

Core Stability

Want to *have a ball* exercising? Not only is a stability ball fun, using it strengthens your abdominals, improves balance, and corrects posture. Most likely you have seen these large, brightly colored, inflatable balls with other exercise equipment. Performing exercises on an unstable surface, such as a ball requires the use of multiple muscles, particularly the muscles deep in your back and abdomen, or the core muscles.

The core muscles are comparable to the foundation of a building. The core muscles stabilize the spine, which provides a base of support for the body's extremities to move. For this reason, core strength is important in athletics, as well as every day activities. Before the motion of an arm or leg, the core muscles contract, in order to protect the spinal column and support the movement.

The stability ball or Swiss ball is a versatile piece of exercise equipment. Using the ball during resistance training provides strengthening of the core muscles simultaneously. For example, the ball can be used as a bench for bench presses to strengthen the chest. While lying on the ball your core muscles are working to keep you on the ball and keep your hips parallel with your shoulders. Your body is doing this while you raise your arms over your chest. The stability ball can be used in leg, arm, and abdominal exercises. Engaging the abdominal and back muscles during exercise and activity protects the spine and can help prevent low back pain, while improving posture and balance.

Always talk to your physician before beginning an exercise program..