

Get On The Ball for Office Fitness!

The average American spends 1,821 hours working each year. It's no wonder we complain we don't have time to exercise! That's where **WORKING ON THE BALL** comes into play.

Today 64 percent of Americans are overweight or obese. A reason for this is the environment in which people spend most of their waking hours: at work. Sitting all day can lead to excess fat storage, a depressed mood, and a lack of energy. Fitness gurus Jane Clapp and Sarah Robichaud's *Working on the Ball: A Simple Guide to Office Fitness* (Andrews McMeel Publishing, LLC, \$9.95) solves this problem by providing an innovative, playful approach to fitness—no gym shoes, expensive club membership, or extra time required.



THE BIG SIT

Exercise balls are usually found in the home, but what about at the office? Using a stability ball as a desk chair, Working on the Ball takes readers through a full day of “active sitting.” Clapp and Robichaud’s exercises are simple enough for any office worker to follow. Organized with midmorning hunger cravings and after-lunch slumps in mind, Working on the Ball includes great exercises. Here, the authors show us exactly how to have fun, get fit and get on the ball!

EXERCISE: THE BIG SIT

Seem as if it’s too early in the day to tackle that mound of work piled high on your desk? How about an exercise program that begins with sitting? Before you go hand-to-hand with your professional obligations, take a moment and get centered for your busy day ahead. Have a seat on your ball and “PAC” it all in. PAC stands for:

PUPPET – Stretch your head and torso upwards, as if someone is hoisting you up with a string through the top of your head.

ANTI-PEE- Engage your anti-pee muscles - in other words the muscles that stop you from peeing. (This exercise is also known as Kegels).

CORSET – Pretend someone just zipped a sexy corset around your waist and suck your stomach into your back. Now, try breathing deeply, pulling the air down into the bottom of your stomach. Lots to pay attention to, but this will become habit over time.

EXERCISE: UPPER-BACK CLAP

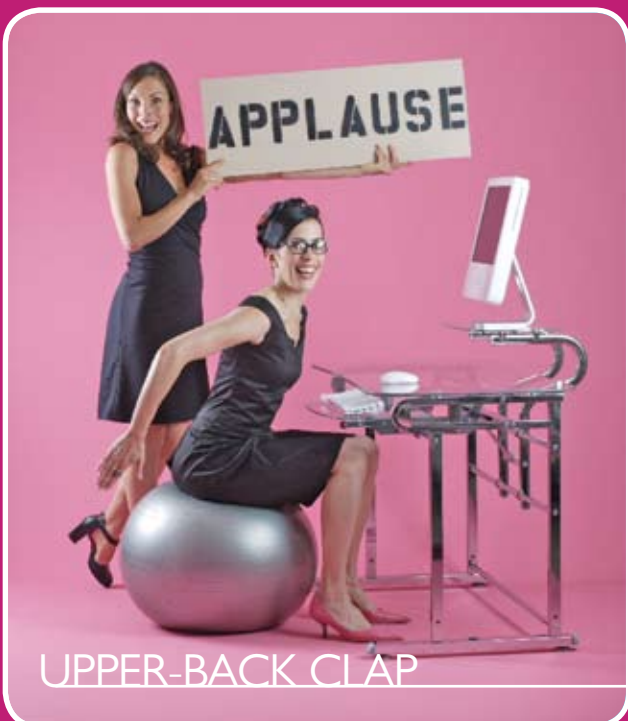
Working on the ball is a crazy thing. Nobody is going to applaud your work before you give yourself the kudos you deserve!!! Sit up tall PAC it in and clap those hands behind your back at least 20 times and squeeze your shoulder blades together... really you are worth it!!! Repeat 2-3 times until the space between your shoulder blades burn.

EXERCISE: TABLETOP TANGO

Ahhhh... finally everyone has gone home. Just you, your ball, and your butt. Before you strip out of your office attire and throw on those fab jeans, let’s tighten that derriere! Start by sitting on the ball, PAC it in and slowly walk it out until your body is creating a flat tabletop position with your shoulders remaining on the ball. Slowly drop your bum toward the floor, then squeeze and slowly lift those hips toward the ceiling. Repeat twenty times. You should feel this exercise in your hamstrings, butt, and lower back.

THE CREEP

Oh, man, here he comes! The office creep. Stalking you like pretty, he wants to have lunch with you... again! Or maybe he wants to borrow your stapler, a pen, your mouse, your whatever. Time to hide! PAC it in. Slowly, stealthily, steadily creep under your desk. Take four steps forward. As you step, allow your spine to make contact with the ball one vertebra at a time. Just as slowly, walk back out and repeat ten times, until he’s gone for sure.



About Jane Clapp and Sarah Robichaud

Jane Clapp is the founder of Urbanfitt, a fitness services company in Toronto. She has also written and performed standup comedy. During her more than 13 years in the fitness industry, her clients have included such celebrities as Richard Dreyfuss.

Sarah Robichaud is a professional dancer who has performed and choreographed for classical and contemporary companies throughout Europe and Canada. She works as a personal trainer and lives in Toronto with her son.

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Q & A with Jane Clapp and Sarah Robichaud

Q: You are both fitness professionals, so how did you get the idea to work fitness into the office?

A: The majority of our clients have jobs that require them to sit at a desk all day. It came to our attention that the more time they spent at work, the less energy, time, and motivation they had to make it to the gym. We wanted to outline healthy steps toward a balanced lifestyle where fitness and work could be combined into the same time frame.

Q: Tell us about the recent discussions on whether stability balls are good or bad for you.

A: Most of the resistance to using a ball as a chair comes from the ergonomic community, and is an opinion based on assumptions rather than scientific fact. However, we know from first hand results with clients that using a stability ball as a chair and incorporating stability ball training into fitness programs decreases lower back pain, improves coordination and core strength, and makes people more alert throughout their day. Most rehabilitative specialists, physiotherapists, fitness professionals, and sports medicine doctors endorse using a stability ball as a chair.

Q: Did you develop the exercises yourselves?

A: All of the exercises are variations on moves that already exist but have never been adapted for the desk-worker. We made the exercises office-specific so that they could be performed in a very small space, using the desk as a training tool or stabilizer. We kept the moves simple but effective with their main focus on improving alignment, core stability, and overall strength in all of the major muscle groups. We also made the exercises practical so that the reader can keep their office attire on, even skirts and heels.

Q: Do you find yourselves “on the ball” more than ever now, whether at work or home?

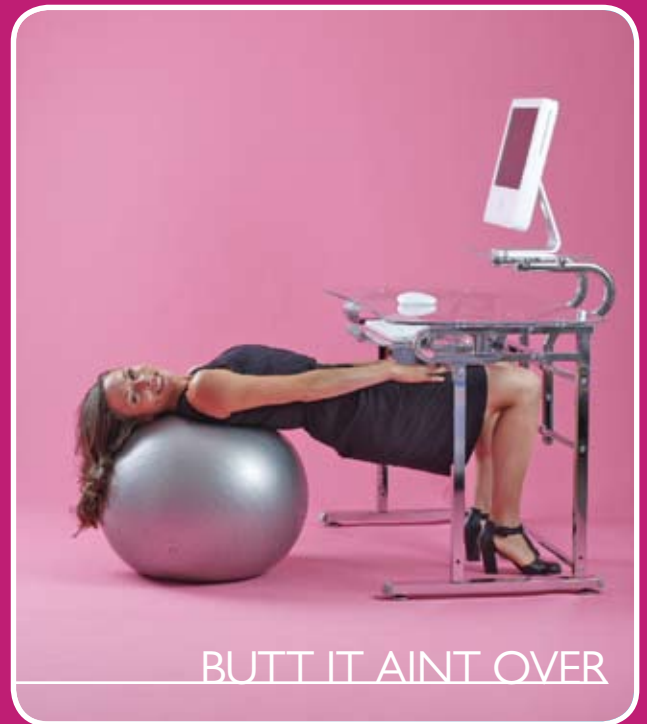
A: Oh, but of course, in more ways than one. We wrote the book on the ball. Jane has a ball for each floor of her house. Our children want their own balls. Our favorite exercise tool is the ball for so many reasons. We bounced on the ball to comfort our children when they were infants and used the ball to ease back pain during pregnancy and childbirth. The ball is here to stay.

Q: How do you encourage your clients to “work on the ball?”

A: We encourage all of our clients to sit on a ball at the office. Most of our clients have balls at home and at the workplace. The feedback from them after a month of sitting on the ball is really positive. They claim that their energy level, focus, and posture have all improved. It also gives people a sense of control over their fitness goals. They realize that fitness programs don't have to be all or nothing and that every five minutes focused on sitting tall and working core muscles is an effective way to accumulate overall health gains.



THE HULA



BUTT IT AINT OVER

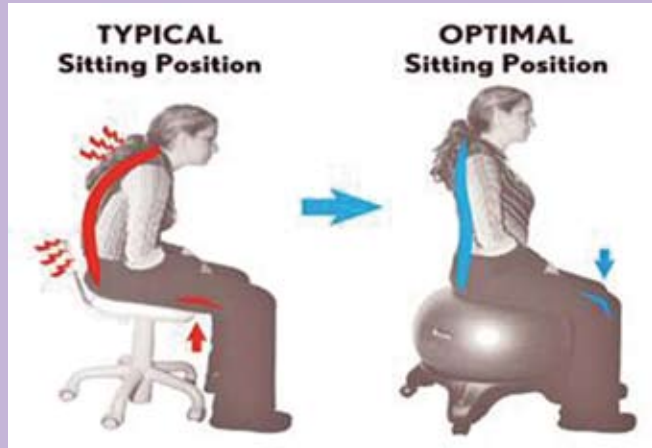
EXERCISE: THE HULA

Is your mind trailing off again to faraway places, beaches, grass skirts and swimsuits? Swimsuits!!! Instead of getting panicky and scanning the horizon for a big palm frond to hide behind, better to get your bod' bathing suit-ready! PAC it in. Squeeze those abs and move the hips side to side. The ball will move slightly under you. Resist moving quickly and imagine your waist is shrinking as you do ten to fifteen full hulas. Feel the breeze from the ocean, smell the salt and

Perfect Posture

Posture Perfect Solutions Ltd is a company based in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. Specializing in the design, manufacturing and distribution of alternative seating solutions for optimal health, Posture Perfect launched their new solution for poor posture and neck and back pain: The Evolution Chair was designed to provide an alternative to traditional office chairs and operative stools.

The Evolution Chair is truly an innovative seating solution that successfully combines the core health benefits of a stability ball with the efficiency and mobility of an office chair. It is a practical therapeutic solution for a healthy and happy workplace. Any company in any industry would benefit from implementing the Evolution Chair as its primary seating choice. Many dentists now use the Evolution Chair to relieve lower back pain, which is a testament to the efficiency and maneuverability of the chair given the strains of the occupation. Clearly, the need for an alternative seating solution is huge, and the market is ready for it.



The Evolution Chair, which retails for \$179.00 has a height adjustable base and comes with a high quality 55cm ball and pump that allows users to inflate or deflate the ball to attain their ideal ergonomic position. Just sitting on the ball and adjusting to the bounce and sway engages muscles deep within the trunk. Such active sitting builds strength in the abdominal muscles and spinal stabilizers, resulting in better posture.

Poor posture is proven to be a major cause of back, shoulder and neck pain, which reduces energy and the ability to participate in a full, active life. A study by David Marcarian, NASA engineer and world leader in SEMG scans (which measure posture and cervical placement), showed the Evolution Chair nearly doubles muscle activity, providing isometric exercise to build strength in the abdominal muscles and spinal stabilizers, resulting in better posture. The chair also reduces pain by absorbing compression that is transmitted to the spine while seated.

“The response has been overwhelmingly positive,” says Lori Harman, Business Director for Posture Perfect Solutions. “People find ‘active sitting’ to be a healthy, energizing alternative.” Anyone interested in improving their posture can get their own Evolution Chair by visiting www.evolutionchair.com or by calling Posture Perfect Solutions at 604-985-0634/ 1-800-964.8566.

suntan lotion. Ah, so much fun to get “lei’d” at the office.

The key to stability ball exercises is that balance must be maintained, creating the need to continually engage several muscles throughout the body, even while just sitting.

The book makes it easy to get on the ball and get in shape. The exercises are paired with photographs that demonstrate

stance and technique, and the authors provide guidance for making healthy choices in the workplace by offering such tips as nutrition information and lifestyle recommendations. Working on the Ball also offers advice on choosing a ball, and evaluates your posture and desk setup. A comprehensive fitness guide, Working on the Ball is a must-have office supply. ■