

## SPA DOCTOR: I felt so joyless, now I'm in my element

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In the space of a couple of months, I've had two back-to-back chest infections, both serious enough to warrant the full panoply of antibiotics, steroids and inhaler.

It's hardly surprising, given that I live in the heart of the city, where a cloud of air pollutants follow me to work each day.

The hideous chesty cough, wheezing and shortness of breath are finally on their way out, but the illness has taken a toll and I'm physically drained and feeling joyless.



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Three hours' drive from Athens is The Euphoria Retreat, below, tucked away in the hills of Mystras, in Greece's Peloponnese peninsula.

Drawing on the wellness rituals of the Byzantine era, with a sprinkle of ancient Chinese medicine, the picturesque retreat transports guests back to a simpler time, free from modern stresses.

Everything about the property, including the 45 luxurious rooms, is based on the Five Elements theory, which underpins both Chinese and ancient Greek health philosophy. The elements – wood, fire, earth, metal, and water – are believed to be the universe's fundamental components and their interactions affect our health.

## What's the treatment?

I opted for the five-night 'rest and de-stress' programme, a chance to fully 'reset' the mind and body, expelling toxins.

First up is a Byzantine Hammam Ritual, which involves lying on a plinth in a steamy marble room. The steam is said to be beneficial for bunged-up sinuses – exactly what I need. It is pure bliss and leaves me feeling lighter than I have in months.

Next is a reflexology session designed to quiet busy minds. It is so relaxing, I enter a different world. Then it's on to a one-to-one yoga session which restores confidence and inspires me to take up the practice again four years after a bout of sciatica.

After this I dip into the spherical pool, where I float amid piped dolphin sounds.

A week later, my lungs are clear, I'm rising early and feeling more positive and energised than I have in years. Given half the chance, I'd be back in a flash.

- A five-night stay at the Euphoria Retreat costs from £2,375 including flights, transfers and full-board accommodation. Visit [healingholidays.com](http://healingholidays.com)