

Networking Question: Balance training vs. Temporary stability

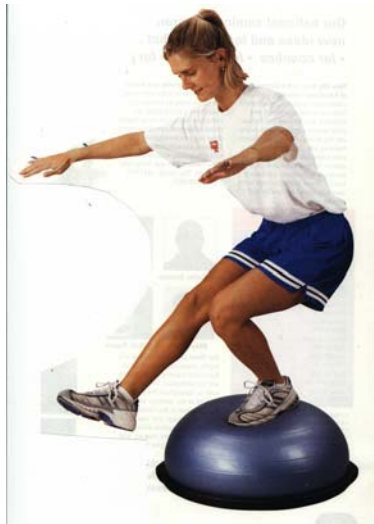
Finding the “Balance Zone™”

The DBS provides an excellent opportunity for networking and sharing ideas: Your input is greatly appreciated and I will share this insight with other progressive Physical Therapists and Exercise Performance Specialists.

The following picture is from the front cover of a very fine fitness products catalog. We, as therapists and exercise performance specialists, have utilized a variety of unstable surfaces to try to have our clients “**learn**” balance. Is the model below in balance? She appears “stabilizing” over the forefoot, which may have been the directions she was given-if no instructions were provided than what is she learning? When we ask clients to learn balance on a compliant surface do we tell them where they should feel the pressure on their feet?

Question:

How should we teach clients kinesthetic awareness when learning to feel a stable base of support and then progress into functionally safe activities?



My thoughts:

I believe, without proper feedback and instruction, using these unstable surfaces requires the patient to find a temporary, arbitrary position of stability, utilizing whatever compensations are necessary, to remain standing as instructed by the therapist.

I would suggest that the better learning technique would be to use the feedback capabilities of the DBS to learn the feel of balance on a stable surface—**balance zone**. Then, add unstable surfaces (even on the DBS) for further training with feedback and increasing difficulties. Then progress to exercises without feedback.