where outcomes are measurable, applied to products that cannot deliver that determinism. The language sounds scientific. The systems are not.

To optimise something, a target must exist. Whole-body health has none. Sleep, strength, immunity, cognition, metabolic health — these interact, trade off, shift across time. Improving one can compromise another. Yet marketing offers optimisation as a universal promise. Precise in tone, empty in definition.

Feel the burn. Get a glow. The burn is metabolite accumulation, the glow is thermoregulation. Neither is evidence of adaptation. Real change happens quietly, during recovery — mediated by pathways most people never feel. Marketing sells sensation as signal. Noise mistaken for process.

Performance marketing isn't wrong because it's ineffective. It's profoundly effective. It's wrong because it pretends to describe how bodies work. It describes how people want to feel about change. Once seen, the language loses its power. And biology — indifferent to narrative — quietly reasserts itself.