



Stability Ball Core Exercises

By Amanda McMurray, Kinesiologist at Mixx Fitness Studio

During training sessions clients often ask me, “what exactly is the core and why do I need to train it?” Generally I find that clients know core exercises are beneficial but are not exactly sure why.

The core is made up of muscles which run along the torso and which have many functions including stabilizing the spine and pelvis, moving the torso in various directions and maintaining good posture. Core muscles include the rectus abdominis, internal and external obliques, and transverse abdominis which make up the abdominals and the erector spinae and multifidus which are found in the back.

The benefits of having a well conditioned core include decreased risk of back pain, improved function during daily activities and improved athletic performance.

Below are five core exercises you can do on a stability ball to help tighten and tone your core.



Ball Crunch - 2 sets of 15 repetitions

Sit on a ball and walk your feet forward until your lower back is supported by the ball. Place hands beside your head and contract the abdominal muscles by pulling your belly button in towards the spine. Slowly crunch up by lifting your shoulders off the ball. Return to starting position and repeat.



Ball Plank Extensions - 2 sets held for 15-30 seconds

Balance with your forearms on top of a ball and toes on the floor. Lift your chest off the ball and focus on keeping the abdominals contracted. Hold the position without arching the lower back or letting your hips lift up. To make this exercise harder push the ball away from you with your elbows then pull it back in. Repeat this motion while holding the plank.



Roll-Out - 2 sets of 15 repetitions

Begin by kneeling on a mat with your hands on top of a ball, arms extended and abdominals contracted. Slowly roll the ball away from the body as far as you can without arching the lower back. Roll the ball back to starting position and repeat.



Low Back Extension - 2 sets of 15 repetitions

Lay with your hips and lower torso on top of a ball and feet on the ground. The further apart your feet are during the exercise the easier it will be to balance. If needed, place your feet against a wall for extra support. Lean over the ball with hands beside your head. Lift up until your entire body forms a straight line from head to toes and a slight arch is felt in the lower back. Lower back down and repeat.



Supine Twists - 2 sets of 10 twists per side

Lay with your shoulder blades on top of a ball and hips up to form a bridge. Arms should be extended above you with hands together. Keeping the abdominals contracted slowly roll to one side until arms are parallel with the floor. Try to keep hips level during the exercise. Roll back to center then over to the opposite side. Repeat.