

FITNESS KICKS

The turbo-charged hothouses that really set pulses racing

WILDFITNESS ANDALUCIA, SPAIN

IN BRIEF Embrace Neanderthal moves at an anti-treadmill escape

THE LOWDOWN Arrive at the *cortijo*, a hidden enclave surrounded by olive trees and fields of sunflowers, with the heady scent of fennel and rosemary in the hot air, and you might be fooled into thinking you are in for a relaxing week. Especially when you hear rumours of a paella night and spot the beer tap in the courtyard. But Wildfitness is a body-changing holiday worth every drop of sweat. It's hardcore. It will hurt. The good news? There's delicious food and enough rest time to dispel any anger you might feel towards the kick-ass regime. The philosophy is that nature knows best. From animal movements to primal swinging, using your body in the way it was designed will slowly fix bad posture and undo nasty habits. You learn techniques to take away with you. On a business trip for a week? Do a high-intensity Tabata workout in your hotel room (it takes 12 minutes and has the equivalent effect of a 90-minute run). Have a tiny baby? Use it as a counter-weight. At home with the kids? Skip, hop and jump with them. Coaches here – steely, strong and bouncing from foot to foot with restless energy – are all ambassadors for keeping active. Which stands to reason: your body can tolerate any amount of gruelling exercise, honestly, when pushed by the right trainer, just not if you are fuelled by a carrot stick. Thankfully, meals are wholesome and based on seasonal, local products. You won't go hungry. Lunch could be beetroot-and-wild-fennel soup, pork escalope

with ratatouille, and coconut mousse sweetened with dates. And you'll work it off too. Between wild running (barefoot) through fields of flowers, lifting (rocks, people, hay bales) and throwing (rocks, people, hay bales), swimming across a lake and brachiation (swinging like a monkey from tree branches), you will ache in places you never knew existed and be so stiff that by day three the descent to breakfast is an awkward comedy. Yet the exercise is brief, and over before you can really complain. And the beautiful surroundings make the seven-kilometre run almost enjoyable. The team hit the right balance between humour and motivation, and crawling across the lawn pretending to be a leopard is hilarious. It makes you realise how completely unnatural it is to pound the treadmill while staring at a screen with headphones on. To this end there is a lot of talk about how counter-productive our modern lifestyles are. It's visible in the stoop of the city bankers and knackered mothers who sign up for the week-long courses. Watch them unravel, both mentally and physically, and you'll find you can't argue with the philosophy peddled here: good old-fashioned fitness and fun.

INSIDER TIP Focus on the pleasure that exercise enables, not the suffering it causes when you're doing it.

BOOK IT Healing Holidays (+44 20 7843 3592; www.healingholidays.co.uk/condenast) offers a seven-night Boost Course from £1,949 per person full board, including all activities, British Airways flights and transfers.

