

Women's Health

It's Good to Be You™

Your Best Body

Get-Fit Tricks 55
Eat Smart 64
Slim-Down Strategies 68
Healthy Dose 76

As soon as the stability ball bounced onto the fitness scene, the days of banging out boring crunches were over. But this globe, as well as its siblings the medicine ball and the BOSU trainer, can be used to target muscles beyond the abs. It just takes some exercise ingenuity.

Ashley Ntansah, personal-training manager at Club H Fitness in New York City, came up with these moves to improve coordination and banish unwanted inches (as well as workout tedium). For a body-shaping boost, pick and choose a few to mix into your usual exercise routine.

A ball can sculpt every body part.



BOSU DYNAMIC PLANK

Dynamic is the perfect way to describe this upper-body blast that works your triceps, chest, shoulders, and core. **To do it:** Start in a pushup position, with your hands on a BOSU trainer and your feet hip width apart (a). Lower your left forearm onto the BOSU (b), then your right, keeping your body in a straight line (c). Push back to the starting position, starting with your left hand. That's one rep; do 10 to 15. Rest for 15 seconds, then repeat, leading with your right arm. Keep alternating for two or three sets.

BOSU V-UPS WITH MEDICINE BALL

This goes beyond the basic core workout because the BOSU adds instability to keep your entire core constantly engaged. And because you're squeezing a medicine ball between your legs, your thighs will feel a mega burn. **To do it:** Sit in the center of a BOSU trainer with your legs extended in front of you, knees slightly bent, with a two- to four-pound medicine ball between your thighs. Lean back, placing your hands on the floor behind the BOSU for balance (a). Contract your abs and slowly raise your legs toward the ceiling (b). Hold for one second, then return to the starting position. That's one rep. Do 20 to 25.



BOSU FOUR-POINT BALANCE

This challenging move forces your mind to stay completely focused and your muscles to stay constantly engaged. Ntansah's tip for finding balance: Squeeze your glutes during each leg extension and pull your navel toward your spine. **To do it:** Position your hands and knees on a BOSU (a). Slowly extend your left arm out in front of you and raise your right leg behind you, forming a straight line from your fingers to your toes (b). Hold for 10 to 15 seconds, then bring your arm and leg back to the BOSU. That's one rep. Rest for five seconds, then repeat with the other arm and leg. Alternate for 10 reps.



MEDICINE BALL INCHWORM

Don't let the name fool you: This move is not easygoing. The baby steps torch your hamstrings and calves, while your arms and shoulders are constantly at work. And the farther your feet get from your hands, the harder your core has to work to keep you stable. **To do it:** Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and lean forward, knees slightly bent, to place both hands on a four- to six-pound medicine ball on the floor (a). Slowly walk your feet away from your hands until your body is in a straight line from head to heels (b). You should move about an inch or two with each step. Hold for one second, then walk your feet back to the starting position. That's one rep; do 10.



STABILITY BALL HAND WALKS

Your shoulders and arms are the main event here, but your core and glutes will feel as if they're in the spotlight. Try to walk as far out as you can; the farther you go, the harder it is, Ntansah says. **To do it:** Lie facedown with your torso on the ball, place your hands on the floor, raise your legs, and walk your hands out until just your thighs are on the ball (a). Squeeze your glutes and walk out until you're in the plank position, with just your feet on the ball (b). Pull your abs in tight to keep your body stable. Hold for five seconds, then walk your hands back to the ball. That's one rep; do 10.

STABILITY BALL LEG RAISE

This hits your lower-body target (hips, thighs, and butt) and works them hard. "You think it's just going to work the leg you're raising and lowering, but at the end you feel more in the leg that didn't move," says Ntansah. "It's a great example of stabilizing muscles at work." **To do it:** Lie on your left side on the stability ball, legs extended straight and feet stacked. Position your left hip so that your body forms a straight line (a). Keeping your feet in that position, slowly raise your leg (b). Pause, then slowly return to start. Do as many reps as you can in one minute, then repeat on the other side.

"SLAM BALL" SPLIT-SQUAT JUMPS

Get your heart rate (and your quads!) fired up with this plyometric-inspired move that makes everything feel the burn—shoulders, core, quads, hamstrings, glutes, and calves. **To do it:** Stand with your right leg forward and your left leg behind you, so your feet are about three feet apart. Hold a medicine ball above your head (a). Bend into a lunge, rotate your torso to the right, and slam the ball on the ground outside of your right knee (b). Jump up, switch legs in midair, catch the ball and bring it back above your head, landing softly. Repeat to the left side, alternating for 10 to 20 jumps.



STABILITY BALL WALK-UP CRUNCHES

By removing the momentum your upper body creates during a typical crunch, this move makes your core work harder and more effectively, says Ntansah. Want to make it tougher? Hold your arms straight above your head throughout the exercise. **To do it:** Lie back with your shoulders on a stability ball, hands crossed in front of your chest, with your feet flat on the floor and knees bent 90 degrees (a). Contract your abs and move your feet inward as you sit up (b). Reverse the move by slowly walking your feet outward until you're back in the starting position, keeping your abs engaged throughout the exercise. That's one rep. Do 20 reps in all.



BALLS OUT!

PAGES 55 TO 57
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Falke 3/4 Akron tights (\$60), sportperfect.com
Ibex Balance sports top (\$59), ibexwear.com
K-Swiss Training cap-sleeve top (\$40), kswiss.com
New Balance NBxTreme leggings (\$80), NBxTreme Crop bra (\$45), and 805 sneakers (\$85), newbalance.com
New Balance for Nine West Cyprus 410 sneakers (\$89), newbalance.com