

Ball Exercises Starter Kit

8 Simple Routines To Help You Gain Balance And Coordination

The ball exercises for beginners are a series of Pilates mat exercises using an exercise ball, also known as a Swiss ball, Pilates ball, fitness ball or stability ball. Before you get on the ball, read our Exercise Ball Workout article to get some basics for working safely on your stability ball.

The ball exercises for beginners begin with simple ab exercises and progresses into a beginner Pilates routine. As you go along, remember to utilize your Pilates breathing and try to keep any extra tension out of your neck and shoulders.

• Basic Abdominal Curls:

On a mat, lie on your back with the ball placed under your knees. Knees bent in a 90 degree angle and held together. Place hands behind your head with elbows wide. Inhale stay, exhale and curl head and shoulders off the mat. Inhale to stay (with eyes on your thighs), exhale and return to the mat. Repeat 10 times. Keep tempo slow and controlled.

• Ab Curl With Ball Roll

Lie on back with knees bent and feet placed on the mat hips width apart. Place the exercise ball on your rib cage and hold with fingertips. Inhale to stay, exhale to curl head and shoulders off the mat rolling the ball up your thighs. Inhale to stay, exhale and return to starting position. Repeat 10 times. Remember to keep your shoulders down as you do the curl.

• The Hundred

Lie on your back with the ball placed under your knees, knees bent at a 90 degree angle and held together. Inhale to stay, exhale and curl your head and shoulders off the mat, fingertips reaching long. Pump the arms 6 inches off the mat up and down in a vigorous manner. Breathe in through your nose for five counts, exhale through your mouth for five counts. Continue for 100 breaths. Return to your starting position. Remember to keep shoulders down and neck long. Feel your lower back firmly connected to the mat and your abdominals engaged.

• Half Roll Up

Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet placed on the mat, legs together. Holding the ball between your hands, take the ball over your head. (Remember to keep your shoulders down) Inhale as you lift the ball to the ceiling, exhale and curl head and shoulders off the mat reaching the ball to your knees, inhale to stay, exhale to roll back to your starting position. Repeat 6-8 times.

• Leg Circles

Lie on your back, knees bent and on the ball. The ball is placed under ankle and calf. Arms are down reaching long at your sides. Lift your right leg into the air, keeping your bottom on the mat. Inhale to cross the leg over your midline, exhale to circle the leg back to start. Repeat 5 times clockwise, 5 times counterclockwise, and then repeat with left leg. Remember to keep the ball, and your body, still. Try to keep tension out of your neck and shoulders.

- **Obliques**

Lie on your back with knees bent and feet on the mat. Place the ball between your knees. Hands behind your head, elbows wide.

Inhale to stay, exhale curl head and shoulders off the mat and twist the right side of your ribcage across the body as you squeeze the ball. Inhale returning to center and lowering down. Repeat working the left side of ribcage across your body. Repeat 10 times to each side. Remember to keep shoulders down and elbows wide.

- **Inner Thigh Squeeze**

After completing the obliques exercise, remain on your back with ball between knees and squeeze the ball hard, and release. Repeat 10 times.

- **Hip Lift**

Lie on your back with your calves resting on the ball. Knees are bent and remain together. Arms long at your sides. Inhale to stay, exhale and roll your bottom and lower back off the mat one vertebra at a time until your legs are straight and your body is in a straight line. Inhale to stay, exhale to roll your spine down sequentially returning the ball to your starting position. Repeat 5 times. Try to keep the ball from swaying and use abdominal strength to control your movements. Squeeze your glutes and the back of your legs when you are in the plank position.

Continue working on these ball exercises for beginners until you feel comfortable and in total control. Advance to the ball exercises for intermediate level when you have increased your strength and balance enough to execute the ball exercises for beginners easily. A session with a certified Pilates instructor will assist you in reaching your goals and will insure that you are performing the ball exercises correctly.