



the Wallabies, Melbourne Rebels and Perth Glory. "Elite athletes like it because it's simple and efficient and strengthens your outer ranges of movement to help prevent injuries," says Valera. At the non-elite level, trainers and yoga instructors who've attended Stick Mobility courses are introducing classes to their venues.

The stick makes stretches better by adding a strength component. Pulling or pushing it ensures you're never only stretching. "The stick gives kinesthetic and visual feedback to coaches and their clients," says Dunphy. "It aids body awareness and sharpens coordination." You'll feel that after class, whether you're squatting, lunging or swinging a golf club.

After consulting Matt

Berenc, Equinox's director of education, McCaw designed the 30-minute class. She views it as the muscle equivalent of flossing: an addition to your classic workout. About 28 minutes in, I understand why. I'm sweating and my heart rate's purring along as I lie on my back – stick overhead – doing single-leg hip thrusts.

I've done hip thrusts before, but I've never felt this connected, from my feet through my knees and hips and up my spine. Some of it may be greater awareness, since McCaw said I should feel this stretch in these areas. But leaning into the stick certainly helps me focus.

When class is over, my lower back and hips have gotten a serious workout – and they've never felt better. ■

STICKY NOTES

Ready to take your workout recovery sessions to the next level? Best Stretch Ever co-creator Dana McCaw shows you how below, with her three favourite Stick Mobility moves

BOW AND ARROW

Benefits: Stretches and strengthens core; improves mobility of back, shoulders and hips; strengthens grip.
Do it: Place the stick outside of and in line with your right big toe. Put your right hand on the logo and your left at the top. Push your hips and right hand away from each other while vigorously pulling up with your left hand. Hold each bow and arrow for 10-15 seconds; do 3-5 reps on each side. Do 3 sets.



MONKEY HANG

Benefits: Stretches back, chest and lats; strengthens grip and abs; improves posture.
Do it: Grip the stick with your left hand at the top. Stand with feet hip-width apart. Root the stick just a little bit in front of you. Hinge your hips and bend your knees. Rotate your torso so your chest faces the stick; grab its bottom end with your right hand. Feel the stretch. Hold for 10-15 seconds; do 3 reps per side. Do 3 sets.

SLAP SHOT

Benefits: Mobilises lower spine, shoulders, chest, hips and ankles; strengthens abs.
Do it: Place the stick across your lower back, palms facing forward, feet wide. Hinge your hips, knees slightly bent. Rotate 1 end downward until it's anchored; feel a stretch. Shift your weight slowly to your left hip. Straighten your right leg; hold for 10 seconds. Repeat on the other side. That's 1 rep; do 3-5 per side.

