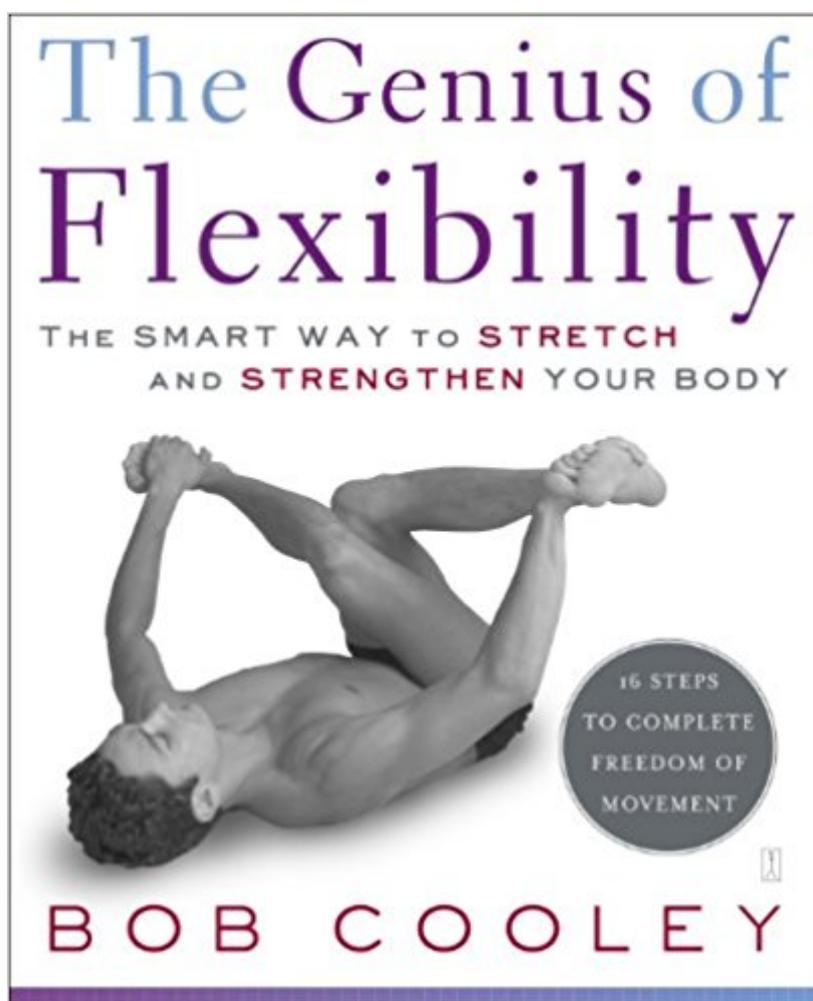


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The Genius Of Flexibility: The Smart Way To Stretch And Strengthen Your Body



Synopsis

Stretches for sixteen unique muscle groups with physiological and psychological benefits. The Technique: RESISTANCE STRETCHING® offers immediate, cumulative, and permanent increases in flexibility, takes the pain out of stretching, and protects you from injuring yourself by overstretching.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

If you've already tried everything, and you're SERIOUS about increasing flexibility, there are 3 essential books you must read about stretching: Relax Into Stretch by Pavel Tsatsouline, Stretching Scientifically by Thomas Kurz, and The Genius of Flexibility by Bob Cooley. That being said, there are a few points to consider before buying this book: 1. Cooley has the background and credentials to be considered an expert on flexibility training. (work with Olympic athletes, Meridian Flexibility System founder, etc...) That being said, you have to forgive his eccentricities and get to the heart of what's in the book...how to use resistance stretching techniques safely and effectively. 2. The heart of the book (which is 302 pp. long) can be found in Chapters 2 and 3 (pp. 17-28) and the stretches (Level 1 Workout, pp. 88-119) That's really all you need to read. Why do I say that? Because (1)

unless you believe increased flexibility will improve your love life, personality, awareness, concentration, physiological and psychological health, and give you spiritual insight about the universe, you don't need to read the other chapters. (I'm not joking, the list above only scratches the surface of the claims made by Cooley concerning flexibility) and (2) If you can do the stretches in Levels 2-3 you probably don't need to read this book.³ Sometimes Cooley's world view of flexibility negatively affects the book. For example, in all of the stretch routines, he doesn't tell you what muscles you are actually targeting for stretch...instead there's a number code for a chart you refer to that let's you know that particular stretch "improves circulation and increases the health of your pancreas".⁴

I have some background in this kind of health/exercise philosophy, so I was interested in what Cooley had to offer. I practice Bikram style Hatha Yoga, and I include "Anma Shiatsu" (Japanese "acupressure" oriented bodywork) as part of the services I offer as a licensed massage therapist. I've also practiced three methods of Chi Kung (18 Buddha Hands, Muscle Tendon Change, and Flying Phoenix), lifted weights and practiced martial arts oriented calisthenics for more than a decade. So I know a bit about the so-called 'meridians' on which Cooley's method is based. And I have to admit that I am impressed and enthusiastic about what Cooley reveals here. I've experimented with the first two courses of 'resistance' stretches that Cooley's book offers for the last month. I agree with one of the previous reviewers - you do have to 'dig' into them. It takes concentration to do them correctly and you expend a fair amount of energy pitting muscle groups against each other. It's very reminiscent of the old Atlas-style 'dynamic tension' exercises. But the Atlas exercises were good exercises, and people who stuck with them and did them faithfully gained great benefit from them. I am convinced that this would be the case with Cooley's system as well. I actually could feel some of the stretches increasing the energy flow through well defined pathways (not always the ones depicted in the book) and in a few cases, could actually feel a tug in my liver and spleen and prostate and lungs. Spend 20-40 minutes performing 16 resistance stretches properly, with good concentration and effort, and you will feel as if you've had one of the most thorough and beneficial workouts of your life. And if you overdo it, you WILL be tired and sore the next day.

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