

healthy, disciplined life?’ Developing this awareness is key to making changes, she says. ‘We don’t class ourselves as a boot camp. We teach a balanced lifestyle and educate our guests on mindful living.’

FIND THE WORKOUT REGIME YOU LOVE

While the structure of a retreat means no workout shirking, the professionals agree that staying consistent back home is key. By offering a range of exercise classes, guests have a chance to find a workout they love. Founder of fitness retreat thirtyeightdegreesnorth.com James Davis recommends making the most of the opportunity to try new forms of exercise until you find one that resonates. ‘A question we often get asked is what’s the best workout to do. We can say what will give you the best bang for your buck, but if you don’t enjoy it there’s no point, you’re not going to be motivated to do it at home. It’s about finding something you can learn to love.’

James also highlights the importance of scheduling workouts. ‘Our clients tend to be from a corporate background and the one thing that they’re lacking in their lives is time. We’ll always challenge them on that – are you really not able to find any time in your day? Then we put practical steps in place. Schedule your workout in your diary, or find some accountability – that could be a session once a week with a personal trainer, finding a workout buddy, or joining a class.’

LEARN THE ART OF CONSCIOUS EATING

Teaching conscious eating and self control are two key pillars at the Sussex-based Slimmeria Retreats (slimmeria.com), which specialise in weightloss. ‘We teach people discipline and practicality, which they can take on their journey after the retreat,’ says Slimmeria’s Debbie Schogger. ‘On a typical day, guests wake up with a hot water and lemon, then take a coastal walk, followed by a fresh juice breakfast, a fitness class, yoga, then a raw salad for lunch. The afternoon is for spa treatments, fruit tea and a hot vegetable dinner. We constantly demonstrate how little people need to eat, yet can still function and continue their everyday routine. There is no need to overindulge, which we emphasize through conscious eating and self-control.’

Not every retreat offers a stringent weightloss plan, however. While thirtyeightdegreesnorth.com has a ‘sensible and sustainable’ approach which allows people to order anything from grilled salmon to burger and chips, The Body Camp opts for a mainly vegan menu. ‘We have a plant-based kitchen and before you know it, our guests just start feeling better,’ says Kate Whale. ‘The weight drops off, their energy levels are better, their skin looks better and their digestion is better.’ She recommends adopting a Monday to Friday plant-based approach at home. ‘What we believe is that eating a mainly meat and dairy-free diet is hugely beneficial for your body.’

She also recommends taking a long, hard look at your breakfast choices. ‘Are you having jam on white toast which



Above: The entrance hall at specialist weightloss retreat Slimmeria in East Sussex; the new yoga studio at Body Camp Mallorca (right)



‘You need to find your “why”, as that’s what’s going to get you up in the morning’

provides nothing other than a quick carb and sugar hit, followed by a load of coffee which is exhausting you? Start making simple changes like a natural breakfast; an avocado on rye, plus some coconut yogurt and berries. That’s a complete meal – sustaining and nourishing.’

UNLOCK YOUR MOTIVATION

Beyond the cardio and the weights and the sensible food choices, the key to sustainable change is unlocking your most profound motivations, says James Davis. ‘Drill down into your reasons for wanting to change. Often there will be a bigger reason than just wanting to get fit or lose weight – and sometimes you have to ask yourself “why” five times to access it. I once coached a guy who said he wanted to get his fitness back, but when we drilled down, he said his son was a talented footballer who had been injured, and that he wanted to be fit enough to play with him to help him get back to a professional level. That was his “why”. That’s what’s going to get you up in the morning, when it’s raining in December and the alarm goes off at 5.30am.’ ■