



# SHOCK TREATMENT

Is there any cure for a lifetime of neck and backaches?  
Leo Bear heads to Canyon Ranch to find out

**C**hronic: *adjective* (of an illness) persisting for a long time or constantly recurring... My upper-back and neck pain is chronic; it's been following me around for 20 years. It started when I was studying for my finals at university – stress and being hunched over a desk for long hours took its toll, and one morning my neck froze. While my friends were downing Diamond Whites and snogging rowers, I spent six weeks in a foam neck brace.

Cut to present day. Working mother. Weekly deadlines. Neck pain worse than ever. I've had an MRI scan – nothing showed up. I've had physio – this helped. I see an osteopath every six months to check I'm correctly aligned. And yet, here I am, still suffering. Some fireworks at a party triggered the most recent flare-up. All that looking up at the sky and lifting small children. I wake up in agony. 'My neck's fucked again,' I tell my husband tearily, reaching for the diazepam.

Desperate for a solution, I book a five-day trip to Canyon Ranch in Turkey (the latest spin-off from the famed Canyon Ranch in Tucson, Arizona), enrolling in its spinal-care programme. Arriving at midnight, tired, crumpled and further depleted by the hour-long bumpy car journey from the airport, I collapse into a cocoon of marble and soft linens, waking the next day to warm sunlight and a steaming pot of English Breakfast tea delivered through a cubby hole into my room.

Canyon Ranch is beyond beautiful. It's located on a rugged stretch of coastline north of Bodrum, and there's no shortage of space – the spa has a whopping 38 treatment rooms. Along with Eva Herzigova and Prince Harry, I'm one of the first to enjoy this clean, linear environment. The atrium at the heart of the resort is the size of an aircraft hangar, all glassy walkways and indoor palm trees overlooking the Aegean.

I spend most of my stay in the Health + Healing wing, which specialises in preventative medicine. Melek, a wonderfully cheerful female physio, prescribes shockwave

sound therapy to my upper back. It's what doctors use to blast kidney stones, apparently, and it feels like a cross between a deep-tissue knuckle-pummelling and being Tasered – in other words, intense but weird. Blood starts to flow to parts of my body that have been starved of oxygen for years, and the relief is instant.

My range of movement immediately increases and I can see over my left shoulder once again. Tingly, light laser therapy follows to reduce inflammation, by which time I love Melek and her machines so much that I want to kiss her. Instead, I shake her hand and sink into a cringy little half-bow/half-curtsey and thank her profusely; she tells me she loves her job and suggests another session the next day.

The rest of my time here passes in a haze of physio, pilates, consultations, one-on-one gym sessions and good vibes. I feel so positive that I agree to visit the Bod-Pod, a hi-tech device that measures my fat-to-muscle ratio. It's manned by Erkan – a San Diegan who's so strong I swear he could do one-finger pull-ups – who tells me that I don't need to lose weight, I need to build muscle. I attend lectures, including 'The Science of Cravings', while eating oatmeal and cranberry cookies. But of the 80 fitness classes available, I take just two. Frankly, I'm too busy being Tasered.

Back home the results have lasted. My neck isn't giving me any trouble, although my upper back has returned to its usual stiffness from working at a computer. But my stint at Canyon Ranch has prompted me to ask my GP to hook me up with a sports physio who has access to shockwave-therapy equipment, which I might even be able to get on the NHS. That's the beauty of a great spa: it reminds you how it is to feel good again, and you don't want to let that go.

**BOOK IT** Wellbeing Escapes ([wellbeingescapes.com](http://wellbeingescapes.com); 020 3735 7555) offers the four-night Destination Spa programme from £920, including breakfast, flights, transfers, activities and a £70 spa credit. Combined shockwave and laser therapy, from £680 for 25 minutes.

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## HEADS UP

*Alcohol isn't encouraged at Canyon Ranch, but they will bring you an organic-wine menu if you ask nicely.*