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RUBEN TABARES

Lauren Ho talks to the Mandarin Oriental's wellness guru, Ruben Tabares

Ruben Tabares is a much-in-demand personal trainer and head of fitness and wellness at the Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park. Here he talks inner health, establishing good habits and not eating for three weeks.

A former student at the Royal Ballet School, Ruben Tabares is a strength and conditioning coach and nutritional expert who is head of fitness and wellness at the Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park, London. From 9-14 October 2016 Tabares will host Longevity Week, a wellness programme at the Mandarin Oriental Marrakech. We caught up with him to get the lowdown on what to expect from the programme and his top tips for a healthier lifestyle.

What can guests expect to experience during Longevity Week in Marrakech?

Nutritious, well-balanced organic and seasonal food according to their blood type; training sessions that have been designed to aid in detoxifying, strengthening and toning the body; and treatments – the cherry on the top – which help you reach optimum levels of inner health.

How do you decide which wellness elements would be most beneficial to incorporate into a one-week programme?

I have been involved in health and wellness for 30 years. I have travelled the world and undergone detoxification weeks (I did not eat for three weeks), longevity weeks and spa retreats, and as a professional athlete I have trained with some of the best trainers in the world. I think these experiences, coupled with my education, have placed me in the forefront of wellness in the 21st century. So I have put together my own ideas of what I always thought was lacking in these kinds of retreats, along with what I believed was the best of what they had to offer.

Why do you think it's important for people to take time out to immerse themselves in a wellness programme?

Unless you immerse yourself like this, you will find it extremely difficult to do it at home. The other very important reason is information: you are literally paying for information that has taken me and my team over 30 years to research.

What would you say is the easiest positive change that people can make to their daily routines?

The simplest thing to do is to make one change a month. This makes it easy to stick to, and it encourages you to make more changes. For example, in September you can change the amount of water you drink from one to three litres a day. In October it can be to cut out sugar... It takes about 14 days for something to become a habit.

What tips can you give guests to help them maintain this wellness programme back at home?

Guests will be given an e-booklet with easy-to-follow tips on how to keep up with their programme and how to continue implementing these changes in their lives. They will also be given their training programmes, and a nutritional guide that they can continue to use at home based on the cooking classes they took during Longevity Week.



The spa pool at the Mandarin Oriental, Marrakech. Credit: Mandarin Oriental, Marrakech

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As a strength and conditioning coach, what inspired you to branch out into wellness and nutrition?

Nutrition is key to a long and happy life. We are what we eat, and, with the knowledge I have now, I find that saying to be more true than ever before. I had to retire due to Achilles tendonitis, which is ironic, as I have not only healed myself completely but am healthier and recover more quickly after strenuous sport than I did as an 18-year-old. For this reason I decided to go into nutrition, sports therapy and all things "wellness".

What do you enjoy most about bringing wellness into the hospitality sector?

Today I take pride in helping my clients with things that have plagued them for years, just by having the right knowledge and understanding not only of what has caused the issue but of how to help them become constitutionally healthy.

What is your approach to ensuring that a guest gets the most out of your offerings during a short stay?

My approach, whether for Longevity Week or a short stay, is always the same: information. I want guests to go away with as much of the right information as possible, so that they can make clever choices in the future. Knowledge is power.

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A lot of people feel time-pressured and time-poor. What nutritional, wellbeing or activity tips would you recommend for them?

I have always believed that when you set realistic and achievable goals anything is possible. If you can spare just 20 minutes a day, then getting healthy is only a few weeks away. Taking 15 minutes to train and five minutes to prepare an unbelievably healthy meal, shake or snack is not hard at all.

Top tips would include: drinking more water, cutting out 95 per cent of sugar, adding superfoods to your daily nutritional plan, and core and strength workouts 15 minutes per day from Monday to Friday, with a rest at the weekend should you wish.

What are your secrets to staying motivated?

You have to set a goal – even if it is as simple as "I want a six pack or toned legs". Take a picture of your goal and look at it every day so you know where you need to be in six months or a year. If you share your goals with friends and family, then you have no hiding place and they can keep you focused.

Main image credit: Mandarin Oriental