

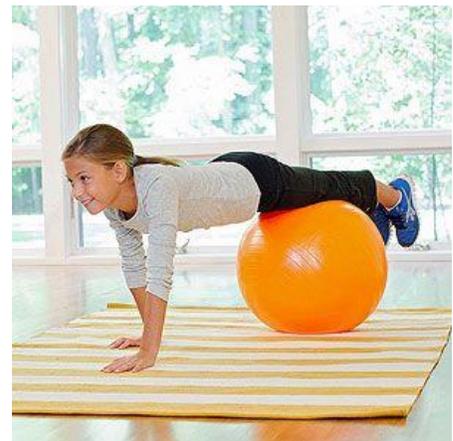
Core - Exercise Ball Activities

Core stability is the development of the hips/pelvis and trunk muscles that stabilize, align, and move the trunk of the body and create a stable base before we move. Building core stability is important for your child as it builds a strong foundation for many other functional skills such as balance, gross motor and fine motor skills, among others.

Ball size – An exercise ball involves playful movement for your child while improving balance, strength and stability. When picking a ball you want to make sure your child can sit on it with their feet on the floor and their knees and hips at 90-degree angles.

Exercise Ball Activities

- **Sit and Bounce** – bouncing on the balls requires the muscles of the core to engage each time your child lands on the ball. This activity may serve as a sensory regulation tool for some children.
- **Sit ups** – have your child lay on his/her back on the ball and roll backward to pick items up from the floor (ie. would be reaching backward, over his/her head), encourage your child to sit up with the item. To assist your child, you can begin to roll the ball back forward until he/she is able to sit up on his/her own.
- **Row your boat** – In a seated position have your child slightly roll side to side or forward and backward.
- **On Top of the World** – Have your child sit up straight and focus on keeping stomach muscles tight. See if your child can lift each foot a few inches off the ground for ten seconds. For an extra challenge lift and hold both feet up. (You may want to spot your child from behind).
- **Wall Squat** – Have your child place the ball between their lower back and a wall, then slowly squat until their knees are at 90 degrees. Keeping the core muscles tight, they should then push back to an upright position.
- **Wheelbarrow Walk** – your child's stomach should be on the ball while he/she walks out on his/her hands to get a toy/book etc. Encourage your child to walk back with the toy. Initially your child may require assistance with balance (support lightly at the hips). Encourage your child to walk out as far as having the knees supported by the ball. Watch for a sagging back and excessive bending at the hips – if this is observed, limit the distance your child walks out from the ball.
- **Hand-Walking the Plank** – Starting facedown with your child's chest on the ball, have them slowly roll forward until their palms are flat on the floor, then continue to walk their hands forward until their feet are on top of the ball and their body is in a push-up position. From there, have them slowly roll back to their starting position (you can hold your child's hips as they move).
- **Leg Kicks** – Have your child lie on their back with their hands at their side and knees tucked into chest. Gently throw an exercise ball toward your child, and have them straighten their legs to kick the ball back to you with their feet.



** Please ensure that you are following the recommendations on each activity for maintaining alignment to maximize the benefit and prevent injury. Always make sure that when your child is completing ANY of these exercises that they are breathing! Breath holding allows your child to compensate and not use the crucial core muscles that these exercises target. Activities that ensure your child is not breath holding include **singing a song, counting out loud, naming animals and making sounds, naming color/shapes/etc.***