

Stretching The Boundaries

JON ROBINSON

Happy New Year, People! You've landed on the fitness segment... I don't know if that was by chance or if you made your way here on purpose, but either way, this is the time of year when people tend to make a real concerted effort to improve their fitness and adopt healthier ways. Is that you? If so, I would imagine you would want to work as efficiently as possible. Exercise can be physically tough, time-consuming and money-consuming to boot, so it makes no sense (at least to me anyways!) not to undertake any kind of activity that would serve no purpose. Allow me to clarify this statement though; if the sole purpose of the activity is pleasure then that's reason enough to do it, but for many, exercise is a pain in the ass during January and occasionally February.

This next point is probably going to develop some opposition, but I'll state my reason for the claims by referring to thorough scientific experiments undertaken by reputable figures in the world of exercise physiology. The point is, stretching is not at all effective, so if you're looking to develop a fitness routine, you could be using your time much more productively. Getting fit, (whatever that means to you) is really tough so undertaking any activity that gets in the way isn't going to help.

Ok, so you need some citations to back this up? There are literally dozens of reputable sources that do so.

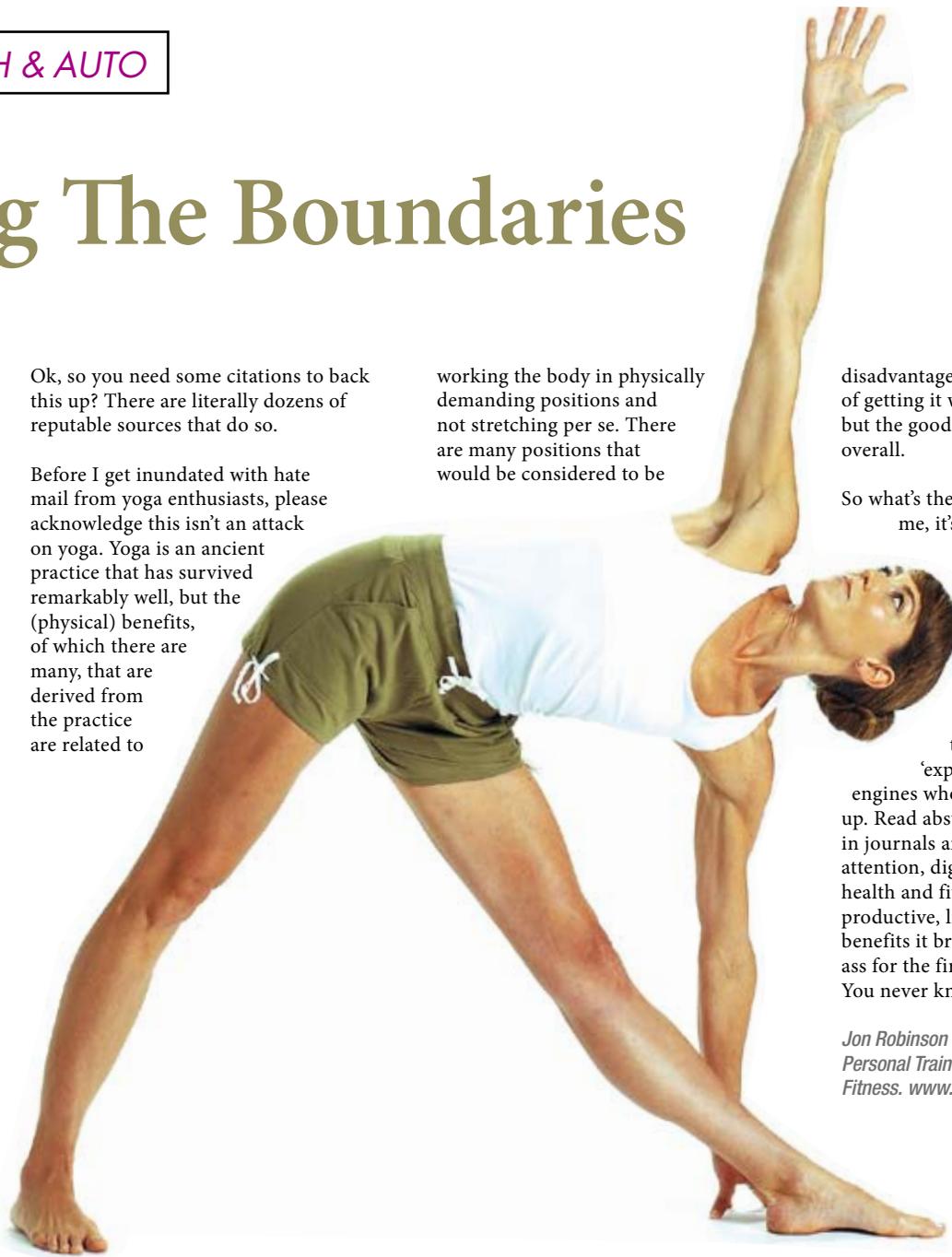
Before I get inundated with hate mail from yoga enthusiasts, please acknowledge this isn't an attack on yoga. Yoga is an ancient practice that has survived remarkably well, but the (physical) benefits, of which there are many, that are derived from the practice are related to

working the body in physically demanding positions and not stretching per se. There are many positions that would be considered to be

disadvantageous to the body in terms of getting it working well mechanically, but the good tends to outweigh the bad overall.

So what's the point of these claims? For me, it's simply to suggest that you should invest some time into learning about fitness from good sources rather than giving into the rate reductions kicking around at this time of year. You'll never look like the chemically-enhanced 'experts' you see on search engines who seem to just make stuff up. Read abstracts from the real experts in journals and if something grabs your attention, dig deeper and hopefully health and fitness will become a productive, lifelong pleasure with all the benefits it brings; not just a pain in the ass for the first two months of the year. You never know, you might just enjoy it!

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Flying High

MARK ANDREWS

It's no accident that Bentley chose Beijing for the international media drive of their new Flying Spur. Greater China is now their number two market, and accounted for 45 per cent of sales of the first generation Flying Spur which, with the new model, they are hoping to increase to 60 per cent.

Bentley is keen to point out that the latest Flying Spur is an all-new model, but with its evolutionary approach to design, it could well pass for a facelift of the previous generation. Going along with the dropping of the Continental name, the headlight arrangement is no longer the same as its GT sibling, and the outer lamps are now larger than the inner ones. There is a less boxy look than the old model with sculpted lines running the length of the car. Surprisingly, the car is a slippery beast with a drag coefficient of only 0.29.

Moving onto the interior, everything except for the control dials and stalks are swathed in either luxurious leather or wood veneer. Everything screams quality right down to the Breitling clock – there are no hard plastics to complain about! Buyers have a choice of 12 leathers and two veneers to go with the 17 standard paint schemes. For a price, everything is negotiable and there are over a hundred extended paint colours! However, with this level of customisation, it would be good to have a key fob that is at least a little different, spare the badges, to that of the new Volkswagen Santana.



As can be expected, pretty much everything is electric right down to the power open and close boot. As well as dropping the Continental name there is an emphasis on the passenger experience, as most owners are likely to be chauffeured. In the rear, there is now what Bentley call a Touch Screen Remote (TSR) which controls the front infotainment unit, rear seat heating and ventilation, climate, rear blind and gives vehicle data. Rear seats are electrically adjustable and have a comfortable massage function. There is an option for two ten-inch LCD screens mounted on the front seat backs along with Wi-Fi. The fold down rear armrest can house an optional champagne cooler and there is also a fixed rear central console four-seater option.

Put your foot down and the car is deceptively fast, and tops out at over 300km/h. The eight-speed ZF gearbox provides near imperceptible shifts, but select the sports mode and use the steering column mounted paddle shifts, and the car drops its cool demeanour with a hearty growl. Permanent, rear biased, all wheel drive ensures excellent road holding. The sheer size of the car though means it is always most at home as a highway cruiser.

Instrumentation, for the price, really should be better. The new BMW 3 Series has a head up display and yet the Bentley, a much faster car, makes do with a relatively

low mounted sat nav and a small display sandwiched between the rev counter and speedometer.

Only the keenest drivers will notice any real difference between the air suspension's comfort and sport settings (largely tuned to the former). Bentley has also made considerable efforts to dampen noise, creating a cossetting environment.

If this car were a person, it would be an English gentleman; it's refined and whilst it's a little staid on the surface, it has unbridled power underneath. Prices start at RMB 4,058,000.

