

**IT'S NO SECRET THAT WE'RE** living in a phone-addicted, hyper-connected world: one of relentless emails, WhatsApp messages and social media likes. Little wonder we're exhausted, on the brink of burning out, or in a constant state of fight-or-flight anxiety.

I'm guilty on all charges. As a fashion editor, entire chunks of my year are consumed by a schedule that flits from New York to Paris; Milan to Tokyo – a never-ending rotation of shows, appointments, deadlines, meetings and late dinners (steak frites 11 nights in a row, and counting). Bad habits are formed, colds and flu kick in when the work pauses – and then the cycle repeats, six to eight times a year.

So when I heard about Lanserhof Lans, the acclaimed detox retreat in the Austrian Tyrol, it seemed like a good opportunity to reset (and, if I'm honest, shift a few kilos before Paris Fashion Week). A seven-night stay was slotted into February. I imagined returning to London invigorated, ready to hit the shows at supersonic speed.

I couldn't have been more misguided. Lanserhof's philosophy is centred around the FX Mayr method, which aims to gently re-establish the way you eat, digest, sleep and exercise. The focus is as much on mental health as it is on physical, with targeted treatments and kind, white-coated doctors of every description to tend to your symptoms. Even the elegantly austere surrounds are designed to be as unobtrusive as possible to aid you in switching off. The dress code is somewhere between Brunello cashmere and discreet activewear (I inappropriately packed leopard print and tailoring). It became clear that this was not going to be a Fashion Week fix, but a long-term upheaval – and, possibly, a new way of life.

This might sound cult-like, but Lanserhof is a lodestone for those both in search of, and severely lacking, something. Many come to lose weight, others to fix sleep issues or identify intolerances, but the fastest rising demographic is those suffering

from stress – more than two thirds, according to Dr Roland Fuschelberger. 'We try to motivate them to change things in their lives,' he explained. 'Diet, mainly. They may be eating or drinking too much because of stress, never switching off, and their bodies suffer.' After softly massaging my stomach, he concludes that my bloating is stress-related (and not helped by last night's ragù and red wine).

Dr Fuschelberger swiftly prescribed a strict, acid-eliminating diet: small bowls of oat porridge for breakfast, steamed potatoes and linseed oil for lunch, vegetable broth for dinner. No amount of

*'We're paying to starve,' joked a Saudi princess whom I befriended. At the end of the week, she had rebooked for next year*

begging earned me a second helping; the dirndl-wearing staff take no prisoners. The first few days were the hardest: hunger drained my energy and disrupted my sleep, which was punctuated by food-related dreams (in one I managed to find The Ritz's lobster club sandwich on Lanserhof's non-existent room service menu). I found it difficult to read more than a page of my book and took to my bed by midday. But by day four, my body felt recharged, my skin glowing: I discovered the treadmill, spent my mornings hiking in the mountains and found time to finish my novel.

Lanserhof's central tenet is to give your digestive system a rest, and even the more generous diet plans – salmon or venison, if you're lucky – are as clean as a whistle: all cooked without salt, sugar or bowel-irritating spices. Between meals, I swallowed magnesium supplements and dispensed liver-activating 'herbal drops' onto my tongue; while mornings started with the obligatory glass of Epsom salts, designed to keep you glued to the loo for a good part of the day.

If the scant portions were hard to handle, it was nothing compared to

the enforced 'digital fasting' (Wi-Fi is intentionally scarce). At first, the temptation to glance at my phone was overwhelming, but slowly I started to leave it in my room – and the sense of freedom was incredible. Emails became unimportant, non-urgent messages went unanswered and Instagram couldn't have been more boring. As my colleagues broadcast themselves at shows, I felt a sense of relief at not being there. It felt like learning to breathe again (which, fittingly, I learned to do in the Mitterand workshops).

Instead, I filled my afternoons with Nordic walking, Pilates and treatments in the spa: everything


from detoxifying birch body masks to icy yet immunity-boosting cryotherapy. I booked in for personal training sessions, determined to lose seven pounds before returning to the fashion circuit, and for intense transformative deep-tissue massages, which straightened out my laptop-inflicted shoulders.

I came to realise that the concept of 'fasting' is about more than simply eating smaller portions. That said, you have to put in the work. A

couple of Saudi princesses whom I befriended found the austerity challenging and difficult to equate with the price. 'We're paying to starve,' joked one. At the end of the week, she had re-booked for next year.

I left Lanserhof feeling serene and restored – as well as seven pounds lighter. Back in London, I stocked up on linseed oil, broth and sheep's cheese. I've started eating breakfast, and moderately reintroduced carbs (which I had previously vilified then guiltily overeaten). I plan to spend more time walking in nature, resting after intensive exercise (it's the only way to strengthen your muscles), not snacking between meals – and, more importantly, stowing away my phone and laptop at a reasonable hour. That may sound obvious to some, and easier said than done to others. But, from time to time, we all need reminding of the basics, or, better still, a strict reinforcement to help rediscover them.

As an altogether different type of fashion week looms, I'm feeling re-energised. However, as every medical professional at Lanserhof will tell you, life is about balance. Possibly in the form of steak frites. □

 *Healing Holidays (healing-holidays.com) offers a seven-night Lanserhof Cure Classic programme from £3,799, full board, including British Airways flights and transfers.*

