

A STEM in the Park

Take Home Activity

STEM

in the **PARK**™

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics



Balance Training

Balance training is beneficial for all ages. It helps improve your coordination, athletic skill and posture. You can increase balance by increasing core strength. If you have access to a Stability ball (a large inflated plastic exercise ball) or a BOSU Balance Trainer, (or BOSU ball as it is often called). The BOSU ball is a fitness training device, consisting of an inflated rubber hemisphere attached to a rigid platform. It is also referred to as the “blue half-ball”, because it looks like a stability ball cut in half. These are great tools to help you improve your core stabilization.

Stability Ball:

There are many exercises you can do with a stability ball to build core strength. You can begin by sitting on the ball with both feet flat on the floor. Draw your naval in toward your spine to engage your core. You can engage your core by imagining you have a balloon between your belly button and spine. Now try to pop the balloon. When you have mastered sitting with both feet on the floor you can try to lift one foot off the floor and hold. Now alternate legs. When you are ready feel free to grab some light weight dumbbells. You can keep your arms straight and lift them out to the side to help strengthen your shoulders which in turn can help increase your core strength because you will be working harder to stay balanced on the ball.

Continued on back

BOSU Ball:

Stand with your feet centered on the BOSU ball and balance. When you have mastered standing on the BOSU for an extended period of time you can try to add a squat. Stand on the dome with feet slightly forward of center. Bend your knees and squat, as though you're sitting back in a chair. Keep your back straight and your torso up and extend your arms out to help your balance. Lower as far as comfortable and push up through your heels.

Another exercise you can do on the BOSU is a Plank.

Place your forearms on the BOSU with the elbows aligned below the shoulders, and arms parallel to the body at about shoulder-width distance. Keep your body nice and straight and remember to engage your core (hint: remember the balloon between your belly button and your spine and you want to imagine popping that balloon).

When a Stability Ball or BOSU Ball are not available you can replace the action of sitting on the stability ball or standing on the BOSU ball by standing on 1 foot or standing on something unstable such as a couch cushion. You can still do the plank exercise by doing this on the ground.

Other exercise to increase core strength is :

Superman/Superwoman:

Lay on your belly and lift your straight arms and straight legs off of the ground. Begin by trying to hold 3-5 seconds. As you do the exercise more often you can increase the amount of time you hold. With this exercise it is important to focus on the quality of the exercise and not just the length of time held.

Hula Hoop

Walk on a balance beam with a bean bag on your head and try to not let them fall off.

This activity is brought to you by LiveFit

