

Introduction to Balance Board Training



Balance Basics

Balance training enhances body awareness and movement efficiency. The more you use balance boards, the better your agility and reaction skills become, resulting in better athletic performance and a reduced chance of injury.

Training with balance boards also develops life skills. Integrating muscle development and proprioceptive training into your daily routine leads to improved posture and greater confidence in sports and daily activities.

Benefits of Balance Board Training:

- Improved balance and coordination
- Better proprioceptive awareness for injury prevention
- Increased leg strength and ankle Range of Motion (R.O.M.)
- Greater trunk and pelvic girdle stability

Practice Balance Daily for Overall Health

Daily use of a balance board will benefit your health and well-being. These simple exercises will have a profound impact on your overall health, regardless of your age or ability. Balance is essential to everyday life and sometimes taken for granted. That is until an injury, health problem or an inactive lifestyle impairs it.

Here are some opportunities to practice balance daily:

- Balance on one foot while putting on your socks, brushing your teeth or standing in line at the market
- Alternate balancing on each leg
- Try sitting on a fitness ball instead of a chair
- In the gym, stand on a Wobble Board while doing dumbbell exercises
- Pretend to be a tight-rope walker and walk along the edge of curbs
- Play catch with a ball or Frisbee standing on one leg

Before you get started, put safety first!

1. Adjust the Wobble Board to the lowest possible setting for first time use. Stand over the center of the Board with your feet shoulder-width apart.
2. Only use balance boards on a dry surface free of any obstacles. You may need to step off quickly, so make sure you have space to do so with ease.
3. Always maintain proper upright posture with your head up, back straight and knees slightly bent. Keep your eyes focused straight ahead. Feel the movement you are going through. Staring at the ground or at your feet may lead to loss of balance, so keep your head up.



4. If you feel unsafe or feel like you may fall, step off the Board. Obtain the help of a spotter or some other suitable balance aid before trying again. Stand in a doorway and touch both sides of the door frame beside you. Consult a physician prior to use.

If used properly, balance boards are fun and make great functional training tools. The basic idea is to move the board in a controlled manner in all directions. It is more important to maintain correct posture than it is to successfully complete the exercise. With practice you will be able to do these exercises and maintain a proper heads-up posture. The following exercises outline a few basic balance activities.

Wobble Board Exercises

Basic

Begin with a gentle Range of Motion (R.O.M.) on the Wobble Board until you become familiar with the movement. Exercises such as side-to-side, front-to-back, and circular rotation are all excellent basic exercises to start with.

Tip: It is important to always maintain stable upright body position and proper heads-up posture with eyes looking straight ahead. Individuals with limited balance and during early rehabilitation for additional safety and support should use a balance aid.

Beginner Wobble Board Exercises

Side to Side

With your feet planted squarely on the Wobble Board, begin a slow controlled movement from side-to-side without the front or back touching the floor.

Front to Back

Slowly move the Wobble Board front-to-back, feeling the movements you are going through.

Rotation

- Rotate the Wobble Board using a controlled circular motion.
- Remain balanced on the sphere without the sides touching the floor.

Calf Stretch

- Keep the heel of your back leg on the floor and lean forward until you feel a stretch.
- Effectively stretches the calf muscles.

Intermediate Wobble Board Exercises

Balanced Push-ups

- Start on your knees and work up to full push-ups as you become more comfortable with the challenge.

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- Use caution and be aware that the wrists are in a fully flexed position for this activity.
- Ensure that your hands stay on top of the Wobble Board or your fingers may get pinched!
- Improves core stability.

Abdominal Training

- Sit upright on the Wobble Board keeping your back straight and the Board level to improve stability and coordination.
- For improved mobility, use your hips to tap the Wobble Board side to side and front to back.
- Closing your eyes will increase the difficulty and enhance body awareness.
- Improves core strength, R.O.M. and mobility in the lower back and trunk.

Kneeling Exercises

- Kneel on the Wobble Board with your hands on your hips, or by your side.
- Use your trunk muscles to begin a slow rotational movement.
- After several rotations, stop and rotate the Wobble Board in the opposite direction.
- Increases R.O.M. and stability of the trunk and pelvic areas

Advanced Wobble Board Exercises

Motor Skill Training

- Perform any of the previous exercises while bouncing or throwing a ball or some other dynamic activity.
- Enhances eye-hand coordination and subconscious reaction.
- Your conscious mind focuses on one activity while your subconscious mind is working on ankle R.O.M. and overall stability.

One Leg Exercises

- Perform the basic moves while balancing on one leg.
- Position the arch of your foot directly over the center of the Wobble Board, so that you can comfortably move the Board in any direction.
- These exercises require more strength and stability. You may feel that one leg is much stronger than the other.

Eyes Closed

- This is the most difficult way to use Wobble and Rocker Boards.
- Always start the exercise with your eyes open. When you and your spotter are ready, close your eyes only until you feel off balance.
- Enhances proprioceptive response and reaction time.
- Only attempt when you have achieved an advanced level of stability and balance.

NOTE: This activity is risky and falls should be expected. Only perform these exercises with a spotter.

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Rocker Board Exercises

Basic

Front to back and Side to Side

Position your feet shoulder width apart, centrally on the Rocker Board. Begin by slowly moving the Board side-to-side, or front-to-back with a controlled movement.

- By rotating your stance on the Rocker Board, you can gently increase your ankle's R.O.M.
- Helps to restore stability.

Intermediate and Advanced

- Try adding in other exercises while attempting to maintain control. Some suggestions are squats, lunges, push-ups and tossing/ bouncing a ball.
- Advanced users may try these exercises on one foot for an even greater challenge.

Combo Board Exercises

Basic Exercises

- Rock back and forth or from side-to-side.
- Change the fulcrum as ability progresses.
- Experiment with different foot positions for an added challenge.

Advanced Exercises

- Using a wider stance, attempt full squats.
- Close your eyes, always use a spotter when you first try this.
- Always **USE YOUR BALANCE BOARD** with caution.