

Get fit AND relax?

Yes, you really can! Four readers prove that fun and fitness can mix on holiday… By Afsheen Shaikh

'Cycling is a fantastic way to see and experience a country'



Dawn Rollins, 43, a chartered accountant from Norwich, says she's a dedicated biker babe

'I'm not one for lounging on a beach, so for the past few years I've been going on biking holidays with my husband, usually for a fortnight at a time. I love it – I'd go for longer if I could!

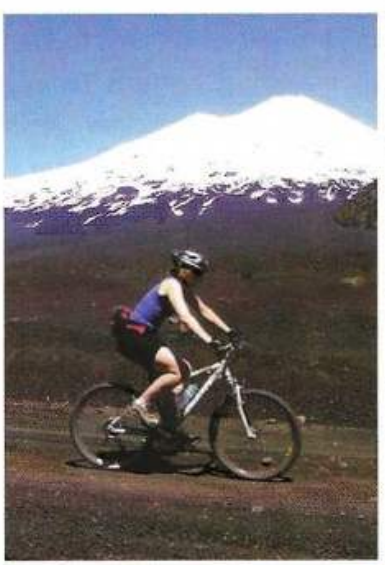
'We've been cycling with Saddle Skeddaddle for eight years. They really look after you so can just sit back, pedal and enjoy yourself. They also offer tailor-made trips and you can either hire bikes or take your own.

'An average day begins with a leisurely breakfast before you set out on an adventure. You can cycle in a group and still have time for yourself if you fancy a quiet moment alone.

'You don't need to be mega-fit to go on this type of holiday. There are people of all ages with varying levels of experience

'Last year, we went to Japan and New Zealand… I've got my eye on South America next year!'

Contact Saddle Skedaddle on 0191 265 1110 or at www.skedaddle.co.uk





'After a couple of days riding you feel totally revitalised'



Liz Woods, 41, a special needs teacher from Bristol thinks saddling up is soothing



'I've always been interested in riding but I've never had the opportunity to learn. I did some research and spotted Cae Iago in Wales – it's not far from Bristol so visited the owner, Lesley, who was so welcoming I booked on the spot. And I've been going regularly ever since!

'I visit Cae Iago once a month and spend a week there in the summer. It's a brilliant way to de-stress yourself. You're out in the open air, riding in beautiful surroundings with great company, and the food and accommodation is wonderful. You couldn't ask for more.

'Don't worry if you're a beginner – there's always someone on hand to give you a hand when you're feeling unsure, and the staff can help you brush and tack up your horse. At the end of a hard day you can relax in the farmhouse, take a trip to the local pub and even book yourself a relaxing massage.'

Contact Cae Iago Riding Holidays on 01558 650303 or at www.caeiago.co.uk



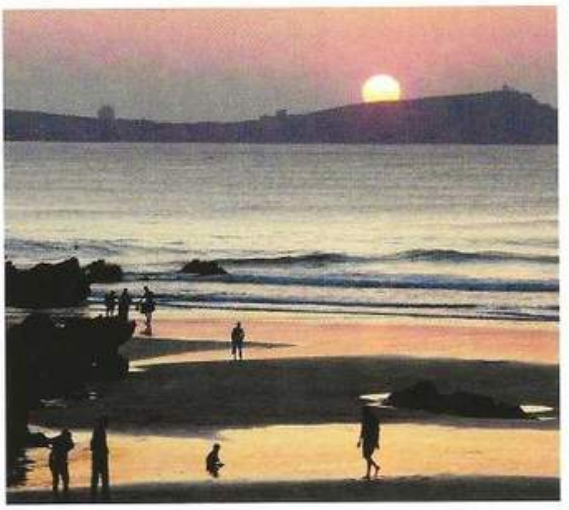
Photography Ruth Jenkinson

'I felt so energised by my surfing experience, now I do other physical activities, too – it's changed my life'



Sandra Wilson, 54, from Bristol spends her holidays riding the waves





'I like to keep fit and when a friend told me about a surfing lesson she'd had, she inspired me to give it a go.

'While on holiday in Newquay I visited Lusty Glaze, a privately owned beach. The centre there runs women-only surfing courses, as well as Surf and De-Stress days. It felt safe and well managed, and they welcome people of all ages so I didn't feel intimidated. In fact, I couldn't wait for my first lesson!

I was hooked from the start, when I learned everything from safety to board etiquette – how to use it and stay on. I was tired at first but it's a lot of fun and keeps you healthy. Being in the water is such an experience and when you've tried it, you want to do it again.

'I loved it so much I've been back several times! I love the fact that these days I spend my holidays being active rather than vegetating.'

Contact the centre on 01637 872444/ 878718 or at www.lustyglaze.co.uk

'The running weekends make me feel much fitter, healthier and more motivated'







Anne Curtis, 43, a book-keeper from Epping enjoys her weekends in the fast lane

'I wanted to improve my fitness levels when I started gaining weight last year. I love the open-air so I decided to try running and booked myself on a motivational weekend course.

'The Running Inn appealed because it's managed by qualified personal trainers, so I knew I'd be in safe hands. I went alone, but it wasn't daunting as it's all so well planned. On the first day we did group exercises and coaching to warm up for a longer run the next day.

'There are healthy, filling meals and socialising in the evening. The rooms have stunning sea views and there's self catering if you want to cook for yourself.

'You don't have to be a fitness fanatic as all levels are catered for – there's even a course for 50+ runners. If I can do it, so can you.'

Contact The Running Inn on 01323 720 640 or at www.therunninginn.com

More great ideas...



Stretch yourself

• Escape to Yoga Farm, set in the gorgeous surroundings of the Cornish countryside. It's open throughout the year, offering a range of yoga retreats and workshops for people of all levels. For more information, visit www.yogafarm.co.uk or call 01736 361301. Feeling more adventurous? Try a package from Beyond who specialise in yoga breaks abroad. Call 020 7226 4044 or visit www.beyondretreats.co.uk

Walk this way



• Paula Knight, 41, our reader panellist loves her walking weekends. Take a leaf out of her book and treat yourself to a luxury walking break courtesy of The Lake District Hotels Ltd. No tents, nasty packed lunches or fear of getting lost, just gorgeous accommodation in family-run hotels, luxury picnics and walking in intimate groups, with an experienced guide. Call 01768 482444 or visit www.lakedistricthotels.net

Dive in



• You don't have to travel to exotic locations abroad to go scuba diving – why not try an exhilarating UK diving break? You can learn to dive with PADI (Professional Association of Diving Instructors), the largest dive training organisation. They run two-night breaks in various locations including the Orkney Islands and Portland in Dorset. Visit www.padi.co.uk for more information or call 0117 300 7234.

JUST FOR YOU

PADI has teamed up with Health Plus to offer you a chance to try a Discovery Scuba Diving Experience with a **special 2-for-1 introductory offer.** To take advantage of this great deal, visit **www.padi.co.uk/two4one** to locate your nearest PADI participating Dive Centre. For any other diving information call **0117 300 7802.**