

## Lifestyle

# Working Out & Winding Down

Optimal health requires a delicate balance of exertion and relaxation — one without the other can leave you feeling physically exhausted or mentally sluggish. Stay fit and give your body a chance to rejuvenate, too, with these BKK recommendations.

by Mandy Smith



### THE RACQUET CLUB

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This family-friendly facility caters to athletes of all ages. From the diehard gym-rat pumping iron before work, to the postpartum mama striving to get back in shape, to the teenager burning off steam at the end of the school day, The Racquet Club is an outlet for anyone wanting room to run in this concrete jungle.

The Racquet Club combines the familiarity of a community recreation center with the excellence of a cutting-edge gym. Choose from a variety of group classes — spinning, aerobics, power pump, yoga — if camaraderie compels you. If you prefer to work through your set solo, stick to individual machines and private studio space,

Are you a gym-goer looking for a challenge? Try the Thai boxing classes; or beat your personal best swim time in the club's massive outdoor pool. Got a competitive streak? Meet the guys after work for a little squash tournament, or dust off those racquets and take to the tennis court with your sweetheart. If you have fitness goals you'd like to reach, experienced personal trainers can help hold you accountable to achieve them.

The Racquet Club made a name for themselves recently with their newly-revealed Urban Playground: a massive, one-of-a-kind rock climbing and bouldering facility. Here you can really put your strength training to work. Automated belay systems allow even the novice climber to shimmy up to the summit without previous experience or a support person with you. Simply grab your rented gear (all of which is available through the Racquet Club) and make an afternoon of it for an upper body workout and adrenaline rush.

Shuttle service from Phrom Phong BTS makes The Racquet Club easily accessible. Membership fees are similar to other gyms in the city, but the facilities are far superior by comparison.

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## THE MANDARIN ORIENTAL SPA

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“The best spa in the world” is a lofty claim. Nevertheless, leisure and travel magazines bestow this title on The Mandarin Oriental Spa, time and time again. Between their elite status and the boasting rights of having catered to Pierce Brosnan, David Beckham and Elizabeth Taylor, they have certainly made a name for themselves.

This sumptuous refuge for relaxation is located opposite the Mandarin Oriental hotel — just a short boat ride across the Chao Phraya River. Recognized as the first spa to open within a hotel property in Bangkok, the history here is rich and the design dramatic: Traditional monochromatic Thai architecture contrasts with lush tropical gardens that greet you the moment you disembark your private ferry.

Once you’ve arrived, prepare to be pampered with no expense spared, and observe the decor, aroma and personalized service unmatched by any other. (But beware: The Mandarin Oriental Spa may just forever spoil the fun of a budget foot massage among the plethora of parlors along the main drags of Bangkok.)

Privacy and pampering are preeminent at the Mandarin’s

massage suites. Before your treatment starts, you’ll find dual steam rooms and showers that set the tone for tranquility. Choose from over 40 therapies or treatments designed to invigorate or unwind, stimulate or de-stress. For special occasions, splurge on a package program that will allow you to relax and rejuvenate over the course of the day.

Whether you select a massage, facial, beauty treatment — or some combination of these luxuries — the experienced therapists will personalize your care to ensure satisfaction, complete with the Mandarin’s signature cucumber eucalyptus eye mask and a refreshing pomelo salad sampler at the close of your visit.

Savor the silence for a few blessed minutes with tea or a juice in the Relaxation Lounge following your massage and soak up the serenity. Real life can wait a few more minutes while you kick back in an automatic massage chair and thumb through a magazine.

Bookings available Monday — Sunday 9:00 a.m. — 10:00 p.m.

48 Oriental Avenue

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