

To YOUR Health

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WELCOA'S ON-LINE GENERAL WELLNESS BULLETIN

CONSIDER THIS...

Take Your Medicine (Ball)

Old-Fashioned Medicine Balls Are Hot!

Teddy Roosevelt used one; so did Charles Atlas. Medicine balls, about the size of a basketball, are filled with sand and can weigh-in anywhere from 1 to 20 pounds. They complement fitness balls in working the core muscles. Here are some ways to use them.

- Wrap your arms around one while doing crunches.
- Play "catch" with a partner.
- Lay on your stomach, arms out in front holding the medicine ball. Lift the ball six inches off the ground.
- Hold the ball in front of you and take long, lunging steps forward.
- Stand with the ball over your head. Bend at waist, keeping arms straight. Touch ball to ground, and stand back up.

Over time these exercises will greatly strengthen your core muscles and help reduce injury. This really is preventive medicine!

★ ★ ★ FEATURE ARTICLE ★ ★ ★

GET ON THE BALL

TRAINING WITH FITNESS BALLS

The hottest sensation in fitness doesn't cost an arm and a leg, it doesn't require lots of room, and it only takes about two minutes to set up. In fact, it's a ball! No really, it's a ball. Sometimes known as a Swiss, fitness, or strength ball, these round inflated balls are key to strengthening your "core." The core refers to the muscles in the abdominal, lower back and hip areas that are often called "the guardians of the spine."

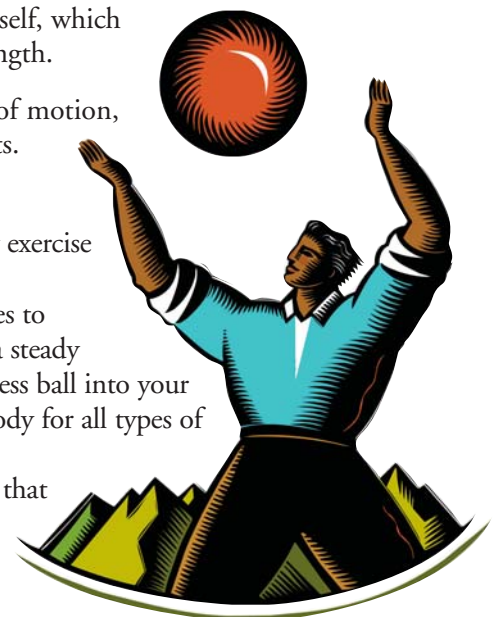
Fitness Ball Benefits

Swiss balls greatly benefit a general strengthening program, specific strengthening for life tasks, or sports-specific training. Here are a few examples:

- Sitting on a fitness ball to perform exercises with weights forces you to stabilize yourself, which improves balance and overall muscle strength.
- Fitness balls allow for a full range of motion, especially for back and ab workouts.

Have A Ball

Fitness balls provide something that many exercise machines can't—the feeling that you are "unbalanced," thereby forcing your muscles to constantly contract to hold your body in a steady position. In actuality, incorporating a fitness ball into your exercise routine will better prepare your body for all types of functional movement rather than just the up and down and side to side movements that weight training provides. So get on the ball!



"The Wellness Councils of America is dedicated to building world-class corporate wellness programs."

TRAINING FOR A LONG, VITAL LIFE

Is your energy level noticeably lower than a few years ago? This may be due to your aerobic fitness level. Aerobic fitness is a measure of your body's ability to use oxygen. The more oxygen you can use, the more work you can do. As you age, you lose up to 40 percent of your vital capacity (oxygen use). However, you can slow and even reverse this loss by increasing your activity level.

Know The Aerobic Facts

Aerobic fitness is maintained by participating in activities involving repetition: walking, running, skating, swimming, etc. Walking briskly for 45 minutes improves aerobic fitness, improves your quality of life, and slows the loss of capacity for work. Aerobic fitness helps you burn calories, control weight, increase energy, and helps improve your sleep. Exercise also keeps your immune system functioning at a high level, reducing colds and other illnesses. Just move about, and your body and soul will thank you.

Warning Signs Of Loss Of Aerobic Fitness

You know you need to increase your aerobic fitness activities when:

- Basic housework is tiring and difficult to complete.
- Your work and daily routine has no continuous large muscle activity.
- You are over 30 years of age.
- Your daily routine makes you tired and you have no energy left in reserve.
- You almost always minimize physical demands like using the elevator and not the stairs, or parking as close as possible to an entrance.

Source: National Digestive Diseases Information Clearinghouse

Increase Your Physical Activity

Begin and end your aerobic activity with light or easy movement. You need to do something every day, building up to the equivalent of a half hour or more of moderately intensive activity. Your activities can be an accumulation of 5 or 10 minute episodes, or one continuous stretch of activity. You can do brisk walks at twice the pace of normal walking, and you will improve your aerobic fitness.

Activities To Include In A Vital Life

Build some of these activities into your daily routine and you can increase your odds for a long, vital life.

- Actively do yard work.
- Turn on music and dance around the house.
- Take brisk walks as short as 5 minutes in length.
- Do vacuuming and other housework with more intensity.
- Walk the dog.
- Park the car farther away from entrances.
- Find a hobby or recreational activity that requires moderate-intensity movement.

