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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Seven Ideas to Help You Get Back into Shape

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Russia's weeklong New Year's holiday is finally over. Whether you spent it in Moscow winding your way from one house party to another in the time-honored Russian tradition, or you have just come back from a seaside vacation in the sub-tropics, you need to get back into your regular working routine. Thankfully, Moscow has plenty of activities to help wake you from that post-vacation lethargy and get in shape for the new year. Here is where you'll find us as we do our annual post-holiday detox.

Tubing on Ploshchad Revolyutsii

The largest hill in the center of Moscow

Tubing has become immensely popular in Russia in recent years. This winter, the highest hill for tubing has been installed in the very heart of Moscow, on Ploshchad Revolyutsii, just a short walk from Red Square. It is seven meters high and a hundred meters long. It has two tracks, so two people can slide simultaneously. The hill features a working clock made of ice,

and there is a small market fair nearby where you'll be able to buy souvenirs, snacks and hot beverages. There are tubing spots around Moscow too, most notably at Muzeon and Kuzminki parks.

Metro Ploshchad Revolutsii, Teatralnaya

Adidas Ski Base at the Olympic Village

Cross-country skiing is back

Adidas wants to bring back the once popular pastime of cross-country skiing, overshadowed by downhill skiing in recent years. For the second year in a row, Adidas Ski Base is open in a suburban Moscow park — this time in the Olympic Village park on the outskirts of Moscow. There are three ski tracks of different lengths and difficulties: one, three and five kilometers long. If you are new to cross-country skiing, you can hire an instructor to teach you the basics of the two main styles: classic and skate skiing. On weekends, there are themed parties organized at the ski base. adidas.ru/skibase Park olimpiyskoi derevni entrance at corner of Ulitsa Lobachevskogo and Michurinsky Prospekt

Sled Rides in Kuzminki-Lublino Park

Go dog sledding without leaving the city

You don't need to go to faraway Lapland to enjoy some dog sledding with Siberian Huskies. Kuzminki-Lublino offers several types of rides with the cute animals for both kids and adults. You can choose a simple twenty-minute ride or a longer option. There's a tour of the husky nursery and a lecture on husky sledding suitable for kids or a more adult-oriented, threehour-long trip to a lake in the depths of the park — with champagne and a barbecue afterwards.

Detox Programs

Boost your immune system

Detox programs have become quite trendy among lifestyle-conscious Muscovites. If your vacation has been especially taxing in terms of food and drink intake (and it probably has), detox might be a good idea even if you're not into health fads. The company 365 Detox has one of the most popular programs. You can order sets of smoothies, cold-pressed juices, almond milk, immune-boosting shots and herbal tea online at http://365detox.ru, or buy them at one of the many stores that sell their products. There are also many alternatives, like Smart Detox by Smart Food (http://smart-food.su/detox/) or Just for You (http://justforyou.ru/programs/detoxmenu/).

Sportivnaya Sektsiya

Learn a new sport

If you are bored with regular fitness centers, check out Sportivnaya Sektsiya (Sports Club) and learn a new sport. Started as an invitation-only club, Sektsiya gradually turned into a full-fledged business. There are more than fifty sports on offer at Sektsiya, including fencing and

rock climbing. For each sport, you can get a package of four or eight sessions with an instructor. Or get a package of two sports, which may be from completely different fields, like boxing and ballet dancing. Apart from becoming more fit you will get to hang out with some cool people, who've been at Sektsiya from the very start. Sometimes the sessions take place at interesting spots, such as the Tretyakov Gallery or Strelka Institute.

Ice skating

Themed skating rinks

As you might remember from one of the first scenes of Tolstoy's "Anna Karenina," ice skating has always been of Muscovites' favorite winter pastimes. Today Muscovites are spoiled for choice when it comes to skating rinks. Sokolniki Park launched Rok Katok, a rock-music themed skating rink, where you can skate under strobe lights. Different days are devoted to different rock musicians (park.sokolniki.com). Gorky Park's rink is all about street art this year, with graffiti and public art objects, including a 60-meter long light installattion in a tunnel (www.bigkatok.ru). VDNH Park provides ice dancing classes on Fridays (katok.vdnh.ru). Another option is to go to the rink on Red Square and skate by the city's greatest sights: the Kremlin, GUM and Saint Basil's Cathedral (gum.ru/rink).

Sanduny Experience the Russian baths "We have a tradition. Every year on Dec. 31, my friends and I go to the banya," is probably the most famous line from the movie "The Irony of Fate," broadcast on Russian television every New Year's Eve without fail. Banya refers to a traditional Russian public bath, which usually includes both a "dry steam bath" similar to a sauna and a "wet steam bath," where patrons beat each other with birch branches with the aim of improving circulation. If you haven't had a chance to go to banya in the new year, it's high time you did so. Founded in the early 19th century, Sandunovskiye Bani — or simply Sanduny — is still the the city's most venerable steam spot.

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