Core and stability training has become a cornerstone of good fitness programs. The big ball provides the best venue for improving abdominal and back strength and endurance, stability training for shoulders and hips, and proprioceptor training (balance).

Ball work can be done as part of a stability circuit or a station in a regular strength and cardio circuit. The base level for any exercise is just to maintain posture on the ball.

Stability balls can also be used in many games using playground or other balls, as well as in cooperative learning situations.

**Things to do with a ball**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>On the ball</th>
<th>Next to the ball</th>
<th>Prone on ball</th>
<th>On floor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balance</td>
<td>Side bend</td>
<td>Back extensions</td>
<td>Abdominal curls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic tilt progression</td>
<td>Side balance w/ leg abduction</td>
<td>Diagonal reach</td>
<td>Leg curl and obliques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abdominal curls</td>
<td></td>
<td>Roll out</td>
<td>Reverse curls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridge hip extension</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hip tuck</td>
<td>Foot to hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surf</td>
<td></td>
<td>Walk outs w/ push up</td>
<td>Pilates roll</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Supine hip extension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lying leg abduction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**On the ball**
- **Balance** - Sit on top of the ball and balance by lifting feet off the ground.
- **Basic Tilt Progression** - Sit on top of the ball. Shift pelvis forward while rolling out on the ball, hands on lower abdomen to cue tightening transverse
abdominals. Progress to hands out forward during pelvic tilt roll out. Raise and lower arms during pelvis tilt rollout. Raise knee (leg) with pelvic tilt rollout.

**Curls** - Sit on an angle on the ball. The closer the buttocks are from the floor, the easier the curl. Pull the ribs toward the hips while tucking pelvis to raise the hips.

**Bridge hip extension** - Resting head and shoulders on ball, stabilize with legs by stacking knees over ankles.

**Surf** - Balance on top of ball on hands and knees; then just knees.

**Next to the ball**

**Side bend** - Lying sideways on the ball, lower leg bent at knee to make a larger base, top leg bracing against floor. Bend laterally to take the rib cage toward the hip.

**Side Balance** - Lying sideways on the ball, stack ankles to provide a narrow base of support. Raise and lower (abduct) top leg to challenge balance.

**Prone on the ball**

**Back extensions** - Bracing toes on floor and hips into ball, raise and lower upper body.

**Diagonal reach** - Lying prone on the ball, extend opposing arm and leg to balance. Switch sides.

**Roll out** - On knees, facing the ball, brace forearms into ball while rolling ball away, taking weight onto ball and off knees.

**Hip tuck** - Prone on the ball, walk out hands until thighs are on ball. Contract abs to an isometric contraction. Increase stability work by contracting hips and knees to roll the ball under the body.

**Walk out with push-ups** - From a prone position on ball, walk out on hands and balance on hips, thighs or feet. Add push ups.

**Supine on the floor**

**Abdominal curls** - “Sitting” with lower legs on ball, curl up.

**Leg curl and obliques** - Rest heels on top of the ball. Bend knees to roll the ball toward the buttocks. At full contraction, drop knees to the side to engage obliques.

**Reverse curls** - Squeeze ball between buttocks and heels. Contract abs to lift the ball off the floor.

**Foot to hand** - Squeeze ball between ankles and lift legs to pass ball to hands extended above chest. Touch ball to floor behind head while lowering ankles to floor. To protect the lower back, bend the knees and/or brace hands under the buttocks to keep back on the floor.
Pilates roll - With arms out at sides to provide a base of support, squeeze ball between knees, with hips bent. Roll lower body side to side to touch outer thigh to floor. Keeps shoulders and low back on the floor.

Supine hip extension - Rest lower legs on ball. Raise and lower hips.

Lying Leg Abduction - Lying sideways, raise legs while holding ball between legs.

Games to play with a stability ball

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partner</th>
<th>Small Group</th>
<th>Large Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Round the Clock</td>
<td>Pass the Egg</td>
<td>Tag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seated Bounces</td>
<td>Football</td>
<td>All It</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butt Sit Pass</td>
<td>Train Track</td>
<td>Indiana Jones</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Partner

Round the One-Minute Clock* - sitting back to back, partners pass the ball around as many times as they can in one minute.

Seated Bounces* - one partner “sits” on the wall with the ball at their ball and passes (or bounces) a ball to the partners sitting (balancing) on a ball.

Butt Sit Pass* - partners sit parallel to each other and facing opposite directions. Their knees are bent and their heels are on the ground. They pass the ball as many times as possible in one minute.

Small Group

Pass the Egg* - with one ball per group of at least 4, players lie in a circle, head to toe, and move the ball around the circle by sitting up and passing it into the hands of the players in front of them.

Football* - with one ball per group of 4-6 players lie in a circle with heads in the middle. They pass the ball with their feet only.

Train Track - Participants create a track for the stability ball by lying down side by side and moving the ball with hands (and feet). Once they pass the ball, they need to run to the end of the line and lie down to create more track.

Large Group

Tag - each player straddles a stability ball and bounces to avoid being tagged “it”. The playing area is defined and players may not bounce out of the boundary or get off the ball to avoid being tagged.

All It * - a variation of tag where players score points for tagging others.
No “tag backs” or tagging the same player repeatedly.
Indiana Jones - a large group activity arranged in two concentric circles. “Indy” gets between the two circles and attempts to avoid the rolling ball. The outer and inner circles try to tag Indy with the ball.