

## **Top 10 Reasons for not Swapping out your Office Chair for an Exercise Ball**

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The Swiss Ball or exercise ball was invented in Italy in 1963 as a toy. By the 1980s, the ball had found its way into North American physical therapy settings. A decade later, the exercise ball was used to develop core strength in the fitness industry. Now the exercise ball is trying to creep into the office environment as a substitute (an inappropriate substitute!) for an ergonomically designed office chair. Below are 10 reasons why you should not swap out your office chair for an exercise ball:

1. Exercise balls have a tendency to roll out from under the user as they sit or stand resulting in the risk of losing balance or falling off the ball
2. Exercise balls are a tripping hazard in small office spaces
3. Sitting on a ball increases the load on the lower back, resulting in significantly greater whole body discomfort after one hour, because of a lack of lumbar support
4. The amount that your core muscles work while you sit on a ball is not much different than sitting in a chair. In fact, there is only a difference of 4 calories/hour in energy expenditure
5. Exercise balls have no armrests or back supports so the back and upper extremities are not fully supported
6. You can't swivel or move around your workspace while seated
7. Office chairs are made of breathable material to transport heat and moisture away from the body, but the material of a ball is not breathable
8. Sitting on a ball spreads out the contact area on the buttocks and thighs which results in uncomfortable soft tissue compression, poor circulation and discomfort
9. The exercise ball is not height adjustable and may not be tall enough to place your hands below your elbows with your hands on the keyboard
10. The exercise ball was not designed to be a sitting surface and may burst, resulting in a fall

Save the exercise ball for the gym or while watching TV. Stay active and avoid sitting for prolonged periods of time. <http://intranet.mayo.edu/charlie/safety-rst/2014/02/14/burn-calories-at-work/>