

SPECIAL
WELLNESS
REPORT

Balancing Act

The global wellness industry may be quick to adopt the latest advances in technology—as evinced by the trend for cryotherapy to treat skin and muscle fatigue—but at the same time it is also reacting against our dependence on them. Multi-day programs aim to fix sleeping patterns broken by our high-tech lives, and with the nonstop stimulation of our phones and computers, more operators, spas, and resorts are proclaiming the importance of going off the grid. Here, we outline a myriad of ways to harness technology for your benefit while countering its negative effects.

By Judy Chapman



PLAYING THE WILD CARD

For a unique mental and physical challenge, the tailored Get Lost adventures by luxury travel company **Black Tomato** (blacktomato.com) promise a Bear Grylls-style immersion into the great outdoors, minus the extreme eating. Guests can decide how “lost” they would like to be and pick out the kind of terrain—either jungle, polar, desert, mountain, or coastal—for the adventure. But the rest is entirely up to Black Tomato, which will supply travelers with the necessary training and technical equipment before dispatching them to a remote area that could be anywhere in the world. As a support team keeps careful watch from a distance, participants must find their own way out via a series of checkpoints to claim a reward at the end of the expedition. It’s billed as a mindful way to engage with new surroundings and a chance for honest self-discovery. As Black Tomato co-founder Tom Marchant explains, “We believe there’s something about true disconnection from both technology and from the traditional format of luxury travel—guides, schedules, and so on—that allows us to tap into this new state of mindfulness.”

Walking amid
the sand dunes
of Namibia.



COLD COMFORT

Winter may not have arrived in Hong Kong just yet, but you can now experience the bracing cold at **The Ritz-Carlton Spa** (ritzcarlton.com), which has partnered with London-based skincare label **TIISKIN** to launch a trio of brand-new cryotherapy facial and massage treatments. Using purified air chilled to -30°C , the exclusive 60- or 90-minute facials are suited to jet-setters and residents exposed to higher levels of pollution; extremely low temperatures have the effect of exfoliating dead cells, reducing puffiness, firming up the skin, and helping to attain a brighter complexion. Meanwhile, sports enthusiasts can opt for a 60-, 90-, or 120-minute session that combines full-body cryotherapy with deep-tissue and sports massages to soothe fatigued muscles. The final offering is a half-hour cryotherapy energy cellulite treatment—intended to stimulate micro-circulation and the lymphatic system—which can be added on to other spa therapies.

CALIFORNIA DREAMING

The **Four Seasons Hotel Los Angeles at Beverly Hills** (fourseasons.com) has recently added a Wellness Room category to its choice of guest quarters. A tie-up between the property and health-centric residential developer Delos, the five rooms and two suites on the fourth-floor spa level were designed with a range of features to improve guests’ physical and emotional wellbeing. These include circadian lighting to energize the body by day and enhance sleep quality by night, an air purification system, plus showers fitted with a device to reduce chlorine levels. Among the extra in-room amenities are exercise equipment, yoga mats, and meditation videos by bestselling author and alternative medicine advocate Deepak Chopra, while guests also have access to sleep and nutrition programs developed by the Cleveland Clinic.



COURTESY OF BLACK TOMATO; COURTESY OF FOUR SEASONS HOTELS AND RESORTS; COURTESY OF THE RITZ-CARLTON, HONG KONG

SNOOZE CONTROL

With sleep deprivation on the rise, luxury hospitality and wellness brands around the world have introduced a series of treatments and retreat programs that can offset jetlag and relieve even the most long-suffering insomniac.

Sleep Treatments

Luxury skincare and wellness brand ESPA collaborated with binaural rhythm experts—who stimulate the brain through differences in frequency between the left and right ears—to devise the high-tech Sleep Ritual now offered at **ESPA Life at Corinthia London** (espalifeatcorinthia.com). The two-hour experience starts with abdominal yogic breathing and visualization before moving on to a scalp and hot-stone massage. Spa-goers then listen to binaural rhythm audio as the therapist performs acupressure on the feet.

Guests at **The Peninsula Hong Kong** (peninsula.com) can unwind through the 120-minute Peninsula Sleep Ceremony, also created by ESPA. In the privacy of a candlelit spa suite, you'll be treated to an aromatic bath, meditation and deep breathing exercises to clear the mind, followed by a restorative hot-stone massage and a facial and scalp massage. Recommended for late-night arrivals, the treatment is also available at



Peninsula spas in Shanghai, Beijing, Tokyo, and New York.

Over in Thailand, the Bangkok and Chiang Mai properties of **137 Pillars Hotels and Resorts** (137pillarshotels.com) deserve a mention for the 90-minute Sleep by Design Therapy launched last year. This is enhanced by a Glyph headset playing binaural beats while a full-body massage is performed to the rhythm of your breathing patterns. Guests staying in the suites can also request a Sleepdown Service, in which a “sleep butler” and “sleep curator” prepare the room with temperature control, mood lighting, and luxury sleep amenities—including bergamot bath salts for an indulgent pre-bedtime soak.

Meanwhile, neighboring Cambodia's **Song Saa Private Island** (songsaa.com) offers the jet-lagged and insomnia-prone an antidote in its 2.5-hour Night Spa Ritual by leading British brand Ila Spa. Designed to shield the nervous system from sensory overload, the treatment cocoons spa-goers

in aromatherapy-infused body scrubs before slow, sleep-inducing Ayurvedic marma-point and facial massages.

Devised by Australian spa brand Subtle Energies, the newly launched two-hour Sleep Support Therapy at Perth's **Crown Casino Spa** (crownperth.com.au) also harnesses Ayurvedic techniques to regulate the body's natural rhythm. The treatment begins with deep pranayama breathing and a full-body massage, progressing to a marma-point facial massage—aimed at activating the pineal gland believed to regulate circadian cycles—before closing with a guided *savasana* meditation.

Sleep Retreats

Six Senses (sixsenses.com) was one of the first hospitality brands to realize that sleep was just as important to personal wellbeing as diet and exercise. Its Yogic Sleep retreats, developed with in-house yoga master Dorelal Singh, are oriented on the state

High-tech headsets are employed in 137 Pillars' Sleep by Design Therapy sessions. Below: Melbourne's Willow Urban Retreat sports a soothing, minimalistic look. Opposite, from top: The spa relaxation lounge at Maldivian resort Six Senses Laamu; a meditation class at Bali's Revivo Wellness Resort.



of consciousness known as *yoga nidra*, and comprise restful treatments and sleep-boosting amenities and cuisine. Six Senses has also collaborated with renowned sleep doctor Dr. Michael Breus to roll out a "sleep upgrade" worldwide, enhancing villas with optimal room temperatures, lighting that boosts melatonin production, organic bedding, and humidifiers for easier breathing.

If you're planning some downtime in Melbourne, consider the Sleep Deeply program at the recently opened **Willow Urban Retreat** (willowurbanretreat.com.au), a chic wellness space dedicated to yoga, movement, whole

foods, and healing. Half- or full-day itineraries balance mindful exercises with therapies that include Ayurveda, acupuncture, and holistic massage, as well as naturopathic prescribed meals. A three-day option is also available, while those staying for longer periods of time can extend the program up to six weeks.

Thailand is another top choice for sleep-centric vacations. At Koh Samui's luxury wellness sanctuary **Kamalaya** (kamalaya.com), the Sleep Enhancement program is available as a standalone offering or can be integrated into any retreat stay. It includes lifestyle consultations, treatments, healthy meals, plus activities to reduce an overactive mind and other issues that contribute to poor sleep.

In Indonesia, one of the newer arrivals to Bali's spa scene is **Revivo Wellness Resort** (revivoresorts.com). The Sleep Well retreat here teaches methods that can be easily implemented at home; after your consultation, you are prescribed a customized program that incorporates meals, activities, and a range of treatments. Expect acupuncture, Ayurveda, or reiki alongside hammock yoga and meditation. Meanwhile in Ubud, the latest offering at eco-wellness lodge **Svarga Loka** (svargalokaresort.com) is the 7-, 10- or 14-night Deep Restorative Sleep Retreat led by energy-field practitioner Eros Ferrari. The cause of poor sleep is identified and cured in daily healing sessions with Ferrari, and guests also enjoy detoxifying saunas, sound healing treatments, and pressure-point massages.

NAPTIME IN...



NEW YORK

In the city that never sleeps, you can now drop by **The Dreamery** (dreamerybycasper.com) for a 45-minute nap to recharge in a calming yet whimsical venue insulated from the frenetic pace of Lower Manhattan. Adorned with playful line drawings and star-like LED lights embedded in walls of dark blue, the space was conceived by mattress-making startup company Casper as a magical "nap lounge" for sleep-deprived locals and visitors. It has nine circular private pods fitted out with cozy bedding, sleepwear, amenities, and optional sleep audio courtesy of meditation app Headspace.

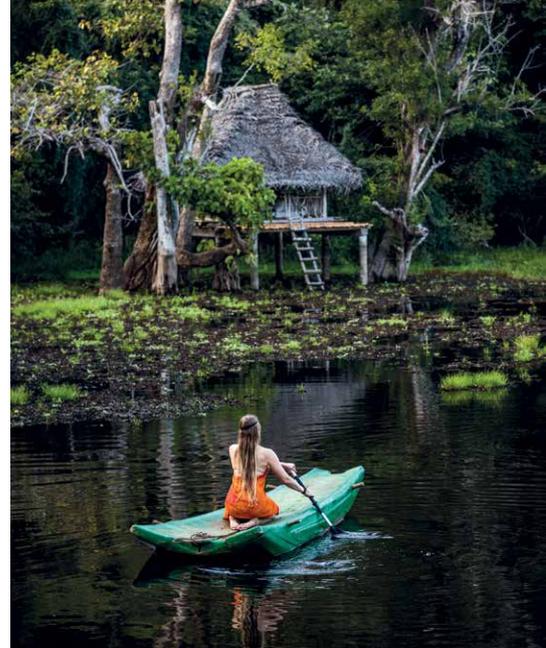


HONG KONG

Pay by the hour or by the night at the quirky **SLEEP** (sleep.io) hotel that opened last December in Hong Kong's hip Sheung Wan district. Check-in via QR code and slip into one of eight wood-lined "SLPer" capsules, which feature soft organic bedding, magnetic black-out curtains, a supply of fresh air, and even a sunrise alarm that allows you to wake naturally. A personal locker with two organic cotton towels (for a welcome hot shower) are provided, as is drinking water and locally sourced bath amenities. Says co-founder Alex Kot, "While we cannot guarantee quality sleep for every guest, we have users who say they sleep better than at home, and others who have gotten a rare deep sleep despite their insomnia."



Clockwise from left: Guests at Oneworld Ayurveda can undergo a Balinese purification ceremony; paddling to a lakeside hut at Sri Lanka's Ulpotha; Aro Ha serves a variety of farm-fresh vegetarian fare.



DIGITAL DOWNTIME

Screen-escape getaways are now a firm fixture at spas and wellness resorts across the Asia-Pacific region. From downtown Kuala Lumpur to the wilderness of New Zealand's South Island, here are a handful of places worth seeking out.

INDONESIA

At Bali's **Oneworld Retreats** (oneworldretreats.com), whose small-scale property clings to a jungly ravine outside Ubud, most yoga programs include a day of silence—when instructors switch off the Wi-Fi and ask guests to take a digital detox. In place of electronics, participants are provided journals for writing, paper for drawing, and mandalas for coloring to tease out their creative instincts. Just 20 minutes up the road, sister property **Oneworld Ayurveda** (oneworldayurveda.com) makes ignoring technology's siren call an essential part of its multi-day Panchakarma detox. No devices are permitted in any communal spaces, and cards are given out reminding guests not to use computers or phones in order for the benefits of the treatments to work on mind and body. Many practitioners report feeling so good after a day off the grid, they extend their digital detox for the rest of the retreat.

MALAYSIA

Travelers need not leave the city to cut out all screen time. At the **Mandarin Oriental Kuala Lumpur**

(mandarinoriental.com), you can check your phone in via the spa's Digital Silence Service and embark on a half-day or overnight digital disengagement. The five-hour Digital Wellness Program, developed with the help of the Mayo Clinic, consists of mindful activities like yoga and journaling to slow down the mind, complemented by healthy spa cuisine and a treatment that targets areas affected by repetitive usage of devices: the hands, wrists, shoulders, neck, temples, and eyes. On December 12, all Mandarin Oriental spas worldwide will offer Silent Night, a time when treatments are performed without music or talking. Look out for the brand's Digital Wellness Retreats that will be launched before the end of this year.

NEW ZEALAND

The last thing you'll feel like doing is checking your email when staying at **Aro Ha** (aro-ha.com), an eco-friendly luxury wellness resort outside Queenstown that overlooks the northern arm of Lake Wakatipu. On arrival, guests are advised to switch off their devices and embrace natural living



to the fullest through activities ranging from raw vegan "un-cooking classes" to hikes in the surrounding mountains. There's no Wi-Fi access in the public areas and most cellular services don't reach the remote location. Going screen-free is encouraged on Silent Day, whereas longer retreats include a Tame Your Tech session that outlines research about the use of screens and practical advice on reconfiguring them, following co-founder Damian Chaparro's tips to make them less addictive.

SRI LANKA

There is no Wi-Fi, electricity, or even phone service at **Ulpotha** (ulpotha.com), a remote village-cum-retreat four hours by car from Colombo in the island's central region. But the resultant tranquility

is wholly liberating. Centered on a 1,000-year-old spring-fed reservoir, Ulpotha immerses its guests in a daily routine of yoga, Ayurveda, and detox treatments amid an electromagnetic-free environment that encourages restful and thoughtful days. Says general manager Suzi Scott, "The program combined with a digital detox allows one to recuperate on profound levels. We notice how our guests bond with each other far more deeply than if they were distracted by their smartphones." Typically open to guests six months a year, the retreat has simple pleasures in spades: comfortable mattresses and crisp sheets in sparse but tasteful mud huts, freshly made gourmet vegan meals, and colorful birdlife on the luxuriant grounds.