

# STABILITY BALL

## *What is a Stability Ball?*

The Stability ball has many names (i.e. exercise ball, physioball, fitness ball, etc.). It was originally created to use with rehabilitation patients but has moved into the exercise realm. The ball is filled with air, can be from 35 to 85 centimeters, and is made of elastic soft PVC. Stability balls are inexpensive and portable.

## *Why use?*

When using the ball to exercise, smaller stabilizing muscles are engaged to help maintain balance. The instability of the ball causes the muscles of the back and core to be engaged when performing the exercises. Training with a stability ball has many benefits which include to:

1. Improve balance and coordination
2. Strengthen and tone muscles
3. Improve range of motion
4. Improve posture

## *How to select a ball?*

To find the ball that is right for you, sit on the ball like you would sit in a chair. (Feet should be flat on the floor, knees form a 90 degree angle, and legs are parallel to the ground.) The table below provides some general guidelines for selecting a ball based on your height.

Ball Size (cm)	Maximum Ball Size (in.)	Your Height
45 cm	17 in.	Under 5'
55 cm	21 in.	5' – 5' 7"
65 cm	25 in.	5' 8" – 6' 2"
75 cm	29 in.	Over 6' 3"

<http://www.nwhealth.edu/healthyU/getMoving/balls.html>

## *Safety*

Before beginning an exercise routine using a stability ball make sure to complete a total body warm-up for 3-5 minutes.

1. Perform the exercise on a solid surface (i.e. floor) before attempting the exercise on the ball.
2. Wear shoes so your feet do not slip on the floor.
3. Exercise with a shirt because when the body becomes wet it is easy to slip off the ball.
4. Perform the exercises with slow and controlled movement.

## ***How to use a Stability ball?***

Body alignment is important when using a stability ball. With most exercises, you want to maintain a neutral alignment of the spine. Listed below are two areas to focus on when performing ball exercises.

- 1) Head - You want to think of a straight line from your head down through the hips (if you are sitting on the ball). It is important to not hyperflex your neck.
- 2) Core - You want to engage your core by pulling your belly button to your spine.

## ***How to create a Stability ball routine?***

First, familiarize yourself with the ball exercises then perform the exercises on the floor before progressing to the ball. To begin, select five to six exercises. Arrange the exercises from 1 to 6. Perform each exercise then move to the next exercise. Do not worry about time or number of repetitions the first time you perform the routine.

As your strength and balance improves, perform each exercise for 6 seconds or 6 repetitions then progress to 8, 10, 12, or 16 secs or reps per exercise.

<b>Fitness Level</b>	<b>Number of Exercises</b>	<b>Number of Reps or Time per exercise</b>
<b>Beginner</b>	5-6	6-10
<b>Intermediate</b>	6-10	8-12
<b>Advanced</b>	8-12	10-20

Here are two routines to try:

- Stability ball beginning routine
- Stability ball core routine