

# Therapy & Exercise Balls

## Selecting the correct ball size

A large ball is preferred when sitting on the ball and working on balance activities. When the feet are raised off the ground, it facilitates greater balance reactions and reflexes.



Therapy Massage Ball, Item # 38446

When working with infants and small children with rolling and sitting on the ball, make sure that you are able to handle and control both the user and the ball simultaneously.



Therapy Balls, Item #s 3057, 6963, 3069, 6775, 6619, 3074, & 3082

A smaller ball may be used when working on balance activities and when more stability is needed for the user who is sitting on the ball.



Football, Item #s 6706 & 6608

Consider the size of the ball when working on Range of Motion (ROM) of the arms and lower back and core strengthening exercises with the legs.

The ball should be comfortable enough for the user to hold and maneuver.



## Fitting the ball to the individual

In order to sit with feet on the ground and produce 90 degrees of flexion in the knees and hips, the height of the ball should not be any higher than the knee when the user stands next to the ball.



## Ball Basics

### Sitting correctly on the ball

In order to facilitate trunk stability and alignment, the proper positioning should include 90 degrees of hip flexion and knee flexion with an anterior tilt of the pelvis when feet are placed on the floor.

If using the ball to facilitate greater balance reactions, make sure the user's weight is equally distributed through the pelvis.

On a round ball, the user should sit in the center of the ball on the top, not the sides of the ball, to ensure the greatest amount of stability. On a peanut ball the user should sit in the middle of the ball with even amounts of the ball to his right and left.



### Special considerations for multiple disabilities

When using the therapy balls, be considerate of any rubber allergies, fears and concerns about falling when sitting on the ball, and any sensory defensiveness with the various exposed textures.

### Correct inflation

On each ball there are specifications for the amount of pressure which should be in the ball for optimal performance as well as maximum capacity.

### Safety considerations when using the balls

Close supervision and physical contact with the user sitting on the ball are required to ensure safety when working on balance activities. Consider the floor surface on which the ball is resting before sitting a user on the ball. Use safety mats under the ball and a piece of Dycem® if stability is required. You may also use support rings (**see Item # 30321**) to cradle the ball and therapy balls with feet.

Knowing any restrictions in movement and the current core strength of the user is important before placing the user on a ball or beginning exercises.

Check the inflation of the ball and the stability of the ball on the floor surface before placing or assisting the user onto the ball.

The ball may be cleaned with disinfectant when needed.

## Academic and therapeutic goals

- The primary goal for using the therapy balls includes facilitating dynamic balance when sitting or lying on top of the ball.
- Goals may also include increasing core strength by facilitating trunk and back control.
- Balls may be used to improve movement, range of motion of the arms and back, and general gross motor coordination.
- Increased tolerance with weight bearing activities may normalize muscle tone and improve strength of the arms.
- Sensory activities may elicit sensory alertness as with drumming and sitting on the ball. Other sensory activities such as applying deep pressure with the ball may produce a calming effect.
- It's easy to add components of cognition and teamwork to games with the therapy balls.

## Different Applications

### How do I use a hop ball?

Use the hop ball to facilitate core muscle strength and to build muscle tone in the lower trunk. The handles allow the user to control the amount and direction of the bounce.



FlagHouse Hop Ball, Item #s 5588 & 5597

### When do I use a peanut?

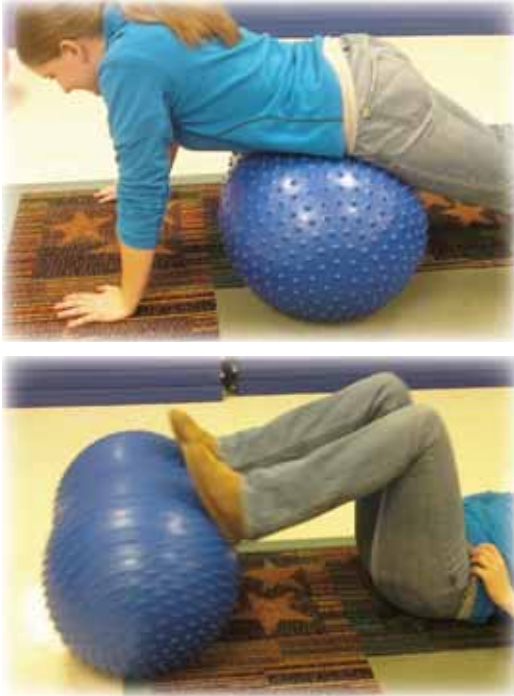
Keeping dome side up, this product can be used in The peanut therapy ball may be used to sit on, roll on, lay on, or to prop feet. The peanut therapy ball may be used for core strengthening, balance activities, proprioceptive and sensory input.

Use the peanut therapy ball when more stability is needed or if the user is timid or scared of sitting on a regular therapy ball.

Also when beginning the therapy sessions and when desiring more physical control with balance activities,

the peanut is a good choice.  
The peanut may also accommodate two users straddling either end of the ball.

If lying prone on the peanut ball, the user should still be lying in the middle with their stomach on the top of the ball with the upper and lower body on either side of the ball.



FitBall® Peanut, Item #s 7121, 7142, 38971, & 7225

#### When do I use a ball with feet?

Use this ball when you need more control and stability. The feet prevent the ball from rolling when standing up and provide additional stabilization while sitting. This therapy ball would be ideal for classroom use. Students may benefit from the proprioceptive and vestibular input without having the ball roll away.

This is a great tool for beginning practitioners to use in therapy. The amount of control and coordination needed to manage by the practitioner is much less than with a regular therapy ball.



Football, Item #s 6706 & 6608

This ball also helps strengthen upper leg muscles and lower back muscles.

- Practice the movement of standing and sitting using hands to push up from the ball.
- Lie prone with knees bent at 90 degrees. Place a small therapy ball between the ankles. Raise and lower feet off of the ground while holding the ball between the ankles.



Gym Roll, Item #s 38444 & 38445

#### Using a ball as a chair in a classroom

Use the ball in the classroom for increasing attention span, core strength and postural control. Use the ball when reading, writing at the desk, writing on the chalkboard, and/or completing craft projects.

#### Use the therapy balls to build core strength.

When lying on the peanut ball, place hands on each side of the ball, putting pressure on the ball while rolling the ball back and forth.



Lie prone in the center of the peanut ball with hands on the ground while performing push-ups.

#### Sensory activities

Use the therapy ball to provide additional sensory input when needed.

- Increase weight bearing and sensory input in the arms and upper back by placing a large therapy ball in front of the participant while he is sitting in a chair. Place the ball between his legs if comfortable. Stabilize the ball as he leans onto the ball on forearms or on extended arms.





Body Ball, Item #s 2677, 2679, & 2690

### Fitness and exercise activities

Use the therapy balls to increase postural control, strengthening of the trunk musculature and to facilitate vestibular processing and balance. Activities while sitting on a therapy ball may include:

- playing a card game
- playing Wii™
- catching a ball
- simulated bowling using a foam ball
- throwing a foam basketball

Use the therapy ball to increase movement and Range of Motion (ROM) of the arms and upper back:

- roll a small therapy ball up and down and in circles on the wall or the floor to increase ROM



### Sensory activities (con't)

- Use the texture balls to provide additional sensory input to the body.
- Drum on the sides of the ball as the participant sits on the ball. The vibrations will add further sensory input.
- Use the balls to drum different beats. Sit with the ball between the legs and drum the beat of a song while listening to music. This provides auditory and proprioceptive input.
- Roll the ball over the user, adding pressure with the rolling.

### Activities for Adults

The following activities will facilitate lower back and trunk strength and control.

1. Have the participant sit on either a round or peanut-shaped ball, depending on amount of support required. The goal is to facilitate reaching to his right, left, up, and down as well as crossing midline while rotating his trunk. Rotate the trunk while reaching for objects to incorporate activity and everyday function.
2. With the participant lying prone on a peanut shaped ball, walk forward with his hands in order to weight bear through the upper extremities as well as receive proprioceptive input while moving.
3. Sitting on a round therapy ball, reach arms above the head while holding a small ball, if strong enough to do so. At the same time, lean backwards while engaging the abdominal muscles and toss the ball forward. Each of these small movements will engage the abdominal muscles and should be adapted to the ability of the individual.
4. To work on strengthening hip adductor muscles you can place a peanut-shaped therapy ball standing up in between the participant's legs and ask him to squeeze inward. This can be done while he is sitting on a mat or in a chair, with his feet on the floor.

Have the participant lie on the floor or mat table in a supine position. Place a small peanut or round ball under the back of the participant's heels. Instruct him to bend his knees and bring the ball toward the buttocks. To facilitate increased core strength have him lift the ball off the floor.



## Games

Various games and activities can be completed using the therapy balls. Incorporating challenges and fun interaction encourages engagement with the tasks.

### 1. Title: Name Race

**Number of Participants:** 10 or more

**Ages:** 6 years and older

**Equipment/Supplies:** 2 small therapy balls

**Instructions:**

1. Have the participants form 2 teams.
2. Have the team members introduce themselves to the group, including sharing first names.
3. Form 2 lines (this may be in any order, shortest to tallest, oldest to youngest, first name alphabetically, or random order).
4. Each team member needs to know the name of the participant in front of him and behind him.
5. The first participant in line needs to reach and pass the ball overhead to the participant behind him. The participant behind him is only able to grab the ball once his name is said by the participant passing the ball to him.
6. The participant who receives the ball then passes the ball to the participant behind him through his legs. The participant behind him is only able to get the ball if his name is said.
7. This pattern of passing the ball overhead and calling the participant's name and the next participant passing the ball between the legs while calling the participant's name continues until the last participant in line is reached.
8. Then the line turns and faces the opposite direction. The passing of the ball continues with the same pattern until the ball reaches the

participant who initiated the game. Whatever team gets it to their leader first wins.

### 2. Title: Therapy Ball Pass

**Number of Participants:** 5 or more players

**Ages:** 8 years and older

**Equipment/Supplies:** 1 medium size therapy ball

**Instructions:**

1. Form a circle.
2. The leader calls out a body part and each participant must pass the ball to the next participant in the circle using only that body part mentioned. Examples: "Use your knee!" "Use your shoulder!" "Use your heel!" "Use your stomach!"

### 3. Title: Within the Line

**Number of Participants:** 3 or more players

**Ages:** 7 years old and older

**Equipment/Supplies:** Variety of therapy ball sizes

**Instructions:**

1. Create a boundary with yarn, tape, chalk, or jump rope. This forms the "court."
2. Participants arrange themselves within the boundary and throughout the space.
3. The leader calls a given command, informing the participants about what is expected. (i.e. kicking the ball, bouncing the ball, tossing the ball).
4. The participants keep the ball in motion as long as possible while completing the task and within the boundary lines.
5. Change the commands as the team work and skills dictate.
6. Participants can sit or stand for this activity but all participants should be in the same sitting or standing position.

### 4. Title: Rapid Relay

**Number of Participants:** 4 or more

**Ages:** Basic Level-age 5 and older

Intermediate Level-age 7 and older

**Equipment/Supplies:** balls of various sizes, large marker cones or a chair.

**Instructions:**

**Basic Level**

1. You can play this game as one team or break into multiple teams depending on the size of the group.
2. Place chair or marking cones to designate the end goal.
3. Simply have each participant kick or dribble the ball down to the cone or chair and back to the starting position.
4. The next participant in line does the same activity.
5. The relay continues until everyone has a turn.

**Intermediate-Advanced Level**

1. You can play this game with one team or break into multiple teams depending on the size of the group.
2. You still need your end points, but for this level you can also create a type of obstacle for your team(s).

- Place another chair or cone in the line of the relay.
3. Dribble or kick the ball from the starting point to the end goal, weaving in and out of cone(s)/chair(s).
  4. Or, change the game by asking each participant to do something different as they run through the relay.

**5. Equipment safety:** Grade or adapt this activity by using balls of different sizes. We found that the smaller balls were easier to control.

### **5. Title: Potato Head Toy Relay**

**Number of Participants:** 6 or more participants (one or more teams may play this game depending on the size of the group and room and the goals of the game).

**Ages:** 6-11

**Equipment/Supplies:** One complete set of the Potato Head Toy (including accessories) per each team.

The number of body parts and accessories should be divided equally between the teams. One hopping therapy ball per team.

#### **Instructions:**

1. Only one participant per team at a time.
2. The first participant must return to the starting line before the next participant can go.
3. The participant must place the Potato Head Toy body part or accessory on the body before he can return to the starting line.

#### **Steps:**

1. Set up the relay space. Place the various body parts and accessories for the Potato Head Toy at one end of the relay space along with a large "hopping" therapy ball. Place the Potato Head Toy body at the other end of the relay space.
2. Participants grab a body piece or accessory and bounce on the ball to the end of the relay space.
3. Each participant places the body part or accessory on the Potato Head Toy in the correct location.
4. The participant bounces back to the other side of the relay space, and the next participant in line repeats the process.
5. Repeat until the Potato Head Toy is fully constructed.
6. The first team to construct the Potato Head Toy fully and to have all their participants back at the starting line wins.

### **6. Title: Number Memory**

**Number of Participants:** 4 or more players

**Ages:** 6 years and older

**Equipment/Supplies:** 1 medium therapy ball

#### **Instructions:**

1. The participants form a large circle.
2. The participants then count off so that each participant has his own number.
3. The participants pass the ball around the circle with each participant saying his number as he receives the ball.
4. After the ball has been around the circle once or twice, have the participants scramble around in the circle.

5. The participant whose number is one starts with the ball.

6. The participants pass the ball (gently) around the circle to the participant whose number is either one number above him or one number below him.

### **7. Title: Category Catch**

**Number of Participants:** 3 or more

**Ages:** 4 years and older

**Equipment/Supplies:** One therapy ball (size based on the needs and goals of the group)

#### **Instructions:**

1. The participants form a circle.
2. The leader announces the category. The category can be anything, according to the age or developmental level of the group or what is being covered in the classroom. For example, a group of four year olds might play using the category "animals." Older participants might play using categories such as sports, grammar rules, or letters of the Spanish alphabet. The only necessary equipment is a ball, which may vary in size, shape, and weight based on the age and developmental levels of the participants involved in the activity.
3. The ball is passed, tossed, or bounced to one participant who responds to the category with one comment/answer and then passes, tosses, or bounces the ball to another participant who provides another response to the category.
4. The game continues until no additional responses can be named.
5. This game may be more challenging if the participant who receives the ball cannot come up with an appropriate response, he must leave the circle. The game continues until there is only one participant left in the circle.

### **8. Title: Quick Math**

**Number of Participants:** 3 or more

**Ages:** 7 or older

**Equipment/Supplies:** One therapy ball, collection of math equations and answers

#### **Instructions:**

1. Assign one participant as the leader. The rest of the group stands in a line/semi-circle facing the leader.
2. The leader announces a mathematical concept (addition, subtraction, multiplication, or division) depending on the age level of the group.
3. The leader quickly throws out an equation and tosses/rolls the ball to a participant in the group.
4. The participant quickly answers and throws the ball back to the leader.
5. The game continues until a participant provides a wrong answer. Any participant who recognizes and identifies a wrong answer then becomes the leader. An alternative approach to the game is to have the leadership rotate between participants.
6. **Equipment Safety:** Be careful and stay alert at all times when throwing the ball.

## 9. Title: Crab Soccer

**Number of Participants:** 4 or more

**Ages:** 10 years and older

**Equipment/Supplies:** medium size therapy ball; 2 laundry baskets or hula hoops used as a basket or end goal.

### Instructions:

1. Participants divide into two teams.
2. Review the rules of the game and begin the session by practicing the "Crab Walk Technique."
3. Sit on the floor and place feet and hands on the floor. Knees are bent and hands are placed alongside the body. Lift your bottom off the floor and walk around the floor in this position. This is the crab walk.
4. "Dribbling the ball" entails the participant to maintain a crab walk while holding the ball in his lap.
5. You must stay in a "crab-walk" position while you are dribbling the ball. If the position is lost or the participant sits down on the floor, the participant must throw the ball.
6. You may also sit on the floor to receive the ball from another teammate but you must lift up off the floor before "dribbling" down the court.
7. The game begins with the ball being tossed out by the coach/referee. The teams are positioned in the crab walk position. One participant catches the ball, places the ball in his/her lap, and proceeds to dribble it down the court to the "basket."
8. Points are scored when the participant throws the ball into the basket.



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This guide is for informational purposes only. FlagHouse, Inc., staff, and students from Occupational Therapy department @ Elizabethtown College, Elizabethtown, PA, collaborated to create it.



## FlagHouse Therapy Balls

To order, call 1-800-265-6900 or visit  
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### Feetball (Wt. capacity: 400 lbs.)

Size	Item #
18" (45cm)	6706
22" (55cm)	6608
26" (65cm)	6929

### Body Ball (Wt. capacity: 440 lbs.)

Size	Item #
22" (55cm)	2677
26" (65cm)	2679
38" (95cm)	2690

### FlagHouse Hop Balls

Size/Age	Item #
18" (3+)	5588
22" (6+)	5597
2-Handled Hop Ball	2798

### Gym Roll

Size	Item #
Small. For ages 6 months+. 16"dia. x 32"L.	38444
Large. For ages 2+. Accommodates 3 users. 24"dia. x 51"L.	38445

### FitBall® Peanut

Ideal for use with children of all ages.

Wt. capacity: 400 lbs.

Size/Color	Item #
16" (40cm)	7121
20" (50cm)	7142
24" (60cm)	38971
28" (70cm)	7225

### Donut Ball

Wt. capacity 400 lbs.

Size/Color	Item #
Small. Available in pink (11 3/4"H off floor. 21 1/2"dia.)	38821
Large. Available in blue (15 3/4"H off floor. 25 1/2"dia.)	38822

### Therapy Massage Ball

Item # 38446

Nub-covered surface provides deep massage and pleasant tactile sensation. 30" (75cm).

Carry Strap	38823
Ball Stabilizing Ring	30321
Plug Puller	10269
Pump	38824

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Please direct your questions or concerns regarding this product to the appropriate office listed below between the hours of 8AM-6PM Eastern Time

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