



Level 3

Swiss Ball Side Plank

This very different variety of side planking really challenges balance, alignment and total body integration, in a different way than does the normal Side Plank.

What are some things to keep in mind?

Everyone who tries this for the first time is likely to have a few challenges with balance. And that is absolutely normal.

In fact, I'd argue that's one important aspect of this movement compared to our normal Side Plank.

Think of it as a true 3-dimensional type of stability and stiffness that's whole body. It isn't strictly about that side to side (also referred to as the Frontal) plane of motion.

What is one key to success?

Of course, the way you improve balance and get set up in this exercise more successfully is to create *more integration and stiffness*. The more your body wiggles around, the less chance you'll be able to set up properly.

Stiffen, connect, integrate.

And don't forget to squeeze the ball. This is the other benefit – we're more actively engaging the muscles that "adduct" the hip. These are those that "move your thigh toward the midline of your body. That IS part of the whole body and core stability we're hoping to create.

One additional note to be aware of: some folks who have a history of knee injury MIGHT feel more stress in the knee when performing this. If that's you, your knees may need a little extra care so be careful with that squeezing.

Make it happen MORE at the feet and low leg to reduce stress on the knee. Squeeze and tighten your quadriceps even more – the more you engage your quads (and in fact, your entire body), the less stress the knee will feel. This is all about engaging everything to take the stress off of any one area.

Have fun with this exercise – it's a big challenge to do well and can be a great way to continue your core stability and strength journey!

How often should you do this?

The Swiss Ball Side Plank can be utilized to improve BOTH stability and strength of the core and trunk.

How you intend to use it will determine how OFTEN you do it, and also how intensely you do it.

If done as a stability exercise, where the focus is getting into position, creating good alignment and tension, and then pausing to repeat, with a maximum isometric hold of no more than 10 or 15 seconds, you can do it as often as is feasible. As always when doing a stability-oriented movement like this or the Half Front Plank with a Reach, when your concentration and focus wane a bit, stop. Pause for a little while, then come back to your practice.

Conversely, if you intend to get into position and look at it as a way to increase strength and time it for maximum duration, more rest between sessions is required.

To summarize:

- Know WHY you are doing it before you embark on your training.
- Listen to your body. Rest and recovery are an essential component for improvement, yet at the same time, frequently practicing low-stress skills that require concentration and

focus is also required to improve. Learn to know the difference and if in doubt, err on the side of caution.

Train smart! Enjoy the journey and embrace the process!