

# DPA Pages!

## Balance Balls in the Classroom

### DESCRIPTION:

Unlike sitting on a chair, balance balls can provide a great way for students to work on their core strength and balance while sitting at their desks. There are also various ways that Daily Physical Activity can be achieved on a balance ball.

**DPA** Strength, Flexibility

### EQUIPMENT:

Resources listed below  
45/55/65 cm balance balls (depending on the students' height)  
Scarves and Bean Bags (in K to 3 Bin)

### IMPLEMENTATION IDEAS FOR GRADES K TO 7:

**Try a Brain Dance** — Play the "Sitting in a Chair" version on the BrainDance DVD. When students are familiar with all eight movements, repeat, following cues on the BrainDance CD.

**Head-to-Toe Stretch** — Perform the 10 stretches from the Action Schools! BC Head-to-Toe Stretch Poster or Get Strong 101 DVD. Do stretches # 8 and # 9 off the ball.

**Chair Aerobics** — Create chair aerobics routines (try swimming, cycling, paddling movements) to music from the Dance Party Fun CD or a CD of your choice. See K to 7 CAR pp. 37 and 79.

**Throwing and Catching Activities** — With bean bags or scarves, try the Top Ten Progressive Challenges and juggling with scarves (K to 7 CAR pp. 55-56).

**Classroom Workouts** — Perform the hip hop routine on the 6 Fit Kids' Workout DVD. (Stand up for the Funky Jack) or follow along to the Feel the Vibe DVD or Fitball Kids DVD.

**Dance Explorations Activity Ideas** — Many dance moves in the K to 7 CAR (pp. 34-35) can be done sitting on a ball or using a ball for balance while kneeling beside it. Move different body parts, make sounds (i.e. clapping, stamping) or dance and freeze. Explore pathways (zig zags, straight lines, circles or waves) with 1 and 2 scarves. Create sequences changing moves every 16 beats.

**Classroom Circuits** — Do any of the above activities with a ball at one of the stations.

### IMPLEMENTATION IDEAS FOR GRADES 4 TO 9:

**Exercising with Bands** — Choose exercises from the Get Strong 101 DVD (bands). Try shoulder front, shoulder side, bicep curl (sit on band), tricep extension, chest press, chest pull and lat pull down. Repeat two sets of 12-15 repetitions of each exercise.



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## WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BENEFITS OF SITTING ON A BALANCE BALL?

- According to a study led by Dr. Jean Ayres, when bouncing on a ball is combined with sounding out words, spelling, learning math, or memorizing facts (bouncing to the rhythm of the task), the rhythm and rhyme can facilitate memory, while bouncing can enhance respiratory patterns.
- If a balance ball is used to sit instead of a chair ...
  - postural muscle control is activated
  - visual skills such as focusing, tracking, and scanning are improved
  - vestibular senses are stimulated which can help improve balance reaction and alertness
  - improves muscle control and force of movement by stimulating proprioception
  - sensory processing is improved, which in turn increases alertness and sustained attention which translates into improved learning

*Reference: Kids on the Ball, Spalding et al., 1999*

## RESOURCES: (refer to Action Pages! at [www.actionschoolsbc.ca](http://www.actionschoolsbc.ca))

1. Action Schools! BC Classroom Action Resource (CAR) K to 7 or Middle School (F) — in all Action Bins or contact [info@actionschoolsbc.ca](mailto:info@actionschoolsbc.ca) for copies
2. 6 Fit Kids' Workout DVD and Get Strong 101 DVD (in 4 to 7 and Middle School Bins)
3. Dance Party Fun CD (in K to 3 Bin)
4. BrainDance DVD and CD (DVD in K to 3 Bin)
5. Head-to-Toe Stretch Poster (in all Bins and [www.actionschoolsbc.ca](http://www.actionschoolsbc.ca))
6. Feel the Vibe DVD or Fitball Kids DVD



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