

legs (and everything else) after a day touring in the mountains.

Did the end justify the means? All that sun, snow and fresh air combined with eight hours exercise a day really cured the winter blues.

Pound for pound? Incredibly good value considering the price of the average ski holiday. There's life coaching, deep tissue massage, beauty treatments, trips to thermal hot springs and, of course, one-to-one ski tuition.

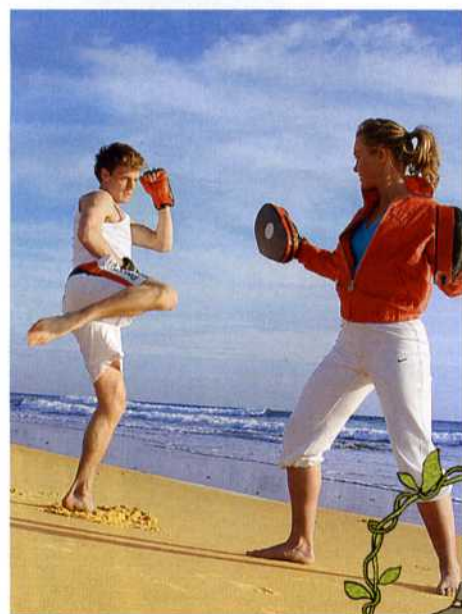
Get me there: A four day Winter Chillout retreat starts from £995 including transfers from Martigny to Verbier. Seven days from £1,450. Flights not included. For more information call + 41765163447, email info@intouchlifestyles.com. Daily flights to Geneva with easyJet. For prices check easyjet.co.uk

WILD FITNESS, Baraka House, Watamu, Kenya

The big idea: Helping sluggish city-dwellers to rediscover health and fitness in a natural environment.

Sweat or starve: Think three exercise sessions a day - from yoga and kick-boxing on the beach, to running through jungles. Food is organic, nutritionally balanced and plentiful.

The 'ow!' factor: No pain, no gain but everyone can work at their own pace.



Did the end justify the means? Absolutely. You will return with improved posture, strength, stamina and suppleness. And you will be evangelical about the benefits of exercise.

Pound for pound? It sounds pricey but worth double.

Get me there: A nine-day kick-start course costs £2,200pp based on two sharing. Contact www.wildfitness.com



IN SPA RETREAT, Jnane Tsamsna, The Palmerie, Marakesh, Morocco

The big idea: Combines yoga, hiking, personal training and massage with cleansing nutrition - all in super-luxe surroundings.

Sweat or starve: You won't go hungry but the food is virtuous - sugar, gluten, salt, dairy and wheat-free.

The 'ow!' factor: Caters to all levels of fitness so if you want to feel the burn, you can. Getting up for the 7am yoga class was the toughest challenge. Fitness guru Christina Howells recently put Ralph Fiennes through his paces.

Did the ends justify the means? Yes, you'll feel lighter, brighter and tighter. The hikes in the Atlas mountains are exhilarating.

Pound for pound? With prices starting from



£1,950 per week (excluding flights), it's on the steep side but it's life-changing stuff.

Get me there: see www.inspa-retreats.com or call 0845 458 0723

RANCHO LA PUERTA, Baja California, Mexico

The big idea: for stressed out bunnies who come for a mix of exercise and meditation

Sweat or starve: Build up an appetite for the organically grown food with the daily 6am hike - progressing from rolling hills to mountain climbs. Hourly classes focus on fitness or renewal so once you've worked your legs and glutes, you can meditate or learn salsa dancing.

The 'ow!' factor: The Ranch's philosophy is that a hammock is as important as an exercise mat. Phew.

Did the end justify the means? Absolutely. You'll feel stronger and leaner with improved posture plus you will have found that elusive inner calm.

Pound for pound? An experience of a lifetime, no matter what time of life you are in

Get me there: Based on the level of accommodation you choose, the seven-day programme starts at \$2,535 (not including tax) per person per week, up to \$3,835 (not including tax) per person per week. See www.rancholapuerta.com. Buy tickets from American Airlines, www.aa.com

and you'll need...



Fitbug pedometer with online personal trainer, from £22 per day for membership, www.fitbug.co.uk

White-hooded top with blue lining, £65, RKR Sport, 0870 084 9118



Camelback Hydropack, £19.99, Blacks, 0800 056 0127 or www.blacks.co.uk

Red Symbio shoe, Salomon, £75, 0800 389 4350



Turquoise shorts with black stripe, £19.99, Ellesse, 020 8970 2492

Reebok 5kg chrome dumb bell set, £14.99, Argos, 0870 600 2020



Calorie jump skipping rope - counts the calories while you are skipping, £14.95, Paramount Zone, 0870 011 3206.



Arnica salve, £6.95, Neal's Yard Remedies, 01747 834 634

Black plus fours, £48 with zipped jacket, £75, RKR Sport as before