

FIRST SEGMENT

All of the movements in the first segment are done sitting on the ball. Always take time to check the following in this position: When sitting on the ball, keep your back straight, relaxing the neck and shoulders. Keep your feet firmly on the floor. Breathe deeply before you begin feeling the softness of the ball. Most of all have fun connecting with your body.

#1 Neck Stretch Up

From the seated position: raise your head as if you were looking at the sky, stretching the throat, hold for a few seconds, then release and begin to lower the head in a downward motion past center point, all the way until your eyes are looking at your stomach. Keep the neck relaxed. Breathing is as follows: inhaling as you look up 3 seconds, hold 2 seconds at top, then exhale 3 seconds as you rotate the head downward. Repeat five to seven times. Take as much time as needed for this movement to stretch and open the neck.

#2 Neck Stretch to Side

From the seated position: turn your head to the right side, without looking down, direct your gaze straight ahead. When you reach the maximum stretch, hold for 2 seconds then slowly turn the head to the left. Remember, not to force the stretch, going only as far as is comfortable. Then, slowly turn in opposite direction. Breathing is as follows: inhale 3 seconds hold 2 seconds exhale 3 seconds. Repeat five to seven times.

#3 Arm Raise Single

From the seated position: extend the right arm up above your head, stretching your fingers and wrist. Feel the shoulder open as you extend the arm to a full stretch. Slowly release the arm, allowing it to glide downward to the start position, pausing and feel the energy flowing from the shoulder down the arm. Alternate sides. Breathing is as follows inhale 4 seconds, hold 2 seconds, and exhale 4 seconds. Repeat five to seven times per side.

#4 Arm Raise Double

From the seated position: this time, raise both arms together from your sides until the stretch is full, pausing at the top, then allowing the arms to relax. Remember to keep the movement soft at the

joint, being careful not to stretch beyond what is comfortable. The breathing is deep and smooth. Breathing is as follows inhale 4 seconds, hold 2 seconds, and exhale 4 seconds. Repeat five to seven times.

5 Ball Circles

From the seated position: place your hands on the thighs, beginning a circular motion with the ball allowing your hips and lower back to relax and open, slowly increasing the size of the circle. Take two to three minutes per side until you feel the body open, then alternate sides. Breathing is deep and relaxed.

#6 Belly Button to Spine

Still seated on the ball, hands on your thighs, begin to tighten the stomach muscles gently. Squeeze the belly button to the spine. Hold for a few seconds, and then inhale, filling the lungs with air. At this point, allow your body to begin to rotate forward, exhaling completely, holding the down position for five to ten seconds. While holding, continue to breathe deeply, then using your hands, push the body to starting position. As the back gets stronger, the hand placement will no longer be necessary. Repeat five to seven times.

#7 Hugging Self

Assume the same position on the ball. This time, hug yourself lightly, touching the skin behind the arms, hold as long as needed. Breathing is deep and relaxed. This movement is a tool to help us feel loved now, if we did not receive love when we were adolescents.

SECOND SEGMENT

These movements are done with your back resting against the ball, your feet on the floor with the knees bent. Buttocks are elevated off the floor and your head is supported with the hands. To find this position, start from first segment position, and then simply walk the feet out from the ball while your back rests against the ball, knees bent at a ninety-degree angle, buttocks off the floor. Take your time finding this position; experiment with what is most comfortable for you. Remember to keep the shoulders and neck relaxed throughout the entire segment; if you feel tension, relax and sit while breathing deeply. Begin when you feel ready again. See illustration.

#8 Buttocks Raise

Slowly lift the body up using the leg muscles so that your hips and buttocks come up as far as possible, inhaling as you do this. Hold at the highest point, then release and exhale slowly lowering the body to the start position, feeling the tension leave the lower back. Remember to keep the buttocks off the floor for the entire sequence. Breathing is as follows - inhale 6 seconds, hold 4 seconds, exhale 6 seconds. Repeat five to seven times. For more balance, if needed, keep your hands on the floor.

#9 Shoulder Squeeze

In the same position, open your arms as if you were about to hug a large person or a small bear; open your arms so that they are resting on the ball. Squeeze your shoulder blades back against the ball, pushing your arms downward, opening the chest location, and relaxing but keeping the arms open. Breathing is as follows: inhale as you push down for 5 seconds, hold 3 seconds, and exhale 5 seconds. Repeat five to seven times. Take as much time as needed for these movements to stretch and open the location to be worked.

#10 Abdominal Crunch

Assume the same position, now placing your hands behind your head and resting your head in your hands. Try not to clasp your fingers, lift your head upward and your chin to the sky. Keep a space between the chin and the chest, and don't rotate the neck overly. Time your breathing around the movement. Exhale as you squeeze the body upward, holding for 2 seconds, inhaling as you release down. Do three sets of ten to fifteen repetitions.

#11 Pull Over

Assume the same starting position, this time using a small weight or medicine ball, about two to four kilos. Stretch your arms back behind your head, bending the elbows and lowering your hands, keeping the joint soft and not overextending the shoulders. After the full stretch, slowly begin to rotate your arms forward, bringing the ball over the head, finishing the movement over the chest. Then stretch the ball back behind the head and continue the exercise. Breathing is as follows: inhale as you stretch back for 5 seconds, hold 3 seconds behind the head, exhale as you rotate forward 5 seconds. Do two sets of ten to fifteen repetitions.

#12 Lying Body Stretch

From the same position, put the ball down or weight down and stretch your legs so they are completely straight. The center of the back should be supported comfortably on the ball. The head is also resting on the ball. The entire body is in a stretched position, arms outstretched and legs stretched out as if you were touching the walls. Breathe deeply throughout the entire stretch. Hold for fifteen to twenty seconds, repeating five to six times. Then relax and repeat the movement for 2- 3 minutes. For added difficulty, place a ball about eight to ten inches in size in between your thighs, squeezing throughout this whole segment.

THIRD SEGMENT

These movements are done lying with your stomach on the ball and your face hanging downwards; the ball supports the entire midsection, palms are flat on the floor.

Place your hands on the floor for balance, allowing the ball to support all of your weight, stretch your legs so that your toes are touching the floor, make sure there is not too much pressure on wrists. Then slowly lift your feet off the floor so your stomach and thighs are completely supported by the ball. You may need to walk forward on your hands until the ball is under your midsection. Take as much time as you need to get balanced. If you have knee or wrist discomfort, place a small pillow under that spot or knees. Breathe deeply allowing yourself to feel the softness of the ball. See illustration.

#13 Full body roll

From this position, begin to roll your body forward six to eight inches, then roll the body backward as far as you can still staying balanced on the ball, work to feel a full stretch, then repeat rolling forward. Repeat this movement for one to two minutes breathing deeply.

#14 Push Up

Same position; now bend your elbows allowing your chest to stretch six to eight inches down to the floor, similar to a push up you learned in school but without all the pressure on the shoulder. Don't overstretch down, keep the movement soft at the joint. As you feel enough of the chest location stretched, use your arms to push the

body up. Inhale as you stretch down for 3 seconds, hold 2 seconds behind the head; exhale as you push up 3 seconds. Do two sets of ten to fifteen repetitions.

#15 Butt Squeeze

Same position, legs out stretched, hands on floor. Now begin to raise your legs 4-6 inches up squeezing the back of the legs and your buttock. Hold at the top then relax and lower the legs. Inhale as you lift up for 5 seconds, hold 3 seconds, and exhale as you relax down 5 seconds. Repeat eight to ten to times.

#16 Butt Squeeze Single

Same position. Now raise one leg off the ball and hold it up, squeezing your buttock. Breathing is the same as the previous movement inhaling as you stretch back for 5 seconds, hold 3 seconds behind the head, exhale as you relax 5 seconds.

Do two sets of ten to fifteen repetitions per side.

#17 Calming the Mind

Assume the same position now rolling forward, place your forearms or your elbows on the ground. Find you balance and relax. Breathing deeply into the ball, hold for three to five minutes.

#18 Ball Hug

Roll backward on the ball from the previous position until you knees touch the floor and you can wrap your arms around the ball and hug it; rest your head and face comfortably on the ball. Make sure your weight is evenly supported between the ball and your knees on the floor. If needed, place pillows under the knees for additional comfort. Once in position, begin to rock back and forth like a baby. Follow same breathing pattern and time as the prior movement. Hold for as long as necessary.

FOURTH SEGMENT

To find this position, lay on the floor on your back with your knees bent. Then place the ball under your legs with your back still resting on the floor. Use a towel or a soft mat for cushion under the back for spinal comfort. Some may prefer a small pillow under the head for support. See illustration.

#19 Side to Side

Once you are comfortable in the correct body position, gently swing your legs from side to side; this is a small movement six to eight inches only. Breathing is deep and relaxed. Continue this movement for two to three minutes.

#20 Abdominal Crunch

This is the same as exercise #10 only with different body angle, place your hands behind your head and rest your head in your hands. Try not to clasp your fingers. Lift your head and chin to the sky while keeping space between your chin and chest. Don't over rotate the neck. Time your breathing around the movement. Exhale as you squeeze the body upward hold for 2 seconds inhale as you release down. Do three sets of ten to fifteen repetitions.

#21 Ball lift

Assume the same position, only this time take your feet off the ball and bend your knees at a ninety-degree angle. Balance the ball on top of your legs, allowing the ball to sit in between the ankle and knee joint. Then stretch your arms behind your head to full extension. Hold each stretch for twenty seconds then relax; repeat four to six times. Next, lift your legs off the ball and place them on the floor, relax for one minute, then place your legs comfortably back on top of the ball into the movement position.

#22 Lying Body Raise

Same position - open your arms to your sides. Straighten your legs on top of the ball. Slowly lift your lower back off the ground raising the buttocks up, stretching the abdominal and the lower back. Keep your upper back and shoulders on the floor. Hold this position for thirty seconds. Then relax allowing the body slowly to move downward back to the starting point. Breathing is - Inhale as you stretch up for 4 seconds, hold 4 seconds, exhale down 4 seconds. Do two sets of ten to fifteen repetitions.