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MODERN LIFE HAS SEEN STRESS—LEVELS SOAR, SO TAKING A REJUVENATING BREAK IN THE NEW YEAR IS MORE THAN JUST A LUXURY. WE'VE GOT A RANGE OF SUGGESTIONS, FROM TAKING TIME—OUT IN THE UK, TO WELLNESS RETREATS FURTHER AFIELD

“Men should go to spas for the same reasons women should – it’s time for you, looking after your body, giving yourself some mental breathing space”

Poor mental health is a symptom of modern life. The World Health Organisation states that 300 million people worldwide suffer from depression and 260 million from anxiety; hello 21st century. Unsurprisingly, high-pressured jobs can have a negative effect on wellness.

“The effects of poor wellbeing in many organisations is stark,” says Kelly Feehan, services director for CABA, the charity that supports the wellbeing of chartered accountants. New research from CABA also reveals that Brits are finding a work/life balance nearly impossible, due to work pressures and employer expectations.

“Some 68% of employees admit to checking their work emails while on leave or off sick,” Kelly says. “This needs eradicating if we’re to have happy and productive employees, with great holistic health and wellbeing.”

While a trip to a spa or taking up yoga isn’t a quick-fix cure, it’s becoming increasingly important to pay attention to wellbeing – and that goes for men as well as women.

“Men should go to spas for the same reasons women should – it’s time for you, looking after your body, giving yourself some mental breathing space and getting expert guidance if you want it,” says Abi Wright, founder of Spabreaks.com

"We are beginning to talk more about men's mental health, and I think the 21st century man is – broadly speaking – much more open to the idea of spa treatments and taking care of their health and wellbeing," she continues. "In turn, spas are responding by designing themselves with a more gender neutral environment, and offering packages and treatments that are either specifically for men or for both men and women."

Abi also emphasises that spas are much more than a luxury indulgence.

"Luxury beauty experiences shouldn't be dismissed as not being helpful for wellbeing as well – it's all time out doing something for yourself, and from a psychological point of view that's invaluable," she says.

"However, that's only one small fraction of the spa experience, and there are an increasing number that offer a much more health-oriented service in terms of nutrition, treatments and fitness."

Rad Kaim, founder of Yoga4Men, which runs classes in London and Los Angeles, also highlights both the physical and the mental benefits of the sport.

"Yoga classes certainly make you sweat, tone your muscles and stretch your tight hamstrings," he says. "However, if you delve a little deeper into some of the philosophy behind the breathing and poses, you can empower and heal your life by releasing conscious and subconscious fears that cause stress, worry and anxiety."

"When I first started practising yoga I would usually see a few men in a class of 20 women, so I made it my mission to make yoga more accessible to the male community," he finishes.

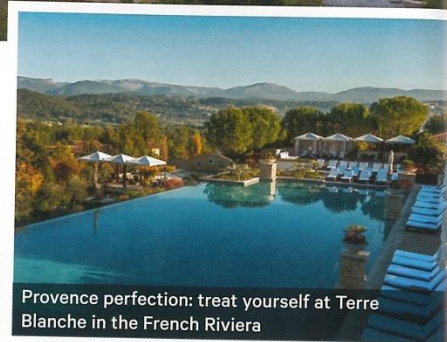
With all that in mind, CALIBRE has compiled its top 10 re-energising yoga and spa havens, both in the UK and further afield...



Provence perfection

Steal away to the countryside of the French Riviera at five-star resort Terre Blanche. Set within a stunning Provençal Bastide, or fortified town, its two-storey spa features unique architecture and contemporary art, and a wealth of treatment rooms and pools, including a relaxation room with a tropical shower and an ice fountain. The infinity pool overlooks the resort, with a breathtaking panorama of the hills and their perched villages.

The lowdown: From £404 per night for two people, including breakfast. Nice and Marseille are the closest international airports. See www.terre-blanche.com



Provence perfection: treat yourself at Terre Blanche in the French Riviera



Barbados bliss: de-stress at Port Ferdinand

Going to Barbados

Woah! Port Ferdinand Marina and Luxury Resort in Barbados has launched spa and wellness packages for 2018 – just in time for a New Year's retreat. On the beautiful north-west coast of the island, rejuvenating activities include stand-up paddleboard yoga and de-stress massages. Stay in an exclusive harbourside home, with direct access to the beach and beach bar.

The lowdown: The Health, Wellness and Fitness package costs US\$844 (about £640) per night, for a minimum four-night stay. See www.portferdinand.com

