

AFTER HOURS SPECIAL



You work hard, so after you call it a day it's time to play hard! Find out where to fire things up or wind down with our hot list of Bahrain's best after-work activities.
Edited by *Christina Fernandes*

After hours special

1 Get sporty

After a day penned up behind your desk, some serious physical activity may just be your ticket to relaxation. So get up and spin, stretch and sweat out the stress!

World Beat Fitness Centre (17 612 576; www.worldbeatfitness.com), Janabiya, various classes available.

Physique Fitness Centre (17 694 464), Budaiya Highway, spinning classes and personal trainers on offer.

Fitness First (13 322 200), World Trade Centre, various classes and personal trainers on offer.

2 Make a splash

Dive into the blue and cool off from a heated meeting or drive yourself to distraction with an outdoor movie.

Lost Paradise of Dilmun Water Park (17 845 100; www.lpodwaterpark.com), Al Areen, open Fri-Mon, Wed 10am-5pm. Thu 10am-midnight (from 6pm ladies only). Tue closed.

3 Be inspired

Break up the office routine and get creative in front of the easel. If you're no natural Picasso, a few art classes will get you into the groove.

Awali Arts (39 217 940; www.smmallen.moonfruit.com), Awali, watercolours Sun noon-2.30pm; acrylics Wed 7pm-9pm; painting studio Tue 8.30am-11am.

4 Learn the lingo

Whether you want to brush up on your school French or pick up a new tongue, language classes let you escape into a different culture for a few hours at a time.

Berlitz Language Centre (17 827 847; www.berlitz-bahrain.com), Adliya, Arabic, French, English and other languages available.

Alliance Française (17 683 295; www.afbahrain.com), Isa Town, group and private lessons for all levels.

6 Get it just right

Swimming is a great way to chill out, but in Bahrain the water tends to be too hot in the summer and too cold in the winter. Finding a temperature controlled pool is the answer.

Bahrain Rugby Football Club (17 695 809; www.bahrainrfc.com), Saar, you must be a member to use the pool.

7 Find a new angle

Head out to sea and relax the old fashioned way, with a rod in your hands. It can be oddly satisfying to catch your own dinner.

The Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain Sports Club (17 580 000), Seef, full-day trips April-November.

Al Dar Islands (17 704 600; www.al-darislands.com), Sitra, three-hour trips for all levels.



5 Cool your need for speed

If you like it fast and wet, why not go for wakeboarding? Trying to stay put on a board while being dragged behind a boat across the sea ought to blow a day's tension right out of you.

Coral Beach Club (17 312 700; www.coralbeachbahrain.com), Al Fateh Corniche.

Sea Loft Boutique Chalets (16 033 833), Amwaj, daily trips 5pm-8pm. BD60 for three hours for four people.

8 Burn rubber

Invite your boss to the karting track – if you're lucky you may 'accidentally' ram into them.

Bahrain International Circuit Kart Zone (17 450 000; www.bahraingp.com), Zallaq, Wed, Fri and Sat, BD5 for 10 minutes (adults).

Gulf Speed One (39 444 137; www.gulfspedone.com), Seef, prices vary between kart types and times.

9 Take a seafront stroll

Bahrain may be a bit short on beaches, but there are some lovely corniches you can cruise to and see the water.

Al Fateh Corniche (Juffair), Budaiya Corniche, Al Diraz Corniche, Muharraq Corniche.

10 Row your boat

Grab a kayak and paddle those gloomy work thoughts straight out of your mind.

Bahrain Sailing Club (17 836 078; www.bhsailing.com/bahrain-sailing.php), Al Jazayir.

11 Release your inner child

Who says arcades are just for kids? Take out your frustration in a bumper car or scare yourself silly on one of the rides.

Magic Island (17 582 898; www.magic-island.com), Seef Mall, Sat-Wed 10am-10pm; Thu-Fri 10am-1am.

Magic Planet (17 584 444), Bahrain City Centre, Sun-Wed 10am-10pm, Thu-Sat 10am-midnight.

12 Bend it like Bhakti

It's no wonder yoga has been relaxing human-kind for millennia – it's difficult to think of paperwork with your legs around your neck.

Bahrain Meditation Centre (17 795 961), Adliya, Sat and Wed 7pm-8.30pm (mixed classes). Sun and Tue 10am-noon (ladies only).

The Art of Living Centre (36 641 677), Al Burhama, five-day workshop BD30.

13 Take down the kingpin

Relax retro-style at a bowling alley and discover the immense pleasure that smashing a big ball into small sticks can bring. And nothing tops the feeling of getting a strike.

Funland Centre (17 293 313; www.funland-centre.com), Al Fateh Corniche, Sun-Wed BD1 9am-5pm, BD1.5 5pm-late; Thu-Fri BD1.5 9am-late.

Bowling @ Magic Planet (17 584 444), Bahrain City Centre.

14 Turn a new page

Books let you enter any world you choose. Join Bahrain's online book club and share the experience. Titles range from week to week, taking in both the classics and contemporary fiction.

Bint Battuta Bloggers' Book Club (<http://battutabahrain.blogspot.com>).

15 Cook up a storm

Instead of grabbing takeaway or a ready meal, learn how to whip up your own creations and spoil yourself rotten.

Yo! Sushi (17 583 3373; www.yosushi.com/bahrain.php), Al A'ali Complex.

16 Hit a wall

Step onto a squash court and play it rough. Smashing a squishy rubber object against a wall can be a great way to let off some steam and work up a sweat.

The Country Club (17 593 593; www.countryclubbahrain.com), near Bar Bar.

Marina Club (17 291 527; www.marinaclub.info), Adliya.

18 Light your fire

Hit the dance floor and get down Latin-style. If you're lacking the moves, taking a class is a great way to learn and meet people, and it's a surprisingly good workout at the same time.

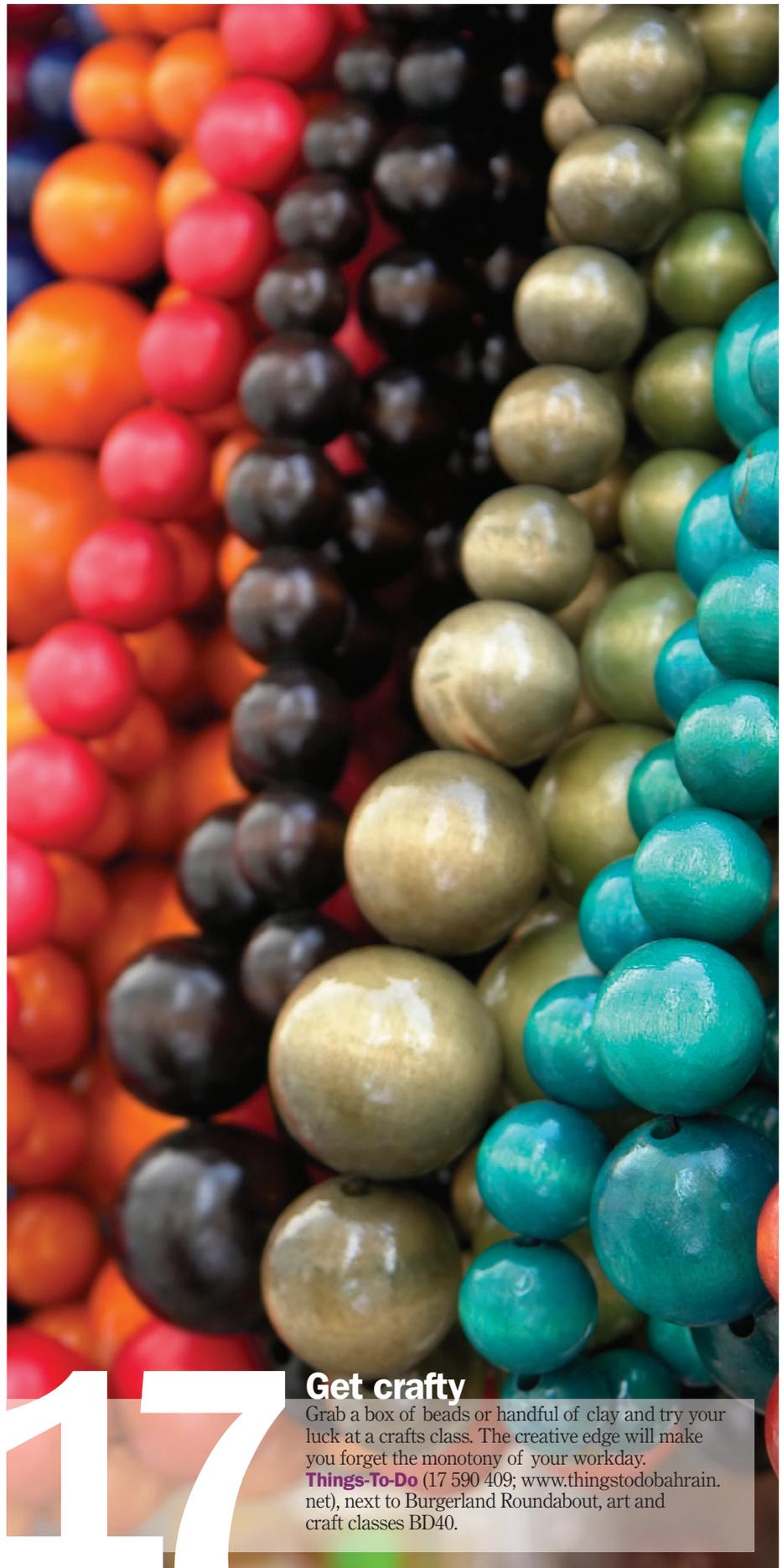
Sampaguita Club (39 753 048), Moon Plaza Hotel, Um Al Hassam.

19 Ride the waves

Jump on a windsurfing board and let the gusts blow you away from the office and into the weekend.

Bahrain Sailing Club (17 836 078; www.bhsailing.com/bahrain-sailing.php), Al Jazayir, call for lesson details.

Coral Beach Club (17 312 700; www.coralbeachbahrain.com), Al Fateh Corniche, call for lesson details.



17 Get crafty

Grab a box of beads or handful of clay and try your luck at a crafts class. The creative edge will make you forget the monotony of your workday.

Things-To-Do (17 590 409; www.thingstodobahrain.net), next to Burgerland Roundabout, art and craft classes BD40.



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Glide away

Ice skating may not spring to mind immediately as a desert country activity, but once you strap on your blades and pirouette away the office blues you'll be wondering why you haven't hit the rink sooner.

Funland Centre (17 293 313; www.funlandcentre.com), Al Fateh Corniche, Sat-Wed BD2.5 9am-11pm; Thu-Fri BD2.5 9am-3pm, BD3 3pm-midnight.

20 Get the right moves

Whether you're a prima ballerina or more akin to an elephant in a china shop, dance classes are a great way to relax and get fit, plus you'll get toned up in no time.

Bahrain Ballet Centre (17 693 232), Bar Bar, Wed 6pm-7pm (tap and ballet).

World Beat Fitness (17 612 576; www.worldbeatfitness.com), Mon, Wed, Sun 10.30am and 7pm (belly dance).

22 Be a lady

If you're frugal and of the female gender, plan your night on the town according to where the next ladies' night takes place. You can pretend the weekend has got here early.

Enigma (17 297 000), Windsor Tower Hotel, Fri-Tue 4pm-2am.

Z Club (17 814 777), Pars International Hotel, free mojitos Mon 9pm-midnight.

Club One (17 296 464), Metropolitan Hotel, Tue and Fri.

La Veranda Restaurant (17 224 343), Aradous Hotel, Sun.

Pulse (17 827 999), Al Safir Hotel, Mon and Fri.

Casa Blu (17 710 424), Adliya, Mon.

23 Get quizzical

If proving yourself at work isn't enough, try a quiz night to show off your brain power. But remember: nobody likes a know-it-all.

The Warbler (17 290 600), Baisan International Hotel.

24 Make sweet music

After listening to ringing phones and beeping computers at the office, the lovely notes you coax from an instrument will be music to your ears.

Bahrain Music Institute (17 721 999; www.bahrainmusic.com.bh), Mahooz, instructions in violin, piano, flute, guitar, oud and vocals.

25 Laugh out loud

Laughter is the best medicine, so comedy nights should take you a long way on the path to happiness.

Skylight Bar & Lounge (17 531 666), The Diplomat Radisson Blu Hotel, monthly comedy night.

Aqua Fuego (17 290 555), Days Hotel Manama, has open mic night Wed.

26 Get even

Gents, if you feel left out during ladies' nights, don't fret. There's more manly entertainment around as well.

The Warbler (17 290 600), Baisan International Hotel, sports night, Sat.

The Exchange (17 742 000), Ramada Hotel in Adliya, free beer, Tue.

27 Play on cue

Hitting things with a stick is like therapy after a long workday. There are several places to play pool or snooker on the island.

Jimmy's Snooker and Billiard Club (17 716 147), Adliya.

The Country Club (17 593 593; www.countryclubbahrain.com), near Bar Bar.

Bahrain Snooker Association (17 716 147).

28 Pound the pavement

If strict training schedules and hardcore races scare you, go for the fun approach to running and try out hashing. It's non-competitive, social and involves drinking.

Bahrain Hash House Harriers (17 862 620; www.bahrainhash.com).

29 Race across the blue

We can't explain why, but getting soaked, spraying your mates and making lots of noise on a jet ski is just so much fun.

Coral Beach Club (17 312 700; www.coral-beachbahrain.com), Al Fateh Corniche.

30 Make a slam-dunk

Dribbling a ball across the court and fighting to get it into the basket is a great way of releasing office tension. Trust us, you won't be thinking of spreadsheets or making mental to-do lists.

EZ Fit Sportsplex (17 692 378), Budaiya Highway.

31 Spend a night at the movies

If you're not up for trying something different, you can always count on this old-time favourite to distract and entertain you.

Bahrain Cinema Company (17 864 666; www.bahraincinema.com), various times and locations.

32 Mince your words

If you know lots of words full of Qs and Zs and you like wordplay, then scrabble is the distraction for you. You're sure to learn some useful words for the next day's finance reports, or maybe even a few things that can help describe your boss.

Bahrain Scrabble League (39 966 382).

33 Sing your heart out

You will probably require a drink or three to steel your nerves – not to mention get through some of the other karaoke performances – but who says that's a bad thing?

The Warbler (17 290 600), Baisan International Hotel, Tue.

Cave (17 272 500), Atlas Hotel, Wed and Fri.

34 Let wishes be horses

Saddle up and feel the wind in your hair as you race through the desert on horseback. It will make you forget all your work worries in no hurry, and you can live out those *Lawrence of Arabia* fantasies (we're assuming here that you have them).

The Country Club (17 593 593; www.countryclubbahrain.com), near Bar Bar, lessons BD5 for members, BD7 for non-members.

The Dilmun Club (17 692 986; www.dilmunclub.com), Saar, BD8 with instructor.

Twin Palms Riding Centre (39 566 809; www.twinpalmsridingcentre.com), Saar, one-hour group lesson BD12, one-hour hack BD10.

35 Snatch the specials

Dinner doesn't have to be boring, there are plenty of theme nights and special offers to jazz up your meal.

Al Waha Restaurant (17 713 000), Gulf Hotel, different theme every night from BD10.5, 7pm-10.30pm.

Silk's Restaurant (17 460 000), Möevenpick Hotel, seafood night Mon 7pm-11pm, BD19.

36 Express yourself

Show the world how you see Bahrain: take up a camera, find your favourite motives and start clicking away.

Bahrain Arts Society Photography Club (17 590 551; www.bahartsociety.org.bh), next to Burgerland Roundabout.

37 Act out

Join the glamour of showbiz and take a few acting classes. You never know how handy this may be in your day job.

Manama Theatre Club (17 776 489), Manama.

38 Be all art

If you don't want to get creative yourself, hit a gallery and have a look at the fruits of someone else's labour.

Bashar Art Gallery (17 727 326), Adliya, Bahraini traditional art.

Casa Dell'Arte (17 822 414; www.casadelarte.bh), Zinj, emerging artists.

La Fontaine Centre of Contemporary Art (17 230 123; www.lafontaineartcentre.com), Manama, multi-purpose venue in a beautiful setting. For latest events call or see website.

40 Smoke up

Grab a shisha, suck up some smoke and feel yourself relaxing. What better way to get in touch with Bahrain's cultural roots?

Aroma Café (17 582 711), Seef Mall.

Don Vito Café (17 714 464), next to Al Bustan Hotel.



39 Hit someone

Some days leave you feeling like you want to smash someone's face in. Thai boxing classes are a great way of venting your anger without getting fired.

Zen-Do Bahrain (17 611 909; www.zendobahrain.com), Hamala, teaching a non-violent form of kickboxing.

EZ Fit Sportsplex (17 692 378), Budaiya Highway.