

Boston Globe
Carillon Miami Beach almost makes you want to work out
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Relax in one of the saunas.

MIAMI — “The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak” is my unofficial vacation motto. Translation: I convince myself I’ll go running, check out the hotel gym, or at least attempt a single sit-up instead of spending yet another long weekend with an amaretto and fig sour in one hand and a giant pretzel in the other.

The problem, aside from my complete lack of willpower, is that most hotel gyms are glorified broom closets with an elliptical machine in one corner and a sweaty dude who grunts while curling 10 pound free weights in the other. One look at this dismal scene and I’m ready for another amaretto and fig sour.

My cadre of excuses quickly evaporated when I stayed at the Carillon Miami Beach. The expansive, airy gym is comparable to any high-end health club, but with ocean views. It’s open and bright with a good selection of equipment. There are also more than 30 trainers and 40 exercise classes. I was told at the spa desk that one of the trainers had the body of Arnold Schwarzenegger and the face of Brad Pitt. Or maybe it was the body of Channing Tatum and the face of Ryan Gosling. Whatever the case, I was suddenly feeling inspired.

The Carillon also has a giant spa (70,000 square feet with 54 treatment rooms). I’m one of those weirdos who would rather gingerly sip a cocktail than get a massage, so I rarely partake of any spa treatments. But the brochure here mentioned something about a treatment called Deep Sleep, which involved levitating on a “warm dry flotation bed.” That sounded like my kind of spa visit.

The Carillon was previously a Canyon Ranch property, hence the emphasis on fitness and the open-air yoga studio. Truth be told, I'd be scared to stay at a Canyon Ranch, but I felt the Carillon was less intimidating and I didn't feel obligated to act like a health nut. Since becoming the Carillon last year, the massive structure has been getting a makeover. Every room in the hotel is a suite with a small kitchen, which makes traveling somewhat more affordable. Even if you opt not to visit the gym, you can at least splash around a bit in one of the hotel's four pools. I think that counts as exercise, no?

CARILLON MIAMI BEACH 6801 Collins Ave., Miami Beach, carillonhotel.com, 305-514-7000. Rates start at \$385.