

Kids on balls



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Lisa has been working in many facets of the health and fitness industry for over 20 years. In 2000, she was named Australian Fitness Network's Fitness Instructor of the Year, and in 2003, was the recipient of Australian Fitness Network's Presenter of the Year Award. Through her business, Physical Best, Lisa combines physiotherapy and fitness to create classes and programs for a variety of ages, levels and abilities, and is well known for her work in developing the Fitball program in Australia.

Kids need to be active. The most valuable element for a successful kids' fitness program is fun. Observing a group of kids in a room with a few fitballs will convince anyone that they are a fabulous tool for enhancing enthusiastic, energetic activity in any child. These big, bouncy balls are readily available to most instructors, and just one of the many ways we can inject fun and fresh enthusiasm into your kids' exercise program.

Important considerations

The size of the ball does matter. The majority of primary school children will need a 55cm ball when lying over or sitting on it. Sixty five centimetre balls may suit some taller children, but generally this size is best used for running, passing and bouncing type activities.

Always make safety a priority; children love to be energetic and adventurous on the ball, so class control, guidelines and supervision that ensure safe activity is vital.

The most successful kids' fitball classes tend to involve activities such as:

- Cardiovascular activity, specifically short-burst, stop/start drills
- Body awareness and control, including posture and movement awareness
- Balance
- Stability
- Agility
- Coordination
- Bone development stimulated by activity
- Mobility
- Flexibility
- Confidence and healthy self esteem
- Cooperation and communication
- A happy healthy attitude to activity and exercise.

Other considerations when working with children include:

- Ensure activities are age appropriate. Use terminology and activities to suit the age of the child or group.
- Growth plates and bone development mean that this is not a time for heavily resisted activity or extreme load. Instead focus on developing form, body awareness and general fitness.

- Muscle/bone imbalances during growth spurts lead to times of relative loss of coordination when children can feel awkward and self conscious. Encourage, be positive and modify activities accordingly.
- Physical abilities vary at all ages, so modify and provide activity options for individuals, rather than age groups.
- Remember, children are not simply 'little adults' when it comes to exercise, so understand that their training requirements will differ accordingly.
- Comprehension and terminology should vary when your clients are children. Avoid embarrassment by using landmarks and demonstrations such as 'towards the mirrors' or 'turn this way', rather than cues such as 'left', 'right' or 'clockwise'.
- Reward with praise and fun for all, and avoid excessive focus on competition.
- Be aware of self image, comparisons and confidence variations.

Fitball exercises for kids

So now you've got the kids, and you've got the balls, here are a few fun activities:

1. Walk the plank

Purpose: enhances postural awareness and control, spinal and shoulder stability, upper body strength to lengthen and strengthen from top to toe.

Application: supervised one-on-one activity or circuit station

Activity:

1. Start kneeling on the floor, hugging the ball (photo 1).



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THINKING ABOUT EMPLOYMENT IN KIDS' FITNESS PROGRAMS?

CHISM Certificate IV Special Populations: Children and Adolescents.

Looking for opportunities for employment conducting physical activity programs for kids and adolescents? Kids and adolescent programs are now being conducted extensively by Fitness Professionals in Pre-school and After-School Care Centres, Youth and Recreation Centres, Fitness and Leisure Centres, Primary School settings and as part of Sports Coaching Clinics.

Fitness Australia Approved Continuing Education Credits (CECs): (Parts A+B - 15 CECs)

Part A: Course Dates

February	11, 12	2006
May	6, 7	2006
July	11, 12*	2006
October	10, 11*	2006
December	2, 3	2006

Part B: Course Dates

February	18, 19	2006
May	13, 14	2006
July	13, 14*	2006
October	12, 13*	2006
December	9, 10	2006

* Delivered in NSW School Holidays

**FILEX 2006 CHISM EVENT
22 April 2006**

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the children's hospital at Westmead
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Topics covered include:

- Assessing growth and development and the effects of exercise on growth and development.
- Physiology of children compared to adults in response to exercise.
- Nutrition for physically active children and adolescents.
- Exercise safety and injury prevention and exercise pre-screening.
- Resistance training guidelines for children and adolescents.

Topics covered include:

- Goal setting and baseline assessments of children and adolescents.
- Exercise programming for cardiovascular fitness, strength, flexibility and fundamental motor skills.
- Individual and group programming: developing lesson components; instructional and communication skills; developing age-appropriate physical activity structures.
- Exercise programming for children and adolescents with special needs.

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If you cannot complete the face-to-face course due to the fact that you live away from Sydney (such as country and rural NSW, Interstate or overseas), or because of work or family commitments, the CHISM Correspondence allows you to complete your training in the comfort of your own home. The Correspondence Course is available to you via "On-line delivery". Each course comes with extensive easy-to-follow manuals and support.

Correspondence Course Resources and Support

With the new Correspondence course you will receive:

- A package of multimedia lectures delivered on CD-ROM covering the current face-to-face teaching of the course
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For information contact:

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Website: www.chism.chw.edu.au



Cue: 'Make yourself as small and as round as you can, around the ball'.

2. Roll out to the plank position (photo 2).

Cue: 'Walk hands forward to roll slowly and carefully out over the ball keeping your back straight and strong'.

Other helpful cues:

- 'Draw your belly button in' or 'don't let your back bend like a banana' to help encourage spinal stabilisation.
- 'Imagine you have a small baby animal (favourite of their choice) on your back' to encourage control.

Pointers:

- Provide alternative for smaller children if the ball is too large, such as four point kneel, alternate arm and leg extension.
- Only walk out to where the child retains good control and alignment.

2. Seated throw and catch

Purpose: enhances core control, balance, coordination, communication and cooperation, using balls, balance and big smiles.

Application: can be performed in pairs, as a circuit station, or in larger circles.

Activity:

1. Sit tall on the ball, a few metres away from your partner, with your feet hip width apart.
2. Throw a smaller ball to each other while keeping your body and ball balanced and stable (photo 3).



Variations:

- Try doing the same thing, with one foot off the ground (photo 4).
- Younger children may use a balloon and older children may use a light medicine ball.

Helpful cues:

- 'Keep your body tall'.
- 'Don't let your ball wobble'.



Pointers:

- Ensure good posture.
- Keep feet out in front so calves are not touching the ball.

3. Round the twist

Purpose:

enhances stability, balance, mobility, cooperation, coordination and communication by winding up and unwinding.

Application: circuit station or class activity, in pairs.

Activity:

1. Sit tall, back to back, with your feet hip width apart.
2. Turn towards each other to pass the ball, which then comes around to be passed back, on the other side (photo 5).
3. Continue to pass the ball five times in one direction, then unwind by passing it the other way.



Variations: for extra wobble control, try this with your eyes closed, or one foot off the ground.

4. Seated bounce

Purpose: enhances cardiovascular fitness, balance, awareness, stability and control - just like a space hopper but 'look no hands!'

Application: class or a circuit station

Activity:

1. Sit tall on the ball with your feet out in front, but close together.
2. Keeping your bottom in contact with the ball, bounce up and down.
3. When you've found a rhythm, try star jumps (photo 6) or leg kicks (photo 7), running on the spot, or jump both feet to one side, then the other.



Pointers:

- Monitor closely for awareness and control.
- Ball must be sized such that when seated, still on the ball the hips are slightly higher than, or level with, the knees.
- Keep feet out in front of the ball

**5. Rag doll roll**

Purpose: enhances mobility, balance, flexibility and relaxation through some roly-poly, flopsy fun.

Application: circuit or class (perfect fitball relaxation/finale).

Activity:

1. Drape over the ball with toes and fingers resting lightly on the ground (photo 8).

**Cues:**

- 'Flop over the ball like a rag doll'.
- 'Tickle the floor with your fingers and toes.'

Pointers:

- Roll slowly and slightly forward and backwards from your fingers to your toes.
- Try rolling side to side, or roll around in a slow circle 'as though you are drawing a circle with your belly button'.

6. Long and strong

Purpose: enhances posterior strength, balance and postural awareness to balance your body.

Application: class or circuit station.

Activity:

1. Starting draped over the ball in the rag doll position, slowly raise your chest and legs to become as straight and strong as you can on the ball (photo 9).



2. Try to hold the position, keeping your legs and back straight as you take less weight through your hands.

Variations: for extra fun see if you can balance on the ball while you 'tickle the floor' or 'pretend to play the piano.'

Pointer:

- Ball must be correctly sized.

7. Bottoms up

Purpose: enhances strength, balance, and stability using a wobbly way to lie on the floor.

Application: class or circuit.

Activity:

1. Lie on the floor with the back of your heels on the top of the ball and your arms by your side.
2. Slowly lift your bottom (photo 10).
3. Don't let the ball, or your body, wobble. Lower your bottom again carefully.
4. For extra wobble control, try doing the same thing with your arms off the floor (photo 11).

**Pointer:**

- watch out for, and avoid, neck and shoulder tension. ♦

Photography by Melanie Hendrikse
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CONVENTION

21 to 23 April 2006
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Learn more from Lisa Westlake at FILEX 2006.
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Visit www.fitnessnetwork.com.au/FILEX for program information and to register online.

www.fitnessnetwork.com.au/FILEX

Announcing our 10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY



This year, Les Mills is 10 years young, and what a decade it has been. We have evolved, expanded and diversified our offerings and have loved sharing the journey with all of you.

Although so much has happened across our first ten years, one crucial factor remains constant, our genuine desire to grow and support the Group Fitness market, to make it healthy and prosperous for all health club owners and Instructors.

With such a great history, we are doing all we can to drive strongly into the next decade and give you the tools you need to fill your rooms. We will put our Licensees and Instructors at the cutting edge by continuing to reinvest into the industry.

One of the strategies to achieve this is our continual investment and commitment to re-invest into program development, training development, education, the highest quality marketing material and awesome quarterly workshops provided at absolute minimum cost to participants. Through these workshops, we are pleased to be able to offer seven CEC points to you for only \$22!

This is all part of our plan to move forward, but let's take a look at where we've come from...

In the early 90's Group Fitness numbers were declining, with up to half of the 80's participation peak opting out of fitness centres. Rooms were empty or emptying and the Group Fitness sector was dying. With the introduction of a quality Group Fitness experience, Les Mills helped their licensees start to take back lost ground.

When BODYPUMP® launched, a buzz swept through the industry and when the full suite of Les Mills programs arrived, a new era in Group Fitness was born.

In 1995 Les Mills Australia began training Instructors in BODYPUMP®. Instructors were empowered by a new level of education that took them well beyond the existing Group Fitness experience being delivered. Les Mills Australia consisted of two staff who were inundated with calls from health clubs. Word was that Les Mills's programs were attracting participants in their droves.

1996: License fees were modified to allow more clubs to take on this popular program. Low monthly fees made the benefits very affordable, even for small clubs. This year saw club owners excited about the renewed potential of Group Fitness with a proven, quality controlled system that cost them less than one club membership sale per month and pulled in far more profit than that. Quarterly workshops began to provide Instructors with inexpensive and practical ongoing education and motivation.

1997: Les Mills Australia introduced BODYATTACK® and BODYSTEP®. Clubs started to experience the benefits of a total Group Fitness package.

1998: RPM™ entered the market, slowly at first but in 2005 it has one of the highest take up rates of all programs in Australia and South East Asia. The very first issue of Revolution magazine published and circulated to Licensees and Instructors.

1999 was a big year in Group Fitness.

- BODYCOMBAT® and BODYBALANCE® were introduced with a MASSIVE response. BODYBALANCE® is consistently the world's biggest mind/body program today (IHRSA).
- BODYCOMBAT® meant clubs were inundated with consumers. We provided a safe, quality controlled and consistent workout that is still going strong nearly seven years later.
- 1999 also saw South East Asian clubs take on Les Mills programs. Currently, Asia is experiencing massive growth with many Australian fitness professionals able to take up great opportunities in the region to expand their careers.
- The Group Fitness Management seminars hit all capital cities for the first time. These have continued to provide club owners and their teams with practical strategies for extracting profits directly from Group Fitness.
- Quarterly workshops expanded (Super workshops) offering a greater motivational experience to Instructors which flowed through to their own club participants.

2000: eClub was introduced to enable clubs to capitalise on valuable marketing material passed on free of charge from Les Mills International.

2002 saw BODYJAM® hit gym floors. On the leading edge of the dance craze, BODYJAM® provided a safe, dance fitness formula which could be enjoyed by all.

2003 was the year our training and education was given a renewed focus. More training was introduced to help our Instructors become the best they can be and help maximise their earning potential.

In 2004, eClub was revamped to add program specific categories and greater usability to the site.

The 2005 FILEX convention was HUGE! The Les Mills Instructor of the year competition acknowledged Instructor excellence and Revolution was revamped to make it an even more enjoyable and informative read. Our name also changed from Les Mills Australia to Les Mills Asia Pacific to reflect our commitment to South East Asia. Over thirty staff members now keep the wheels turning at Les Mills Asia Pacific.

In 2006 over one hundred clubs in South East Asia will be providing Les Mills programs. A new and improved website will launch with sections dedicated to each of our audiences. Our new clothing ranges and our Online Store are soon to go live and Pro Instructor™ will provide further career progression for Instructors. Les Mills Asia Pacific is investing significant resources and time into building fantastic tools for our valued Instructors and licensees.

Les Mills Asia Pacific and Les Mills International call on a large group of experts to input into deep dive sessions to enable fresh, effective and safe training programs to be presented quarterly. The investment Les Mills makes into education provides Instructors with many benefits including:

1. International qualifications! Les Mills accreditation is recognised world wide and classes are run in 55 countries.
2. You gain a whopping 15 CEC points once your accreditation is complete.
3. You get paid to keep fit! In no time, your initial training 'investment' is paid off, making room for profits to start to flow.
4. Training is tax deductible.
5. As part of each training registration, you receive invaluable training resources and certification, and
6. More and more clubs are seeking qualified Les Mills Instructors, so opportunities abound!

We appreciate your commitment and support and are excited about reviewing the next 10 years of Group Fitness history in 2016! Imagine where our industry will be!