

Hiking Spa

Contributed by Gigi Ragland
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It's 7 a.m. and I'm rolling out my mat for stretch class. My group of sweat-clad and Lycra-clothed people are also getting situated, and by the looks on a few faces they're mentally easing into the day as well. Some perhaps have visions of conquering mountains while others are savoring that first cup of morning coffee. This is how we start most of our days at the week-long hiking spa in Tucson, Arizona held in the luxurious surrounds of Loew's Ventana Canyon Resort and Spa.

"Stretching is a great way to start the day and one of the best exercises you can do for the body," explains Devon Metz, who created the Devon Hiking Spa as a means to accommodate hiking enthusiasts who would like to enjoy a spa experience in a "real world" setting. "Hiking is something everyone can do—if you can walk, you can hike. Our ideal is to accommodate people on all levels," claims Devon.

Devon Hiking Spa offers daily hikes to include nature walks, intermediate hikes lasting 3-4 hours to hiking experiences for the more advanced cardio-charged crowd. This allows guests to get a workout at their own pace and to enjoy different facets of the Tucson desert environment. Guides accompany hikers with a ratio of one guide for every four participants. The guides carry additional water, snacks, medical supplies, two-way radios and cell phones to ensure a hassle-free experience for guests. In addition, hikers are gifted with a backpack full of amenities upon arrival at the resort including a hat and wicking tee-shirt.

Rounding out hiking are fitness and nutrition lectures. Registered dieticians help create a take-home food plan for each guest, and fitness sessions focus on creating a take-home exercise plan. All components of physical fitness are discussed and a program is designed to help guests incorporate aerobic activity, strength training and stretching into their regular routine. Their mission is to "give you the tools you need to make healthier choices," says Devon.

Devon Metz makes her home-base for operations in Boulder, Colorado. While at home she enjoys exchanging the longer desert canyon hikes filled with cholla, prickly pear and Saguaro cactus of Tucson for shorter hikes with peak destinations such as Royal Arch and Mt. Sanitas in Boulder. Devon received her Master of Science Degree in Clinical Nutrition from New York University. For more information, check out www.devonhikingspa.com.

