Fort HealthCare Business Health

Stability Ball versus Desk Chair

Stability balls are a great tool to use in a gym or a therapeutic setting because they strengthen the core muscles. The instability of the roundness of the ball, which is prone to rolling, forces the core muscles to consistently stabilize the body while placed on the ball.

One factor that hinders people's use of the stability ball is not using the correct size. Height is the determinant of what size ball is appropriate for the user. A ball that is 45 cm in diameter is appropriate for anyone 5' tall. A 55 cm ball is appropriate for someone who is 5' to 5' 5" tall and so on. If the ball is being used as a chair, it is recommended using a ball one size larger than someone would for exercise.

Stability balls do not offer the same support an ergonomic chair does. Use of the ball is to force the body to stabilize itself; that is part of the challenge and design of the ball instead of use of chair.

Here are a few things to look for when using the stability ball as a chair:
1. Sit squarely on the ball in front of your desk, close your eyes, and adjust your head angle, as necessary, so that it's facing straight forward.
2. Open your eyes. You should be looking right at the center of your computer screen. Adjust the screen or keyboard as needed if you are not facing the center of your screen.
3. Sit up straight on the ball with your upper arms down by your sides.
4. Bend elbows and place hands on keyboard or desktop. The angle created should be 90°. Adjust your ball accordingly.

Benefits of using stability ball as a chair is that your core will be activated constantly. It is a great workout to get in the office. If you need to, use the stability ball in sessions. Sit in a chair for an hour and use the stability ball for 15 minutes until you have built up your core muscles and can handle a longer duration.

For assistance with fitness or ergonomic assessments for employees, contact Sharon Rateike, corporate wellness program coordinator at (920) 568-5475 or Sharon.Rateike@forthc.com.