

What Has Dr. Shook Been Reading?

Exercise Ball for Beginners, A Hands-Free, Eye-Level, Step-By-Step Guide.

By Chrissie Gallagher-Mundy

Harper Collins (2004)

Exercise Ball for Beginners starts out with an explanation of how this child's toy became a tool used by doctors and therapists to heal injuries and how the exercise ball has become a common piece of equipment in health clubs and home gyms.

The basics of stretching, toning and cardiovascular fitness are briefly explained.

With an emphasis on balance and core muscle strength (abdominal, back, buttock and hip strength), Exercise Ball for Beginners, explains how the air filled support combined with the instability of a round surface, makes the exercise ball particularly useful for stimulating balance and developing core muscle strength.

There is a brief discussion of nutrition basics and the importance of drinking water.

Readers who have not exercised in the last three months are encouraged to seek approval from their medical doctor before beginning an exercise program.

The bulk of this book is devoted to various exercises using the exercise ball as a base for stretching and strengthening.

The book itself is designed to fold open and stand upright for viewing while using the ball. (Hence the "... Hands-Free, Eye-Level, ..." portion of the title.) However I found that even with the book standing upright and open on the coffee table, I could not read the instructions without binoculars. It might be more useful to read the instructions aloud, record it on tape and play it back as I exercise.

The pictures are nice.

Exercise Ball for Beginners offers excellent advice and instructions for someone, generally aware of their body's strengths and weaknesses, modestly fit and accustomed to some exercise.

I cannot recommend this book as a solo guide for the novice exerciser. The true beginner or someone recovering from an injury really should have at least a little personal guidance, a real human watching, lending a balancing hand if necessary and giving feedback. "Keep your feet on the floor", "Tuck your chin in", "Remember to breath" "OK, that's enough, use your hands and roll up to an upright position", feedback that a book or video are incapable of providing.

I did like this book and have recommended the exercise ball and this book as a possible alternative to owning multiple pieces of exercise equipment.

If nothing else the exercise ball is one of the most popular toys found in my waiting room.

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