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Healing Holidays MD, Frances Geoghegan, ventured to Switzerland to test the very exclusive - Lonhea. Opening its doors in late 2013, it is small, intimate and its programmes bespoke to each guest. There is nowhere to hide. How did she fair being so closely monitored by the eagle eyed, super fit Xavier? Well, lets see how she coped...

Switzerland is as famous for its high-end Wellness clinics as it is for its Alpine slopes, and the new kid on the block is [Lonhea](#). It's a world away from the Clinique La Prairie, and its revitalisation treatments derived from the liver of young lambs. Lonhea has a much simpler fix – lots of exercise, great locally-sourced food, and super-trained experts - all closely monitored by Dr Michel Golay.

I fly to Geneva, and from there it's an easy 90 minute transfer to Villars, a very pretty village surrounded by snow-topped mountains. It's recommended you arrive on a Sunday, so you can have all your bloods taken, for results to be ready on the Tuesday or Wednesday. Over a light lunch of chickpeas with pomegranate and cubed cucumber, I meet Dr Michel Golay, who explains the 'method', and what I should expect over the coming days. It's clear he is very passionate about what he does, and it's also obvious that the medical world is one that greatly frustrates him. He bemoans the widening gap between medicines referred to as scientific, and traditional or empirical medicine. He loathes the term alternative medicine, which he sees as a derogatory term, he strives for a harmonious union of both medicines, where the patient will truly benefit. His method is based on the two-brain model, from the school of Chinese medicine. Traditional Chinese medicines have been talking about this for centuries, he tells me; it has now been fully validated scientifically.



Health is the result of the balance between two brains, the digestive brain and the encephalic brain. He goes on to explain the basics of the two brain model; the digestive brain must ensure energy intake, with essential nutrients, vitamins and trace elements. It must also, through the intestinal mucosa prevent the entry of unwanted intruders in the body, and its equally essential to normalise the quality of our intestinal flora, in order to preserve our health. The encephalic brain is the motor, the regulator and the coordinator of all essential functions. The brain works correctly when it is well protected by the digestive brain and is properly activated. In laymen's terms, the method means eating

nutritious food, combined with a lot of exercise and taking probiotics to help the gut.

I am sent to the gym; somewhere I will spend a lot of time at over the coming days. I have three hours of 'Nuerocom and Cardio tests' to establish my fitness, flexibility, lung capacity and my balance. Xavier Gerfaud, the super-fit instructor, is the man who puts me through my paces. I am given a heart monitor, which I will wear day and night whilst I am here, so they can properly understand how my body and brain

is working. I start with running for 45 minutes, whilst Xavier adjusts the speed and incline, until he knows I am tested to the limit. I do balance challenges on a wooden board standing on one leg with my eyes closed - easier than it sounds, and touching my toes whilst one leg is in the air - very hard to coordinate. Then he places a halo of wires across my skull, like a scene out of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* - this is to determine the adaptive and visual capacity of the motor system. I have to closely monitor a screen, where the letter E flashes, sideways, facing down, up etc, I call out to Xavier the position of the letter, as I move my head back and forth. It's a very strange but difficult task. Then I have a lung capacity test, followed by endless flexibility tests, as well as core and lumber strength assessments.

The tests actually last four hours, and I feel as though I already have had a full work out. I now proceed to do an online questionnaire that has over 100 questions; it asks questions about my family history of disease, what I eat and drink, my current daily exercise, as well as lots of questions about my emotional state. I then relax in the Spa, which has an infrared sauna, a steam room, Turkish Bath, Jacuzzi and outdoor pool.

Dinner is sharp at 7.30, and is beautifully prepared by Pedro. Salad of fennel with lime, followed by poached chicken on coconut rice; desert is poached pear with melted chocolate. The chalet that will be my home for the next few days is simply designed, wood throughout, with a large open fireplace, and super comfy beds.



My second day at Lonhea starts at 7am with cardio training in the gym with Xavier. It's a shock to the system I hasten to add, but it's what each guest does every morning upon wakening. I pound the treadmill, and am pushed to my absolute limit by Xavier. Excuses are not tolerated; he has a steely determination, and will ensure he gets the most from you. Breakfast follows; local cheeses and hams, eggs and granola, local breads and strong coffee.

After a brief rest, I go to the physio room for a treatment with Rose. She assesses my reflexes, but her main focus is on my skull, and cranial osteopathy. She uses a plastic prong like a crochet needle which she pokes my skull with. This helps in mobilising the sutures in the skull. It's not painful, but neither is it relaxing. Afterwards, you feel more alive, your vision is clearer, and all round you feel sharper. Which is just as well, as personal training with Xavier is next. I do squats, weights, resistance training & power plate before finishing with stretching.

Lunch is delicious, roasted beetroot with sheep's cheese, followed by a mushroom pancakes and broccoli. Desert is kiwi fruit and banana. After a 45 minute rest, I meet Xavier for my two hour hike. The hike takes you through the pretty village of Villars towards the mountain, the climb is constant, and it really tests you to the limit, but the air is so pure and you are rewarded by stunning views. After two hours though, I am exhausted.

We head back to Lonhea, and 60 minutes yoga with Rose awaits. I explain to Rose that I am exhausted, so she does an hour of restorative yoga, which is utter bliss - she finishes the class by cocooning me in a blanket and eye mask for 10 minutes of sleep. I soak my tired limbs in the Jacuzzi, before a quick shower and dinner follows. Dinner is a light vegetable soup, followed by a risotto with nuts and fruit, and a baked apple.

My remaining days at Lonhea follow the same pattern, cardio training at 7am, personal training hikes, yoga and massages with Rose.

On my final day, I have a final consultation and treatment with Dr Golay. As an acclaimed chiropractor, I am really looking forward to his treatment. He cracks and crunches my bones, and gives me a rather



painful abdominal massage and a vigorous skull scrape. He uses a suction pump on my muscles, which releases toxins. I always thought I had issues with my lower back, in fact my back is fine, it's my hips and legs which need strengthening. He then goes through all the tests I have undertaken over the last few days, my fitness levels, my heart function, my poor digestion, and my emotional turmoil. The heart monitor I have worn for the last few days tells its own story. It shows how I have reacted to the exercise and activity, (not great), and repaired myself during the night, (abysmal). A reading of zero is pure burnout, with 200 for professional athletes. At a reading

of 65, I need to slow down.

Lonhea is perfect for someone like me; you have no time to get bored, as you are fully occupied all day with a host of challenging activities. The silver lining is that in the morning I predicted my body to struggle to move, but on the contrary, my limbs felt like the past days gruelling exercise never happened – and was ready for more. Dr Golay is a warm, understated and gentle person. He reads your emotional state just as easily as he does your physical. He chooses all his staff very carefully from the super fit Xavier Gerfaud, to the very nurturing physiotherapist and yoga teacher Rose Casley.

Dr Michel Golay is a former professional footballer who, following a car accident became a chiropractor to Swiss tennis and athletic champions. For 25 years he has been developing his health programme, which is about aligning the 'digestive brain' with the 'encephalic' or 'reptilian brain'. In layman's terms, this means eat well, exercise well, and you can help the self to overcome afflictions of the modern age, (conditions such as IBS and arthritis can be alleviated after two weeks here).

To book a stay at [Lonhea](#) speak to one of our [spa specialists](#) on 020 7843 3597 or email at info@healingholidays.co.uk

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