



Diver Fitness Using the Big Blue BOSU

By Guest Author Dec 31, 2015

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By guest blogger Gretchen Ashton

Think of it as the surface of the ever-moving ocean, shifting sand and rocks, or the deck of a dive boat. Standing, sitting, pressing or kneeling on a BOSU ball immediately requires a diver's full attention, and is great practice for the above scenarios. Invented by David Weck in 2000, the BOSU has grown in popularity for home, professional and sport fitness. The name BOSU originally meant "both sides up," but because of its versatility, it's come to mean "both sides utilized." Divers can purchase a BOSU at most sporting goods stores and will find BOSU variations in fitness classes at pretty much every gym and community center.

So how does it work? The BOSU, similar to other inflatable exercise apparatuses, stimulates proprioception, which means "the sense of the relative position of neighboring parts of the body and strength of effort being employed in movement."

A basic proprioception exercise is as simple as standing on a firm surface on one foot and closing your eyes — now complete the same exercise on a BOSU and the fun begins. Proprioception uses sensors in the muscles, joints and skin to send messages through the central nervous system to the brain, relaying vital information about the length of muscles, position of the joints, limbs and torso, and ultimately the position of the body itself in its present surroundings. Purposely performing exercises that tap into these sensations helps divers increase cognitive awareness, connecting the mind and body with internal sensations relating to heaviness, force or weightlessness. This helps them to control body movements without looking and improves physical performance on dry land and underwater. With practice, divers will become comfortable on the BOSU and can incorporate it into fitness exercises, such as the Bridge on a BOSU.

Bridge on the BOSU

This exercise targets the buttocks, hamstrings and, in certain positions, trains the quadriceps, abductors and adductors (muscles on the front, inside and outside of the leg). Lower-body strength is important for many diving activities, ranging from moving from land to sea and back under the weight of gear to fin-kick swimming. This exercise is also a conservative way to strengthen the lower back.

Divers new to this exercise may begin with their feet on the ground. Performing the exercise on the BOSU is more challenging and requires additional muscles and concentration to perform correctly. Advancing to the single-leg version is increasingly more difficult. Begin in Position One and progress to Position Four. For all levels, once at the top of the movement, slightly lower the hips to just above the ground, hover for a second, and return to the top by contracting the buttocks to lift the hips and repeat. Contract the abdominal muscles to protect and stabilize the torso. If needed, put weight on the arms, extended along each side of the torso, for better balance. Begin with 10 repetitions and increase from there according to ability.



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