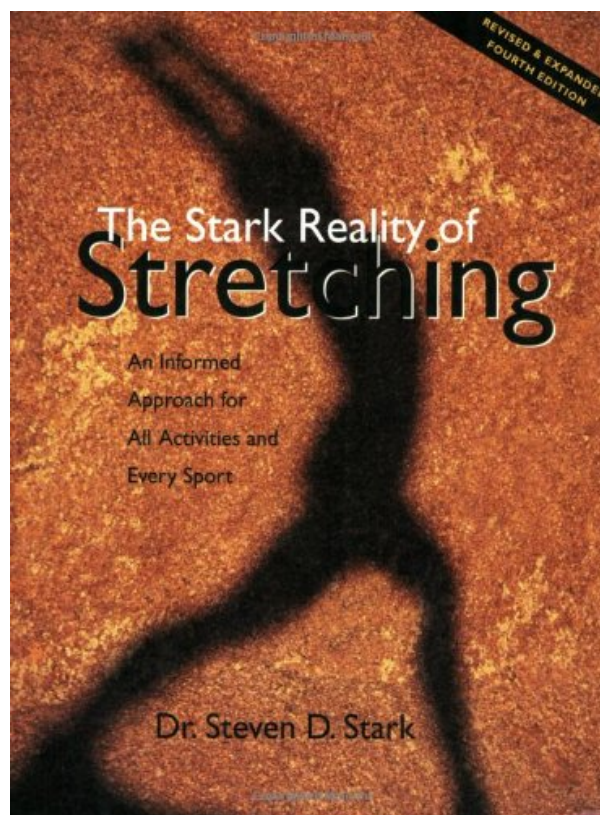
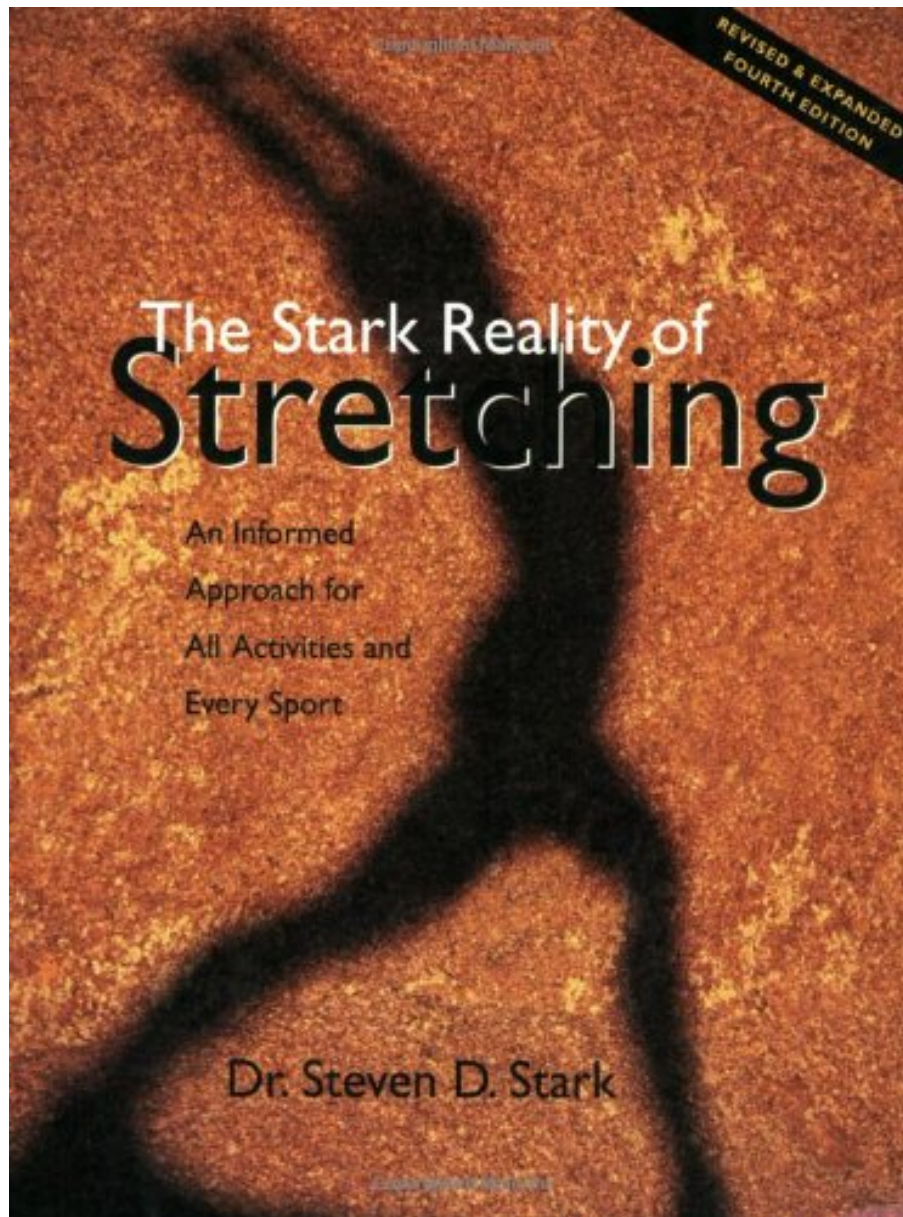


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Improper muscle preparation prior to exercise is the most common cause of acute pain, strain, and permanent damage. Many of these injuries are preventable with proper lower extremity stretching. This book addresses the need for warm-up exercises, analyzes the stretching process, and illustrates anatomy and basic biomechanics. Myths associated with stretching are dispelled. For example, many people believe that stretches and warm-up exercises are the same, when in fact, warm-up exercises should be a preparation for stretches. Applying the strategies outlined in this book will help keep an athlete healthy, build strength and power, and, most important prevent injury.

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Features

- Used Book in Good Condition

About the Author

Dr. Steven D. Stark founded the Podiatric Sports Medicine Group. He lives in Vancouver, Canada.

Most helpful customer reviews

14 of 14 people found the following review helpful.

Not bad, but one dimensional

By Singlemalt

For years I had practiced a series of stretches, picked up from various sources, in preparation for various physical activities that I enjoy: a little running, weight training, wing chun kung fu, and jeet kune do. Some of the stretches I had used were supposedly 'gentle' stretches, some even borrowed from yoga.

Well, I picked this book up after suffering, for the first time in my life at 37 years of age, SEVERE shin-splints. This book was partly instrumental in understanding the cause and alleviating the pain.

I would have to agree with other reviewers, though, that this book should include some upper body stretches, especially for the back. If you suffer back pain, it won't matter how well your lower body is stretched. A sore back will take you out of whatever sport you like to do.

I was surprised to see that some common stretches are just plain harmful and dangerous (for example, 'hurdlers' stretches inflict long-term damage to the knee ligaments of the trailing leg), including some that are part of Bob Anderson's book "Stretching." However, since Anderson's book is at least twenty years old, perhaps it is just in need of an update.

Update: since reading this book, I have spent a period with "The Wharton's Stretch Book" and later Thomas Kurz's "Scientific Stretching". "The Stark Reality of Stretching" focuses on static stretching, so in my opinion, the stretches it recommends are inappropriate before a sports activity. These stretches would be suitable as cool-down stretches or end-of-the-day relaxation stretches. A much better source for pre-sports stretching is "Scientific Stretching" by Thomas Kurz. This book simply doesn't cover the necessary bases for a comprehensive sports stretching program.

18 of 18 people found the following review helpful.

safe for beginners; insightful for the experienced

By A Customer

While I do have some complaints about this book, I think it is a worthy addition to the library of any serious athlete, martial artist (my case), or anyone who wants to stay fit. This book will demonstrate a safe way to stretch even for beginners and the terminally tight. There are clear diagrams of the targeted muscle groups. The "right" way to stretch is shown along with common mistakes that should be avoided--there are explanations of *why* these mistakes should be avoided (e.g. a mistake will end up stretching a ligament, not the targeted muscle). Explanations are given along with all the instructions--this is much more helpful than unexplained instructions and pictures, because the reader will understand what is happening, what he/she should or should not feel, etc. There are also explanations of the problems that can be caused if proper stretching is not practiced (e.g. bunions or plantar fasciitis pain could be caused by tight calf muscles). I am naturally flexible (can do both the side and straddle splits cold) and already stretch very regularly but I still found the explanations insightful.

Now the complaints... it would have been great if Dr. Stark also included exercises for the upper body. Given his podiatric background, the lower body focus is understandable but makes his book incomplete. If you want only one stretching book, this is not generalized enough (Bob Anderson's book is much broader but less insightful, in my opinion). Stark is also over-conservative, claiming that certain stretches ("skill-level stretches", like the splits) should only be practiced from a young age. I think that many people will find such opinions disheartening--I myself only attempted (and achieved) the splits after I was in my twenties, as have many others. All in all, though, it's better to err on the side of safety and I can't imagine anyone getting injured by his stretches. Get this book for safe lower-body stretching, but buy something else, like "Scientific Stretching", if you want to really push yourself.

12 of 12 people found the following review helpful.

Are you making the stretching mistakes explained by Stark?

By Richard Bejtlich

I have studied the martial arts for several years and ran cross country and indoor/outdoor track in high school. While I am not yet 30, I believe my lingering lower leg pain is due to poor "stretches" and exercises from earlier years in these activities. After reading Dr Stark's book, I will make changes in my exercise routine to hopefully prevent further damage.

I was shocked to see how many harmful "stretches" Dr Stark describes were taught by my coaches. Many trainers have no idea their desire to improve the conditioning of their athletes can cause long-term physical damage. (Guess what, coach? It's physically impossible to stretch the Achilles Tendon! Also, I can't stretch my hamstrings by standing, then bending over!)

Dr Stark clues the reader in to fundamental, powerful ideas, such as "loaded muscles can't stretch." Only relaxed muscles can stretch. Bouncing only causes muscles to cease relaxing.

I agree with an earlier reviewer that Dr Stark should address upper body stretching. While many of Dr

Stark's patients' complaints are caused by lower extremity problems, athletes need sound upper body guidance too.

Be forewarned on the content of this book. While it rates 224 pages, some of the material is repetitive, the font is huge, and sometimes only a few paragraphs appear on a single page. Still, the amount of whitespace doesn't detract from the depth of material. The diagrams are clear and the recommended stretches are easy to follow.

Anyone who seeks to learn how to properly prepare for athletics, and wishes to remain fit for life, will enjoy Dr Stark's book.

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