



INSPIRED, NATURALLY

Vail Vitality Center offers science-based wellness regimens for people of any age

» BY TRACI J. MACNAMARA » PHOTOS BY JACK AFFLECK

With mountain peaks towering on the skyline and wildflowers in bloom, Vail's summer landscape is stunning enough to put a kick in anyone's step. Longer days and brighter skies naturally inspire healthy energy, and the Vail Vitality Center is well positioned

to help athletes of all ages channel good vibes from the warm season into year-round wellness.

At the Vail Vitality Center, located within the Vail Mountain Lodge, local athletes join together with Vail visitors for educational programs, fitness classes and athletic training sessions designed to bring equal parts science and inspiration to the

health and fitness paradigm. And when the snow melts away from Vail's world-class ski slopes, the White River National Forest's hiking trails and wooded terrain surface as the ultimate training ground. The Vail Vitality Center takes advantage of this unique opportunity for outdoor programming on Vail Mountain with its bi-weekly

Classes with the Vail Vitality Center include outdoor programming.

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outdoor fitness classes led by Ellen Miller.

Miller is a two-time Everest summiteer and lifelong endurance athlete whose passions range from high-altitude climbing to long-distance ski mountaineering. She's inspiring in her own right, and supercharged results spring from the classes Miller leads on Tuesday and Thursday mornings throughout the summer season. “These outdoor fitness classes are a soul-feeding experience as much as they are intense workouts,” she says.

The classes Miller leads alternately focus on interval and endurance training, and with sound science at their core, they're also in line with other Vail Vitality Center programming. “Studies tell

us that we're less likely to get depressed when we're outside in nature, and we're also happier when we interact with people of different ages,” Miller explains. “Exercise keeps our brains functioning properly, and interval training is essential for physical and mental health,” she adds. Miller structures her classes so that athletes of all ages and abilities can work toward individual goals while keeping the larger goal of lifelong fitness in sight.

“Lifelong fitness is a critically important goal, and we have a vital role in choosing how we age,” Miller says, connecting with another concept that's a theme at the Vail Vitality Center: pro-aging, or the idea that focusing on holistic, whole-body health helps counteract

Ellen Miller's on-mountain classes are based on research that says humans are less likely to get depressed when they're outside in nature.



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premature aging. Participating in a healthy community, staying active in the outdoors and interacting with athletes of various ages are all opportunities for pro-aging that the outdoor fitness class provides, but it's just one option among many that athletes can choose from when lifelong fitness is the goal.

Besides having the necessary permits to offer classes in the expansive outdoor space that Vail Mountain provides, the Vail Vitality Center's indoor facility includes an 18,000-square-foot fitness center and climbing wall as well as dedicated yoga and Pilates spaces. A full-service spa is also on site, offering additional opportunities for healing and relaxing treatments. But what makes this place stand out among others in Vail is its range of medical- and holistic-based services.



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With in-house medical professionals whose areas of expertise range from acupuncture to nutrition and exercise physiology, science becomes a key aspect of the Vail Vitality Center's approach to lifelong fitness.

“We’re science based, and we have highly educated instructors who use their expertise to help people move better and feel better,” says Blake Gould, the Vail Vitality Center's fitness manager. Functional movement screens and personal training can help athletes develop and attain individual goals, but instructors of group fitness classes are also equipped to help athletes modify movements for optimal results.

The Vail Vitality Center will be offering a beginning meditation teacher training course this summer, and Gould will be leading a first-ever youth summer camp. This four-day camp for kids ages 8-12 will include yoga, climbing and game-based fitness. While it promises to give young people some fun framework for a lifetime of fitness, the Vail Vitality Center remains a place where athletes can find the inspiration and support they need to achieve goals at any age.

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