

Writer Andre Cooray

Adventure and Sports Getaways

Unleash your inner adventurer and reach all your physical goals by going on an active holiday

Why sit on your butt all holiday when you can train to conquer a mountain, run a marathon or participate in an equally meaningful adrenaline-pumping event? Many men are attracted to adventure and sports retreats for this very reason. The best part is you will return to work super fit, mentally charged and one step closer to achieving your physical goals.

Here are some of our favourite heavy-duty adventure and sports getaways and centres, as well as useful tips on how to prepare for your next extreme challenge. As they say, 'go big or go home'.

IRONMAN FIT

"As men, we all love that feeling of power, strength and achievement that comes from sport," says Chris McCormack, executive chairman of Thanyapura and four-time triathlon world champion. "Sports resorts cater to the very core of every man, our competitive edge and our desire for pushing ourselves to the limit to find out how far or fast we can go."

So if your idea of a holiday is to train like a pro, Thanyapura Phuket, a luxury sports retreat with its range of sporting academies, including one for triathlons led by professional athletes, is designed for you. Spanning across 23 hectares and nestled in a rainforest and surrounded by mountains, the resort's facilities include a 50-metre Olympic swimming pool and a 500-metre cushioned athletics track.

McCormack's top advice for attempting a climb like Mount Everest is to build up your aerobic base first with long slow rides and runs without increasing your heart rate. "Keep it very steady and slowly increase the length of your sessions, then start mixing it up with speed and fartlek type sessions to add variety and pace," he says. "Climbing a mountain is all about having a really



strong aerobic base as well as strength and conditioning."

EMOTIONAL RELEASE

Is there an area of weakness in your fitness training routine you need to work on? If so, a place like Aro Hā wellness retreat can help you identify and improve it. Located on a sub-alpine terrace on the South Island of New Zealand, it caters to those keen on adventure, results-oriented fitness, alternative health and self-development. "Often there is kind of an emotional rollercoaster that goes along with shaking up our lives," says Damian Chaparro, managing partner and retreat leader at Aro Hā.

Chaparro describes being in a fresh

environment and places where you're physically working quite hard as "a powerful (emotional) door opener". "A lot of us travel subconsciously probably for that reason – we just get a really objective view on our own lives on what's important," he states. "[For] most of us, when we are leading up to a big event, we are often working harder in our professional lives so we have really limited time to do a lot of preparation."

So Chaparro highly recommends doing high intensity interval training because it produces excellent physical results in a relatively short period of time. He also suggests doing some intermittent fasting to support your training. More specifically, try a single day micro-fast followed by eating healthy the rest of the week.

"Mental fortitude...and a strong desire to succeed are vital to all extreme expeditions"

~ Rob Murray John

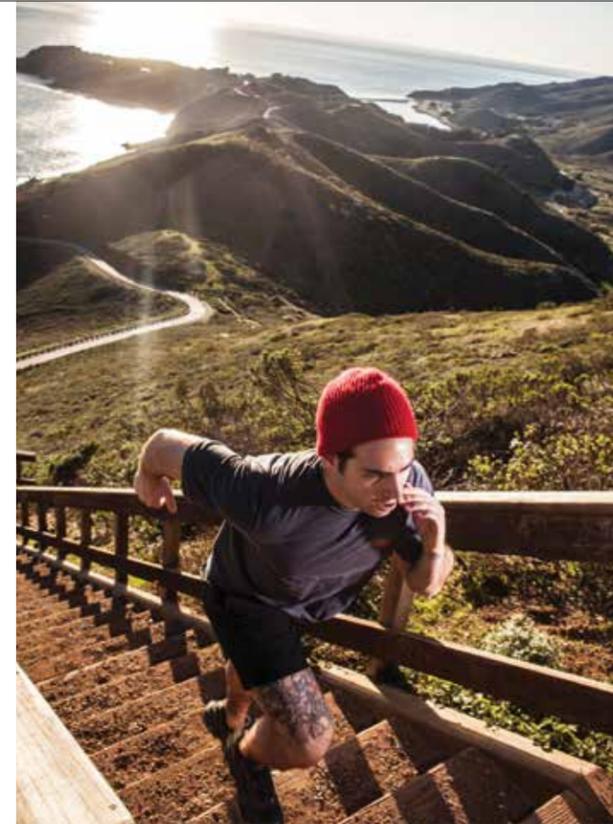
EPIC JOURNEYS

From traversing the jungles of West Papua to climbing Borneo's Mount Kinabalu, and hunting with eagles on horseback in Mongolia's western region of Bayan-Ölgii, Epic Tomato's expeditions cater for the inner adventurer in every man. Its Epic Weekend programme gives clients a taste of extreme exploring – be it a desert, jungle or polar region. "It's these extreme weekend experiences that have redefined the office water-cooler question 'so how was your weekend'," says Rob Murray John, head of operations at Epic Tomato.

For scaling summits John recommends preparing for all types of conditions. For example, practise using travel on crampons over a wide variety of surfaces, including slush, ice, pea gravel, rock and deep snow. He also says to keep motivated and determined because you have to spend long periods of your time in tents waiting for inclement weather conditions to pass. "Mental fortitude, an ability to roll with whatever Mother Nature throws at you, and above all a strong desire to succeed are all vital to all extreme expeditions," he explains.

AIM HIGH

Whether it's an intrepid trek, a triathlon or ultra marathon, it's great to be trained by a professional who has already achieved the level of success you're aiming for. Bangkok-based fitness centre Fitcorp Asia does exactly this and structures programmes



and runs global health retreats to help individuals reach a range of adventure and sports objectives. "They have a success mindset and are always out to overcome challenges in their career...and I think that automatically extends to their physical pursuits," says the founder of Fitcorp Global Daniel Remon of his high-achieving clients.

Remon's number one tip is 'don't leave it too late' by planning at least a few months ahead. "So whether it is business or in your physical endeavours, the old saying 'if you fail to plan, you plan to fail' is true," he adds. "Having a well balanced and not just a high intensity training programme that is structured and incorporates nutrition, recovery and sleep is also really essential."

The Aspire Club, which is part of Fitcorp Asia, has its own altitude chamber. With prolonged use and extended consistent exposure at the right levels, Remon says you can increase your oxygen carrying capacity. "You also get short-term performance benefits because you are able to work a lot harder at a higher altitude than you are at sea level

without the extra stress on joints," he says.

POINT BREAK

Talalla Surf Retreat in Sri Lanka has the right balance of scary throw-you-in-the-deep-end surfing and meditative relaxation. "Surfing promotes a healthy lifestyle because to surf better, we want to eat well and be in good physical condition so we can surf bigger waves, longer and better," says Timothy Dodd, one of the head coaches at Talalla. "My biggest tip is mind over matter with surfing so we can teach the physical skills while we are here, but it is a game of overcoming your fears."

Beginners are taken to ride the unbroken waves as opposed to the easier-to-surf broken waves in a safely controlled environment. Dodd says that a big misconception is that surfing is for a select few and that if you start after the age of 15 you can't master it. "It is completely wrong; we have people from 25 up to 45 years old coming and surfing," he says. For advanced surfers, the resort films your performance too. 🌿

ROLF BRENNER/CORBIS; WONWOO LEE/CORBIS