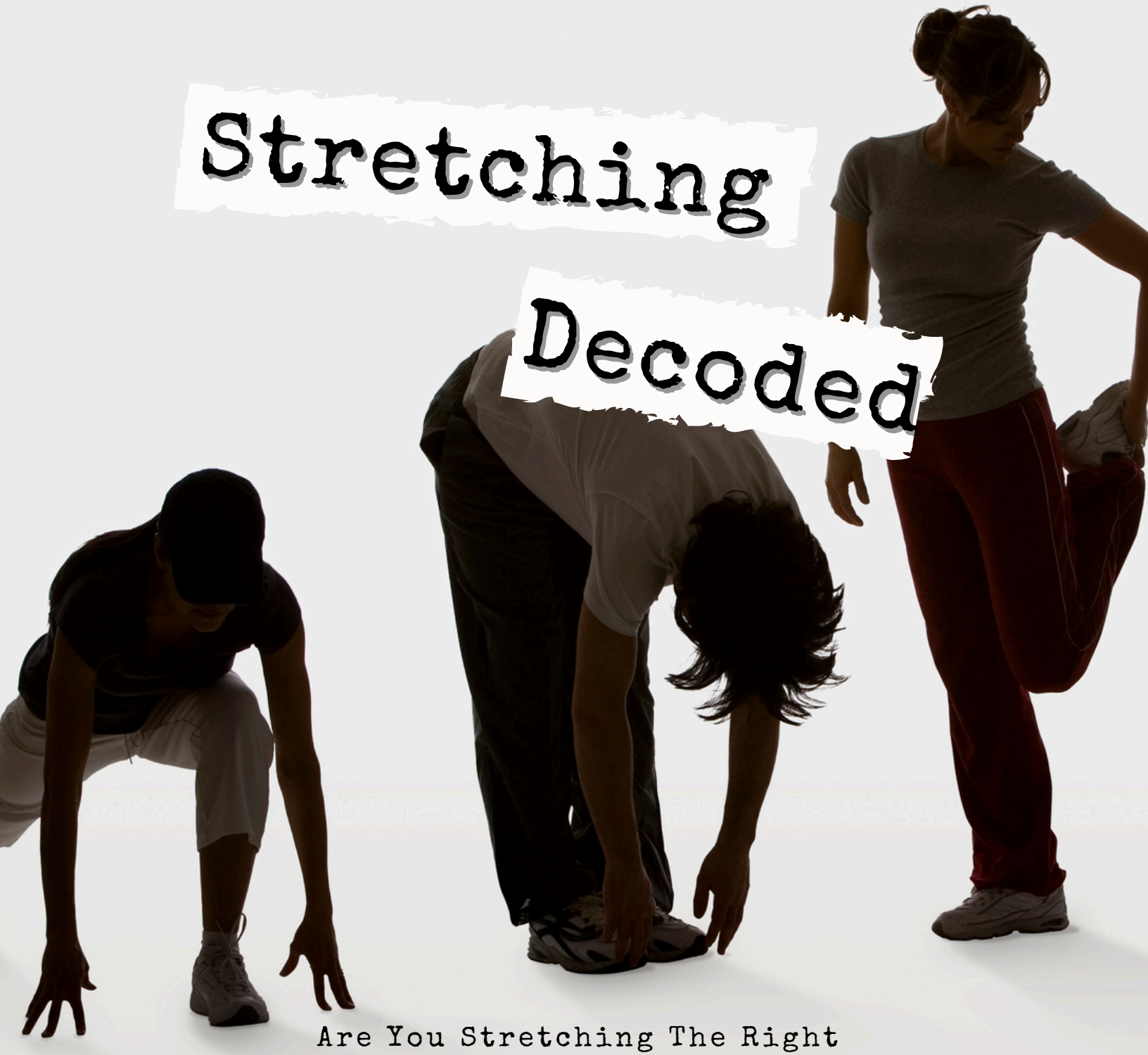
Stretching Decoded



Are You Stretching The Right Way All The Time?

Kyzien Original

Hidden Clue F.I.T.T. PRINCIPLE:

Frequency: 2 - 3 days (minimum) if not to performing physical activity.

Intensity: Stretch until there is mild discomfort, but not pain. Remember this is not a workout in itself, so take your time and breathe (dynamic). This is to warm up/ cool down your muscles.

Time: Hold stretch for 15 - 30 seconds and dynamic stretches 2 - 3 seconds. Perform static 2 - 4 times and dynamic ones 3 - 4 times.

Type: Stretching exercises correlate to joint and movement performed.

*WHEN PERFORMING STATIC STRETCH, REMEMBER TO GLIDE TO MILD DISCOMFORT AND SLOWLY GLIDE BACK.

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Most people agree that stretching is the “breakfast” for all workouts. It is the most important part of performing exercise. Yet, deciding what stretch to do can be tricky. This issue will determine the best stretch for various situations. We will focus on three types of stretches – static, dynamic, and ballistic stretching. Each of these styles has unique benefits and situations for optimal use.

JOIN US AS WE INVESTIGATE THE STRETCH!

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History Of The Stretch

The origins of stretching can be traced as far back as ancient Greece, where stretching was used to improve warriors and athletes. Ancient physicians, Hippocrates and Galen, were both instrumental in revealing the therapeutic advantages of stretching. Another influential figure in the history of stretching is Dr. Andrew Taylor, who introduced the Science of Osteopathy in 1874. The importance of stretching has been recognized for centuries. Now, let's discuss how stretching can help in the holistic development of our bodies.

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The term “use it or lose it” is the general rule of thumb for stretching. The less you stretch your muscles, the less flexibility you will have. Stretching contributes to the elasticity of the muscles, which assists the joints in stabilization and support. It also helps to oxygenate the muscles for better growth and recovery. The movements practiced while stretching can help increase range of motion for a better workout, corrective exercises, and preventative maintenance. By improving your workout through stretching, you will be able to activate more muscle fibers and therefore produce a bigger lift with a smaller chance of injury. Corrective exercises and preventative maintenance such as physical therapy/rehabilitation or intense muscle soreness and fatigue require “heavy” stretching. Corrective exercises combined with stretching will produce a better recovery rate and alleviate pain for any person with an anatomical injury.

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Identifying The Stretch

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OK! So, we've figured out some history and incentives for stretching. Now let's identify these stretching techniques. The first is the famous static stretching. You might be familiar with this style of stretching from gym class, sports, and some training sessions. The static stretch is an isometric movement, where you maintain the full movement and hold it for a designated period, as shown in the photo. The static stretch is the "Godfather" of stretching and has been popular for years. As science progressed, it has been determined that this stretch is best in specific situations. Studies show that static stretching should be performed after a workout or physical activity. If performed before a workout, the isometric motions will put a lot of strain on the muscle. This can do more harm than good. Since the muscle is not warmed up properly, there is greater risk of injury. Static stretching on inactive muscles is like bending beef jerky in one spot. It will easily snap under the pressure. Meanwhile, stretching after warming up is like bending a more tender piece of meat. It can be bent and flexed without breaking.

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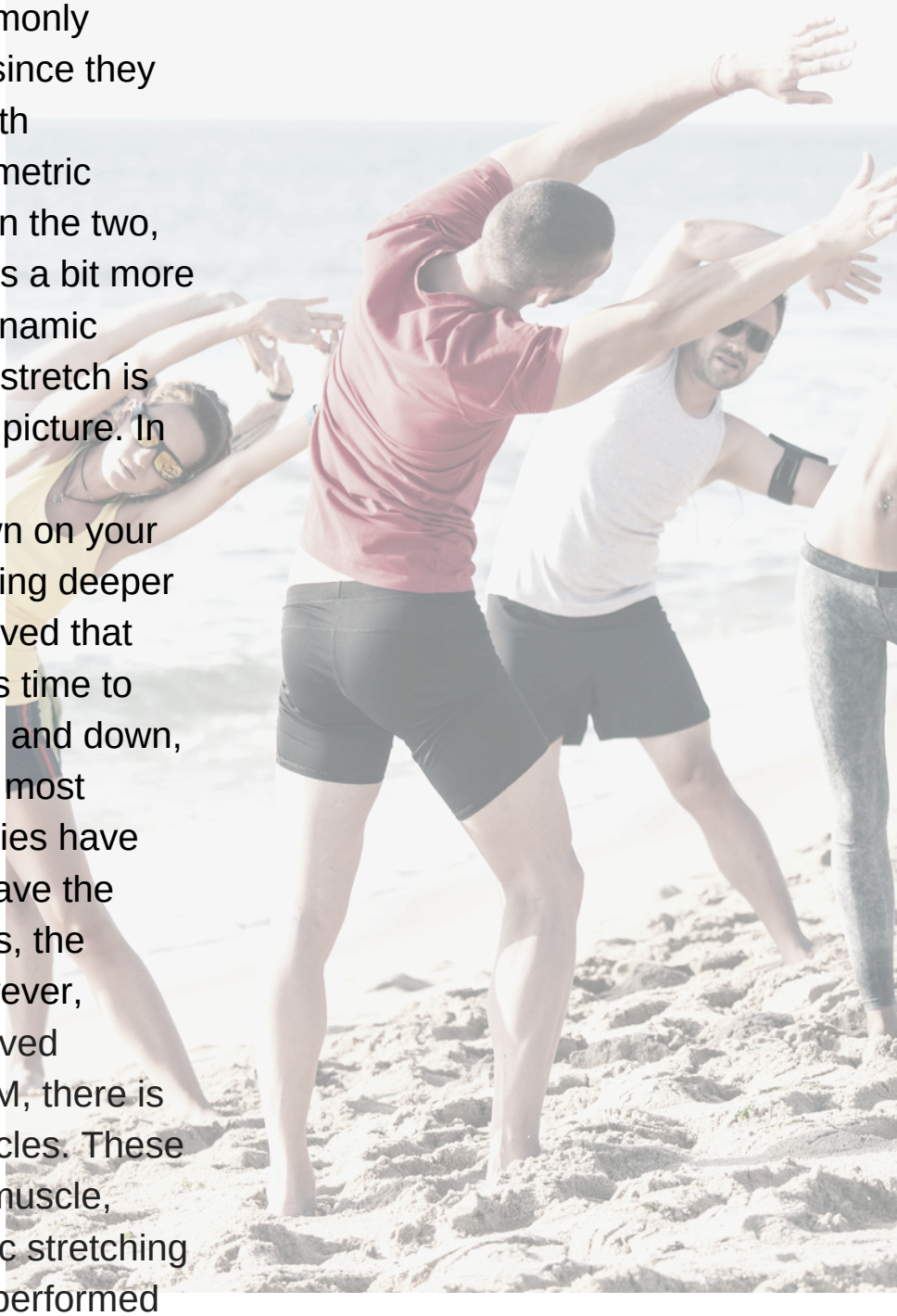
Another popular method is the ballistic/ bounce stretch. This stretch was once commonly confused with the dynamic stretch since they both use a similar methodology. Both techniques blend repetitive and isometric movements. The difference between the two, however, is that ballistic stretching is a bit more rhythmically aggressive than the dynamic stretch. The most common ballistic stretch is the toe touch, as exemplified in the picture. In this stretch, you would try to touch your toes, and bounce up-and- down on your feet (in a “yo-yo” motion) while leaning deeper into the stretch. Initially, it was believed that ballistic stretching gave the muscles time to warm up as the person bounced up and down, slowly increasing their ROM for the most efficient stretch. Unfortunately, studies have shown that ballistic stretches can have the same effect as static stretching. Yes, the bounce activates the muscles. However, because the person has not yet moved sufficiently enough to get a full ROM, there is too much stress placed on the muscles. These movements aggressively twist the muscle, making it more likely to tear. Ballistic stretching is therefore UNSAFE stretch to be performed in common practices



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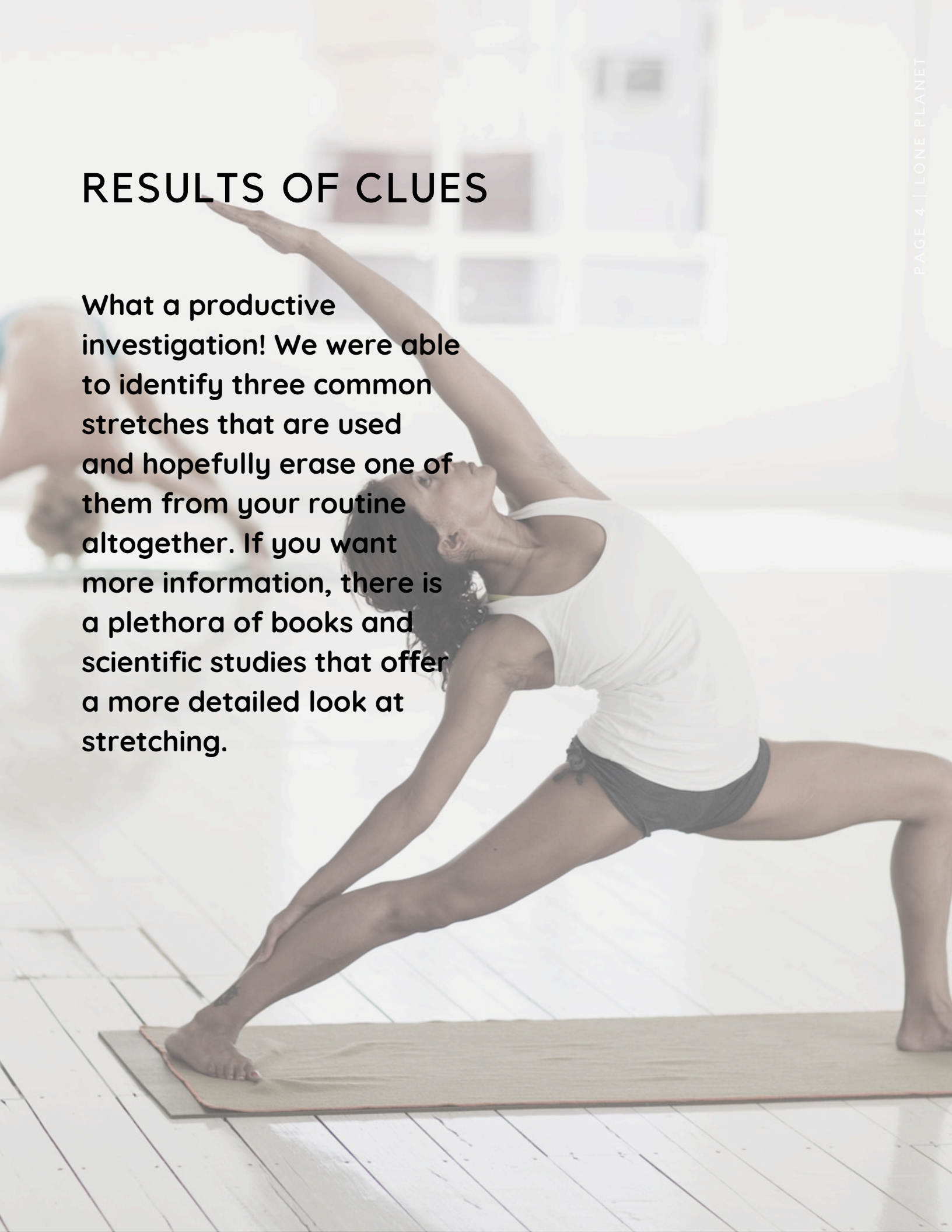
The dynamic stretch is the answer to your pre- workout problems. This stretch is performed through a combination of isometric and repetitive movements. Let's familiarize ourselves with the movement by looking at the photo below. This woman is performing a lunge with her arms fully extended to get a full range of motion (ROM). With this movement she is opening up her hips, activating her core and lower extremities, and stretching her shoulders. To make this exercise dynamic, she would walk while doing this movement for an appropriate distance and then walk back to her starting point. After a few repetitions of this and a few other dynamic stretches she would be ready to do a vigorous workout.

Another example of dynamic stretching is the classic squat preparation that is used by weight lifters before they dive under the bar and lift some serious weight. Two useful variations are the "pause rep" air squat and the "walk down" squat. To perform a pause rep squat, squat slowly. Then pause at the bottom for 2-3 seconds. This movement will help warm your muscles and increase hip, hamstring, and quad flexibility. Walk down squats begin by planting your feet at an appropriate distance to you squatting style. Next, use the end of the squat rack to walk your hands down and slowly descend into the squat, focusing on glute-hamstring activation. To help open up the hip cortex, pause for 2-3 seconds. These two variations of squats are key dynamic stretches that can improve the quality of your workout. BONUS TIP: For an extra challenge, try any of these workouts with a resistance band.

RESULTS OF CLUES



What a productive investigation! We were able to identify three common stretches that are used and hopefully erase one of them from your routine altogether. If you want more information, there is a plethora of books and scientific studies that offer a more detailed look at stretching.