



OUR MAN ON THE GROUND TRAVEL AND LIFESTYLE

GLOBAL TRAVEL AND LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE

- HOME
- ABOUT
- HOTELS ▾
- RESTAURANTS ▾
- BARS ▾
- MOTORING
- LIFESTYLE ▾
- CRUISES
- OUR WRITERS ▾

FEBRUARY 5, 2019

SEARCH ...

HOME > HEALTH SPAS > Get Lean, Lithe And Puma-fit At Target Fitness Retreats

Get Lean, Lithe And Puma-fit At Target Fitness Retreats

April 6, 2017 Our Man On The Ground Health Spas 0



- f
- tw
- in
- p
- G+
- ✉
- 📄

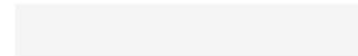
Tabata? Burpees? Pad work? Double Dutch to me. But, hell, I'm about to find out what these are. I'm on a Target Human Performance fitness holiday – if doing five hours' exercise a day can be called a 'holiday'. I'm here for a five-day 'get fit fast' retreat. A so-called health, fitness and wellness break.

There are seven of us – a tea lady and nurse to a marketing executive; five women and two men – gathered in the garden of a Herefordshire house. Our al fresco gym. We're 38 to 56 years old. Folk whose levels of fitness ranges from one woman who "does no exercise" to triathletes. (The latter inspirationally fit older women sporting Lululemon – the world's best athletic gear – and pert buttocks.)

On arrival, I have had my one-to-one consultation with Target's founder, James Golden – to nail down my goals. (A little weight loss and to become more supple, since you ask.) Now James, a self-dubbed 'sports scientist' and our fitness coach, stands in front of us, all tattoos and plucked eyebrows. He's whipper fit, gazelle fast and beaver keen. Is this going to be my body at the end of the week?

[Target Fitness Boxing](#)

FOLLOW ON FACEBOOK

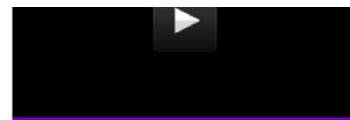


LATEST ARTICLES

- Casa De La Noche**
February 4, 2019 0
- L'Orangerie at Four Seasons Hotel George V**
February 3, 2019 0
- Kasbah Angour Atlas Mountains Hotel**
February 2, 2019 0
- Winter Splendour In Austria's Ski Amadé Region**
February 1, 2019 0
- BE Live5 Headphones: Turn On, Tune In, Drop Out The Right Way**
January 31, 2019 0
- The Most Famous Fictional Streets In The UK**
January 30, 2019 0
- How UK Coastal Towns Are Bringing In Tourism**
January 29, 2019 0
- The Ultimate Guide To Drink Trends For 2019**
January 29, 2019 0
- Are You Really Safe When You Travel?**
January 28, 2019 0
- 10 Best Places To Go On Your Girls Holiday This Year**
January 28, 2019 0

FEATURED VIDEO





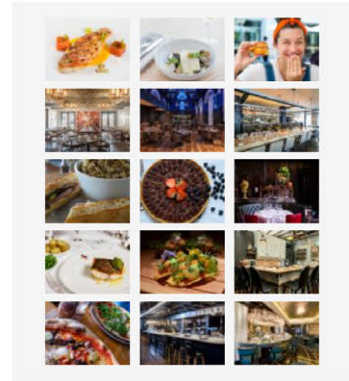
CATEGORIES

Select Category ▾

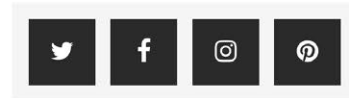
ARCHIVES

Select Month ▾

RESTAURANTS



STAY CONNECTED



I stand in the 'gym' – an acre of walled garden, but there's also a 700-acre estate with blackcurrants and apples – as he shows us how to do a particularly challenging exercise: he's 'playing' the battle ropes as if he were hitting a drum. I have a horrible feeling this is going to be way out of my comfort zone. "It's not a boot camp. There's no getting up at 6am," he says. Will I last the course?

So here's an overview of what happens during the retreat. My morning starts at 8am with a juice – perhaps something fresh and green, like kale and apple. Over the days, I find myself doing the following. Pad work (sparring with a boxing partner. It's good for coordination.) Slamming medicine balls onto the ground. (Just think of someone I don't like...) High intensity circuit training in the apple orchard (hay bales being used for step ups). Then some short, sharp Tabata – which is interval training. It makes me tired even to write about it.

In other sessions, James adds some resistance exercises with TRX straps looped around a tree trunk. (These are a bit like oversized elastic bands.) Plus there's a bit of running down the garden with kettle weights. A few burpees (military exercises; also known as squat thrusts). And some HIIT – high intensity interval training. Followed by stretch work in another al fresco room.

 [Target Fitness Exercising](#)

To cap it off, I have a go on the trigger point roller – a torture devised to help people maximize the benefits of exercise. (Basically, you roll on a foam roller. In agony.) Then the Inspirational fifty-somethings go for a swim in the outdoor pool while I pretend I have some very important emails to read. Yes, people do more than five hours' exercise a day.

Soon my muscles are screaming, 'I hate you too,' and my brain is saying, 'You're wonder woman for doing this.' Thankfully there are lots of gentler activities to distract me. There are nutritional seminars (although they are a bit basic for my liking). A sushi workshop. (The Target chef, Ellie Stagg, is a dab hand at making maki; I'm not so good.)

There's also restorative yoga with Charli Fletcher, a super supple ballet dancer. She teaches Vinyasa (an energizing, power yoga) and Yin (restorative yoga) in a squash court that doubles as an exercise studio. I find myself doing pigeon pose (leg in front, squashed under the other), dancer's pose (leg up in the air behind me), an advanced side angle (stretching for the ceiling like a wannabe ballet dancer), bridge (leg up in the air a different way) and bow (how to look like an archer's bow). Cue for another round of applause.

 [Target Fitness Yoga](#)

Then there's the really easy bit. Like lolling in the sauna and Jacuzzi. And chilling in bed when I retire at 9pm, shattered. My bed is a pretty nice place. The retreat accommodation is in the characterful erstwhile stable block of an 1870s mansion, and guests sleep in onetime loose boxes and the like. There's a courtyard and Victorian gothic clock tower, but also under-floor heating and freestanding bath tubs. Eight bedrooms sleeping 22 people. And an interior that's best described as John Lewis trying to do hip – and includes Ikea and old family furnishings. It's not super luxury, but it's all comfortable.

The other easy peasy bit is the food. Moving my jaw is my kind of exercise. Luckily Target is rabidly anti-diet. So we get copious quantities of very good food, and a lighter supper. It's cooked by the private chef, deliciously Ellie. She creates exotic dishes like Malaysian fish curry with cauliflower "rice", and raw food flapjacks. Korean Bibimbap and goat's cheese risotto. Her food is beautifully presented and made with care.

It's also 'clean' eating, apparently. Which means eating super fresh and natural produce consistently. She's into free range and sustainability, 60 per cent of the food she prepares is organic, and as much as possible is home grown. (She even brings her own micro herbs, pea shoots etc. with her.)

 [Target Fitness Stretching](#)

What are the bits of the retreat experience that could be improved? My muscles. I have exercised every muscle, including ones that I never knew existed. Additionally, there are no beauty treatments, no dedicated spa and, OMG, no massage for those aching muscles. But, as James says, it's a fitness and nutrition based break: more about education than pampering therapies.

It's also an enforced digital detox, as the Wi-Fi is so patchy. Also, sadly I don't think I can credit myself with having done a five-day retreat.... it's really just three days – of seriously concentrated exercise – with merely a couple of hours on the first and last days.

What's tip-top? For those who put their all into it, it's possible to leave the retreat lean, lithe and puma-fit. Nothing is too much trouble for James – he's always there to answer questions and help out. I've built my core (cue for another round of applause) so I leave in far better shape than when I arrived. James gives me a bespoke exercise programme to take away, and one which doesn't necessitate my joining a gym.

My body has been thoroughly challenged and my joints have held up: a source of pride on both counts. I take away a new knowledge of how to apply myself to exercise. I can now do planks, jump squats, super man and lunges. Hey, I even know what pad work and tabata mean. And I can do burpees...

The Details:

Target Fitness Retreats, The Colloquy, Herefordshire, HR5 3JA, England.

Tel: +44 (0)1494 958488

Website: www.targetfitnessretreats.com

Email: info@targetfitnessretreats.com

Insider Tip:

Bag room 7. It has a super king four-poster, a little dressing room, a bath on the mezzanine. And it's in the original carriage room.

Cost: £1,300 single occupancy. £1,050 based on two people sharing. Includes all meals, training and other activities. Target also run retreats in Somerset and Spain.

Reviewer's Rating: 7/10

Author Bio:

Caroline Phillips is an award-winning freelance journalist based in London.

Photographs courtesy of Target Fitness Retreats



« PREVIOUS
Enjoy Calm Amidst Chaos At Hotel
Borobudur, Jakarta

NEXT »
The Home Spa That Puts The Ahh In
Spa



RELATED ARTICLES



**A Cultural Visit To The Isle
Of Wight**



**Chamberlain's Of London
Restaurant**



**Afternoon Tea At The
Chelsea Harbour Hotel**

BE THE FIRST TO COMMENT

Leave a Reply

Your email address will not be published.

Comment

Name *

Email *

Website

Save my name, email, and website in this browser for the next time I comment.

POST COMMENT

This site uses Akismet to reduce spam. [Learn how your comment data is processed.](#)

