

SPORTS & ACTIVITIES

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SPORTS & ACTIVITIES

Hong Kong's expansive and sparsely populated green spaces surprise many first-time visitors with both their proximity to the urban centre and amazing accessibility. Rugged outdoor options such as hiking, camping and mountain biking are plentiful. Messing about on boats, boards or skis is another obvious category of activity, given the ubiquity of both salt and fresh water.

Edgier thrills are there for those eager to tackle the area's granite rock faces, to indulge in paintball firefights in the country parks or to participate in the increasingly busy local adventure sports calendar.

It is, however, possible to raise your heart rate without leaving the urban centres. Shoehorned into the precious spaces between the concrete canyons you'll find a surprisingly good range of public facilities, from public basketball and tennis courts to swimming pools, parks and gardens.

In short, Hong Kong offers the type of facilities, clubs and classes for most of the activities you'd expect to find in any other major city, including 24/7 gyms, golf, yoga, dance classes and the full range of pampering options from a quickie foot rub to a full-blown spa resort package.

In the home town of so many legendary martial artists such as Bruce Lee and Jackie Chan, it's no secret that Chinese martial arts are also well represented, from the full contact variety to the slow-motion art of t'ai chi practised with balletic grace in the parks each morning.

If watching rather than doing is your thing, there's a busy spectator sports calendar, too, and often plenty of atmosphere to be found (especially where there's the possibility of having a flutter on the result, or a beer for that matter). Hong Kong's Rugby Sevens in particular have a legendary status among rugby fans worldwide, both as a sporting event and as an excuse for a raucously good-natured carnival atmosphere.

HEALTH & FITNESS

Hong Kong is bursting at the seams with gyms, yoga studios, spas and alternative health clinics offering everything from aromatherapy and foot care to homeopathy. And if your hotel doesn't have a swimming pool, there are three dozen public ones to choose from.

GYMS & FITNESS CLUBS

Getting fit is big business in Hong Kong, with the largest slices of the pie shared out among a few big names. The **South China Athletic Association** (Map p85; ☎ 2890 7736; 88 Caroline Hill Rd, So Kon Po; ☎ Happy Valley) has a massive (1000 sq metre) gym, with modern exercise machinery and an aerobics room, as well as a sauna, a steam room and massage (monthly membership \$250, or \$50 per visit). The following two are notable in that they offer short-term memberships.

CALIFORNIA FITNESS Map p78

☎ 2522 5229; www.californiafitness.com; 1 Wellington St, Central; daily \$150; ☎ 6am-midnight Mon-Sat, 8am-10pm Sun; MTR Central exit D2 Asia's largest health club has six outlets in Hong Kong, including a **Wan Chai branch** (Map p74; ☎ 2877 7070; 88 Gloucester Rd; MTR Wan Chai, exit A1), which keeps the same hours.

PURE FITNESS Map p78

☎ 2970 3366; www.pure-fit.com; 1st-3rd fl, Kinwick Centre, 32 Hollywood Rd, Soho; daily \$200; ☎ 6am-midnight Mon-Sat, 8am-10pm Sun; Central Escalator This favourite of the Soho set (entered from Shelley St) has a **Central branch** (Map p67; ☎ 8129 8000; 3rd fl, Two IFC Mall, 8 Finance St, Central; MTR Hong Kong Station), which is open the same hours.

SPA TREATMENTS & THERAPIES

Whether you want to be spoilt rotten by sleek Priestesses of Wellness applying thousand-dollar caviar and lotus flower facials, or have a simple foot rub to soothe those throbbing bunions, Hong Kong's extensive pampering sector can assist. Most of the top hotels in town operate their own spas, with some of them essentially mini resorts. For less elaborate treatments you'll find plenty of places in Central and (to a lesser extent) Kowloon, offering spa treatments, massages and reflexology.

DK Aromatherapy (Map p78; ☎ 2771 2847; www.aroma.com.hk; Ground fl, 16A Staunton St, Central; ☎ 11am-10pm; Central Escalator) Full body aromatherapy treatment \$500 to \$550.

Elemis Day Spa (Map p78; ☎ 2521 6660; www.elemisdayspa.com.hk; 9th fl, Century Sq, 1 D'Aguilar St, Central; MTR