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Health Matters 360, Rou Estate, Corfu



This is a new company with a really intelligent approach to general well-being. The 360 team realises that there is limited benefit in going to a bootcamp or a retreat if it only addresses one particular aspect of your health in isolation. It's a bit like when someone waxes lyrical to you about this amazing spa where they lost three stones and you wonder when that holiday might have taken place because, erm, there seems to have been some serious weight gain in the interval, which somewhat reduces the impact of that rave review.

What Health Matters 360 does is take a more integrated approach in order to give clients the tools to adopt a healthier lifestyle that is sustainable long term. Sustainability is the key. Of course, we could all lose three stone on a bootcamp if some Rosa Klebb clone was ordering us up at 6am to exercise and feeding us nothing but beansprouts but nobody can keep that up once you get home. These "health hubs" are all about teaching you how to incorporate healthier food, attitudes and activities into your everyday life. Sounds good to me.

So 360 places a lot of emphasis on nutrition and mind matters. The schedule includes absolutely fascinating sessions on foods, what combinations work, what foods are good for you (turkey is better than chicken, for example, because it is high in tryptophan, which the body uses to make serotonin, the "happy hormone", and, contrary to popular wisdom, eggs do not raise cholesterol levels). Sessions also look at how to choose wisely from restaurant menus – as so many of us eat out now this is sensible and, again, emphasises the company's desire to keep things sustainable.

On my week, people shied away from the mind matters and relaxation sessions, which was a real shame. I thought they were excellent and mental attitude has got to be the key to implementing changes for a better lifestyle. These sessions dealt with things such as how to break bad habits, how to sleep better, how to have healthier relationships with people and how to pinpoint and change areas of your life that aren't working properly. I hate anything touchy feely. I don't do group hugs but although these were group sessions, you didn't have to share any information. We all wrote our responses in our personal folders. It was all very private and, for me, that meant much more rewarding.

There were also one-on-one sessions with the mind and nutrition experts so you could discuss issues raised in group sessions privately and the team were always on hand and willing to chat. I really rated their advice.

There was also a fitness programme but it seemed to be aimed mainly at beginners. A power walk in the morning, one hour of yoga and one evening aerobic session. Personally, I would have liked more exercise but it is a young company and they accepted feedback very positively so I am hopeful they will be able to develop the programme to meet the needs of fitter clients. There are plans to do workouts on the beach, for example, which would be fun.

Afternoons were mainly left free, which was great because Rou Estate, where the courses are based, has an amazing pool that is crying out to be lain beside. The estate is a very peaceful place, the perfect bolthole to hunker down and reflect on where your life's going.

The company also does health hubs in the UK. I would recommend them highly. I learned a lot during my week with them. I think it is a clever approach to counter the stresses of modern living.

PROS

- Intelligent integrated approach to health
- Very knowledgeable experts
- Brilliant support notes, so often spas don't give you any back-up to help you when you get home

CONS

- Lunch and dinner are communal, could get fraught if factions appear in the group
- Fitness element was a bit lacking on my week but they may well address this for future trips

Best for: people who need a health kickstart but don't want a bootcamp where they will be treated like a halfwit and told precisely what to do 24-7

Want more info? Visit the website healthmatters360.co.uk

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