



Not Just Desert

By Elyse Glickman

Can you put ‘fitness boot camp’ and ‘retreat’ in the same sentence? The fitness gurus of The Pinnacle on the West Coast think so. Here’s a sample of how Robin Sullivan, Meredith Miller and Lisa Austin, trainers at The Pinnacle, give the gift of fitness over a weekend in Palm Springs.

Ah... what to give the woman who has it all? Chances are, many of us treat our families—and ourselves—to a wide variety of indulgences, all in the guise of celebration. From turkey with cornbread stuffing, to buttery mashed potatoes, to calorie-rich desserts, delicious holiday fare comes at a price. In this situation, the best gift we can give ourselves is to work our bodies back into pre-holiday form. But how?

A fitness retreat, or fitness boot camp, is a great one-stop shopping gift, since those running the retreat provide everything from actual workouts, to health and nutrition advice, to satisfying low-calorie meals and guidance on how to maintain the healthy flow at home.

Sullivan, Miller and Austin believe that sensible fitness and nutrition shouldn’t be only for the rich and famous. From that notion comes The Pinnacle, a Palm Springs-based desert fitness retreat that is similar to a boot camp.

Though the Desert House Inn at The Pinnacle is a charming place to call base camp, with stylish and comfortable accommodations, you’ll barely spend any time there. The days begin with warm-up yoga and a very dense breakfast, and continue with intense hikes into gorgeous but challenging spots, such as the Indian Canyons and the San Jacinto Mountains. After an organic, vegetarian lunch, the exercise continues with water aerobics, circuit training, more yoga and anything else the gals can pack in. The day ends with after-dinner discussions on such topics as cardiovascular fitness and meditation.

According to Sullivan, “The Pinnacle is personalized to meet the needs of each individual. The end result is designed to give you the tools needed to inspire and maintain a healthy lifestyle.”

Whether you’re a beginner or a seasoned athlete, The Pinnacle has one solid goal for you: To emerge from the experience with an improved knowledge of health and fitness that you can use in your everyday life. Although participating in a weekend

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retreat is the best way to achieve this, you can certainly start your own boot camp experience on the right foot with some exercises proposed by the experts.

Water Aerobics

Water provides a natural form of resistance but is easy on the joints.

- 1. High knees – Jump up and down in the shallow end of the pool, alternating between the right and left legs.
- 2. Butt kicks – Alternately kick the left and right legs back, in an attempt to kick your own derrière.
- 3. Jumping jacks – The water adds another dimension of resistance and strengthening beyond traditional land-based ‘jacks.’
- 4. Spiderman crawl – With your legs in a split against the pool’s wall and your arms out holding on to its edge, crawl sideways along the perimeter of the pool.

Hiking

To get the most out of your hike, work proactively against injuries by following these tips:

- 1. Stretch fully before you begin.
- 2. Take a moment in the middle of the hike, after walking one mile, to stretch your back and hips.
- 3. Hike using small steps.
- 4. Those who want a challenge can practice interval training when moving upward.
- 5. Maintain a low center of gravity when you are hiking downhill.
- 6. Bring arms above your head and wiggle your fingers every once in a while to prevent and ease swelling.
- 7. Hydrate the day prior to your hike.
- 8. Drink water every three minutes during your hike.

At-Home Circuit Training

Did you know both your furniture and your determination can act as a substitute for fancy health club-style equipment? A busy schedule is not an excuse to let yourself go. Get to work with the following exercises:

- 1. Tricep dips on a chair
- 2. Chest presses on a chair
- 3. Step-ups on a chair
- 4. Lunges
- 5. Squats
- 6. Split jumps
- 7. Squat jumps

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For more information on the three-day Pinnacle retreat, visit ThePinnacleChallenge.com.