

PLACES

Trekking on the treetops

Canopy walks have always been a superb way to appreciate the beauty of Malaysian nature. The Malaysian rainforests look exceptionally awesome when viewed from canopy walkways strung up high between gigantic trees.

Now, someone has come up with a twist to canopies. A Frenchman has created an adventurous experience that mixes the canopy walk with a mild version of mountain trekking.

The Skytrex Adventure which opened recently at the Bukit Cerakah Agricultural

park in Shah Alam offers a thrilling but perfectly safe experience. Visitors get the chance to walk along canopies, swing from treetop to treetop, cross high altitude bridges and climb up gigantic nets.

The entire experience is safe as everyone is issued protective equipment for the whole course of the Skytrex Adventure. The circuit has been certified safe by APAVE, which is an independent and worldwide Third Party Inspection Agency (TPIA). The agency provides inspection and safety certification services to projects all over the world.

There are two courses, one for adults and the other for children. Skytrex Adventure is currently open only on weekends and public holidays from 9am to 5pm. The entire adventure will take up to two hours and the entrance fee is RM35 for adults and RM20 per child.

And if the Skytrex adventure promises a bit too many thrills, there are other traditional canopy walks located all over Malaysia.



A popular one can be found at the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM), Kepong. It's the perfect place to experience a canopy walk as it is in the city and easily accessible.

A more challenging one is constructed at Taman Negara, Pahang. Another canopy walk can be experienced at Bukit Bendera, Penang. Over in Sabah, there is one at The Poring Hot Springs in Sabah which is located within the Kinabalu State Park.



HEALTH

5 health tips for the desk bound

If your job demands long hours on the computer, chances are that headaches, back pain, erratic sleep patterns and many other ailments have been troubling you. It probably won't be possible to cut down too much on the time you spend at the PC but you can always follow these tips towards a healthier life.

1. Stretch.

Exercise can make a dramatic difference to your life. Make sure you fit in an exercise programme into your daily schedule. You can stretch during short breaks at your desk. Just stand up and stretch backwards and sideways with your hands up in the air or behind your neck. Don't forget to move your head in those same directions later so that your neck gets some relief too.

2. Take a break, get some sun

Don't do marathons; take 10-minute breaks several times a day. Use those breaks to actually walk around. Even better, walk up and down the stairs. Also, being cooped up all day under artificial lighting can cause health problems. Get outdoors at least twice a day and soak in some natural healthy sunshine.

3. Drink enough water

Office air conditioning systems keep you cool but they are pretty good at dehydrating your body too. Make sure you drink enough water. Pure water is better for your body than any other drink. Water helps to detoxify your body. But remember, don't overdo it. Too much water can cause water intoxication and is potentially deadly. Eight glasses of liquid is about right in a day and that includes drinks other than pure water.

4. Practise deep breathing exercises

Most people simply do not get enough air into their body. Go look for instructions on deep breathing exercises (Google the word 'Pranayama', which is the breathing technique in Yoga). Deep, slow breathing, advocated by Yoga and Pilates practitioners has many benefits. It relaxes the mind and body and it helps takes the load off your heart.

5. Change your posture.

Get your posture right and you are on the way to less back problems. Obesity, poor muscles strength, wrong shoes and poor sitting and standing habits will cause posture problems. There is a lot of information online on building a good posture. One good place to start is Cornell University Ergonomics Web at www.ergo.human.cornell.edu



FOOD

Good old *ikan bakar*

Grilled fish Malaysian style is delicious, if you know where to go. *Ikan bakar* is never hard to find in Malaysia, almost every hawker centre will have at least one stall selling grilled fish, but as every true blue *ikan bakar* fan will know, not every stall gets the sauce and grilling just right. The spicy sauce, either a mixture of onions, chillies, *belacan* (fish paste), sugar and tamarind or soy sauce, lime, onions, *belacan* and sugar, is the X-factor that makes a great *ikan bakar*.

The best time and place to have *ikan bakar* is of course at night and beside the sea. But Klang Valley residents have not let that stop them from enjoying *ikan bakar* during lunch.

The place usually voted the best to have *ikan bakar* for lunch are the stalls behind the National Palace, at Jalan Bellamy. Both **Gerai Seri Menanti** and **Gerai Seri Melaka** have excellent fare. Try the Stingray (*Ikan Pari*) and the Sea Bass (*Siakap*) when you go there. Another popular *ikan bakar* stall is at the Tanglin Food Court behind the National Mosque. The **Ikan Bakar Asli Pak Din Stall** is always thronged by customers from 10 am until they run out of fish.

The nearest place to have *ikan bakar* at night beside the sea is at Tanjung Harapan, Port Klang which is less than an hour drive on a good day. There are quite a few good open air restaurants along the beach and overseas visitors will definitely appreciate the authentic ambience.

For the more adventurous, try the seafood joints located at Bagan Lallang near Sungai Pelek, Selangor. The drive will take one and half hours and do remember to set aside more time as *ikan bakar* is always cooked after you have selected the fish by hand and that can take another half hour.

Arguably, the best *ikan bakar* in Malaysia can be found in Melaka. There are famous groups of stalls at Umbai, Serkam and Duyong. That can take you up to three hours of driving from KL to get there so only try it



when you are visiting the city of Melaka. Also on busy days, be prepared to wait up to one hour or more hours for your fish to be grilled.

And finally, for a different kind of *ikan bakar*, make sure that you find your way one day to Kuantan, Pahang. The many stalls located at Tanjung Lumpur prepare the *ikan bakar* with lots of spices, including *petai* (a local bean with a pungent smell). **Ana Ikan Bakar Petai** is one of the popular restaurants there.



PRODUCTIVITY

Timeless productivity tips

Amidst all the productivity tips that abound these days, there are a few that recur in most top lists. These tips are generally recognized to help anyone organize their lives. Here are five such tips.

Write It Down

It's so simple and yet very effective. All you need is a pen or paper or a digital tool like a PC or mobile phone. Whenever an idea comes, write it down. Do the same whenever you come across a piece of information that looks like it might be useful one day.

One good way to start doing that is to cut empty papers or cards into shirt pocket sizes and put them in shirt pockets ready to be used at anytime. Learn to look, and act, on those bits of written stuff every morning and you've got the first tip internalized.

Handle Incomings Efficiently

Handle documents and emails efficiently. Don't check emails every other minute. Set aside a reasonable time to check emails, say every 90 minutes. Then reply to as many of those emails when you read them. Similarly most papers can usually be handled the same way. The vast majority of your incoming stuff can usually be handled immediately.

Your Private Moment

Set aside a time everyday, say half an hour and give yourself time to think and strategize. Use that time to think and work out key things

and tasks that need to be done. Let nothing interrupt the moment that you're giving yourself.

What's Your Prime Time?

Which time of the day are you in peak work condition? We all have a particular time of the day when we feel energized and enthusiastic. Some find that they are best in the morning, others in the evening. Use that time to tackle your most important work.

Disconnect Yourself To Concentrate

When you are doing a very important task, switch off mobile phones and don't check your emails. Concentrate on the work at hand. The world will still be around when you switch on your phone. Also, studies show multitasking is not efficient as in doing a few things at the same time. Multitasking is perfect when it means taking on simultaneous projects over periods of time, but work on one thing at any particular time.

Reward Yourself

If you have the tendency to procrastinate, try rewarding yourself. Only do something you enjoy after you've completed one of your important jobs. It's best to always do the worst jobs first.

Be disciplined and stick to the goal you set yourself. Set milestones for each job and don't stop until you've reached that milestone. Better still, finish the whole job in one go.