



Twist Ball™ Workout

In this workshop, participants experience a fully integrated workout using the Twist Ball, an air-filled weighted workout ball. The same size and density as a larger Mini Stability Ball, the Twist Ball features a shifting center of sand and two soft foam handles. Once whole-body movement is mastered, participants can increase the variable load and challenge the connective tissue system through new creative exercises. Learn healthy load transfer strategies using drag, pick-up and toss style movements that reinforce whole-body motion, control, strength and coordination to manage acceleration and deceleration forces. Selected exercises in this workshop created by the team at Merrithew™ emphasize movement variables and fascial concepts.

Learning Objectives

1. Explore full-body movements incorporating current fascial concepts related to exercise.
2. Discover how the Twist Ball can be added to increase challenge to mastered movements.
3. Develop the stability and control to manage a shifting weight in traditional and non-traditional movements.
4. Discuss how fascial system concepts can be integrated in a variety of standing and Matwork-based exercises.

Workshop Details

TIME REQUIRED: 2 hours

EQUIPMENT REQUIRED: Pilates Mat; Twist Ball

[view equipment online](#) (merrithew.com/instructor-training/cont-ed/stott-pilates/matwork-matwork-with-small-equipment/stott-pilates-twist-ball-workout)

ADDITIONAL WORKSHOPS: [view online](#) (merrithew.com/instructor-training/cont-ed/stott-pilates)



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STOTT PILATES® Twist Ball™ For Function & Resilience

(merrithewconnect.com/programs/stott-pilates-twist-ball-for-function-and-resilience)

Introduction

This workshop utilizes the Twist Ball, a 12" air-filled ball containing a shifting center of sand and two handle grips.

The focus of the workshop is to begin incorporating load to full-body movements that integrate rather than isolate body parts. Complex, but intuitive, the movement patterns allow engagement of long myofascial chains with graceful, fluid movements.

Momentum is added by the external load moving in swinging motions, which necessitates involvement of the whole body while focus is placed on timing, rhythm and preparatory counter movements to access the fascial training effects.

The swinging also provides room for multi-vectorial variations, and encourages proprioception by means of tractioning the joints. This, along with the pendulum effect, allows the dynamic recoil properties of the fascia to be tensioned and challenged, continually hydrating the matrix, creating a healthier and more resilient fascial system.

Breath Cues are not included in the descriptions of each exercise. Instructors are encouraged to provide breath cues, imagery cues and provide options to better customize exercises allowing clients to enhance the ease of movement and improve the quality of their movement experience.

In this workout, fascial foundations movement concepts are layered over many familiar exercises.

Movement Qualities that can elicit a fascial tissue response are listed below.

- ▶ unpredictable, spontaneous movement
- ▶ three dimensional movement
- ▶ hydraulic amplification (breath inspired)
- ▶ pretension/recoil
- ▶ oppositional force
- ▶ whip-like movement
- ▶ gait mechanics, developmental patterns
- ▶ swing or pendulum-like movement

- ▶ primal (animal-like), playful movement
- ▶ effortless, efficient quality
- ▶ bouncy, spring-like movement in loaded and unloaded positions
- ▶ increased load to the system (i.e. standing rather than supine)
- ▶ tensegrity – tensional integrity
- ▶ freedom of movement
- ▶ sensing end range
- ▶ body undulation
- ▶ weight transfer
- ▶ myofascial slings
- ▶ push/pull upper body motion
- ▶ various tempos
- ▶ smooth transitional moves from floor to stand and from stand to floor

New Movement Terms

Drag: sandbag-style pushing/pulling the ball on the floor holding one handle. The resistance challenge comes from the weight of the ball and the resistance of the ball sliding on the floor

Pick-Up: pick up the ball and return it to the same spot. This practice helps participants recognize and refine the strategies they are employing to handle the load of lifting the ball

Toss: pick up ball and move it to a new location. This is a progression of the Pick-Up

Snatch: a kettlebell-style exercise where the ball swings to an overhead position using whole body motion, control, strength and coordination to manage acceleration and deceleration forces

STOTT PILATES™ TWIST BALL™ WORKOUT CONT'D

WARM UP – STANDING

BREATHING

focus: use of props to create a focal point, add movement to breath optimization imagery, tensional integrity of the spine

start: standing in neutral, feet hip-distance apart, holding handles with Twist Ball at navel level, elbows angled slightly back

1. BALL AT BELLY

in: feeling abdomen gently expand toward the Ball,
ex: notice the abdomen drawing away from the Ball as the lumbar spine elongates

variation: Add spinal motion – i.e. rotation, lateral flexion, thoracic extension/flexion, etcetera

2. BALL AT CHEST elbows close to sides of body

in: feeling sternum gently rise toward the Ball;
ex: notice the sternum drop away from the Ball as the cervical spine elongates

variation: Add spinal motion – i.e. rotation, lateral flexion, thoracic extension/flexion, etcetera

TWO-HANDLE ARM SWINGS

focus: pretension/recoil, whole body movements, pendulum swing quality, tensional integrity of the spine, engaging long myofascial chains

start: standing in athletic stance, holding handles with Ball at navel level

1. SHOULDER-TO-HIP DIAGONAL

swing Ball over one shoulder then move it diagonally toward the opposite hip. Repeat in opposite direction

variations: Add spinal rotation, add squat, increase speed creating a swing-like or a whip-like movement quality

2. ALTERNATING SHOULDER-TO-HIP DIAGONAL

swing Ball over one shoulder then overhead to the opposite shoulder and diagonally toward the opposite hip. Reverse direction. If shoulder flexibility allows, circle Ball behind the head to opposite shoulder

variations: Add spinal rotation, add squat, increase speed, creating a swing-like movement quality

SQUAT SERIES

focus: managing weight transfer, load variations and unpredictable movements, push/pull upper body motions, tensional integrity of the spine

start: standing in neutral, feet hip-distance apart or in a wider athletic stance, holding handles, Ball at chest with elbows close to the sides of the body

1. BALL AT CHEST perform basic squat with Ball at chest

2. BALL BEHIND HEAD OR NECK

perform basic squat holding Ball overhead, behind head or if shoulder flexibility allows, at back of neck from base of neck to base of skull (maintaining neutral alignment)

3. SPINAL ROTATION IN SQUAT STANCE

hold squat position and rotate pelvis and spine

variations: Ball at chest (1) or at back of neck (2)

4. SQUAT PICK-UPS

practice increasing squat depth by reaching Ball forward to counter-balance weight of pelvis shifting back. If mobility allows, maintain neutral spine and tap Ball on floor

variation: tap Ball in a variety of spots on floor, add single arm tap holding one handle

5. BALL TOSS

holding handle in one hand, squat and place Ball on floor and stand up without the Ball. Repeat squat but pick up Ball with the other hand

variation: place Ball on a variety of spots on the floor challenging reach and mobility

6. SQUAT HOLD WITH DRAG

in squat stance with Ball on floor holding one handle drag Ball along floor with a pull/push action. Repeat on other side

variation: vary push/pull directions

DEADLIFTS

focus: engaging long myofascial chains, hip hinge, tensional integrity of the spine

start: standing in neutral, feet hip-distance apart or in a wider athletic stance, knees extended or slightly flexed, holding handles, Ball at chest with elbows close to the sides of the body

1. BALL AT CHEST

maintaining neutral spine, flex at hip joints as far forward as neutral spine can be maintained. Return to vertical

2. ARMS LONG

Repeat with arms exerted reaching forward with Ball below chest level

3. SINGLE LEG

standing on leg with Ball at chest or arms long. Reach opposite leg back keeping toes in contact with floor or lifting back leg on hip hinge

legend: *in:* = inhale; *ex:* = exhale

STOTT PILATES™ TWIST BALL™ WORKOUT CONT'D

EXERCISES

SWING SERIES – WIDE STANCE

focus: pendulum swing mechanics, strengthen through various planes of movement, tensional integrity of the spine, upper body plyometrics, engaging long myofascial chains

start: standing in neutral with both hands holding one handle, arms long in front of body

1. DOUBLE ARM SWING

kettlebell-style swing – knees slightly flexed, hips flexed, neutral spine. Push through feet as knees extend and pelvis moves in an up and forward direction (image hamstrings working like a sling shot) as arms and Ball swing in an up and forward direction (sagittal plane) to approximately chest level

2. SINGLE ARM SWING

same swing style as above with only one hand holding handle. Reach other arm wide to side (tensional integrity) to increase stability and assist in tracking of Ball in a forward swing pathway

3. SNATCH

perform single straight arm swing with enough momentum to carry arm up to overhead position with Ball continuing over hand (this should occur slightly above chest level) and finishing on top of wrist. The objective is to arrive in overhead position with minimal Ball bouncing on forearm. Using whole-body motion, push through feet and slightly extend knees to send Ball overhead and return to straight arm swing. Repeat Snatch several times reducing the number of swings

4. TRIBAL SQUATS

with Ball in overhead snatch position, perform a squat reaching lower arm toward floor. During the squat motion, the spine must rotate further in order to maintain a stable top arm. If mobility allows, touch fingers to floor

Repeat 2-4 on other side

SWING SERIES – OFF-SET STANCE

focus: pendulum swing mechanics, strengthen through various planes of movement, tensional integrity of the spine, upper body plyometrics, engaging long myofascial chains

start: lunge stance holding one handle with same hand as back leg, spine neutral with slight lateral flexion toward Ball

1. CATCH & THROW

swing Ball forward and back in the sagittal plane using whole body forward and back weight transfer to create an effortless swing quality, keeping the sand in the Ball “silent” (smooth moments prevent the sand from being tossed around). After several swings, catch the Ball at chest level and immediately throw the Ball forward lengthening the arm and repeat the swing. Repeat catch and throw several times working to quickly transition from catch phase to throw phase (a short amortization phase make the quality of this action more plyometric)

2. SNATCH

in a lunge stance, perform a single straight arm swing with enough momentum to carry arm up to overhead position with Ball continuing over hand (this should occur slightly above chest level) and finishing on top of wrist. The objective is to arrive in overhead position with minimal Ball bouncing on forearm. Using whole-body motion, push through feet and slightly extend knees to send Ball over hand and return to straight arm swing. Repeat Snatch several times reducing the number of swings

3. LUNGE WITH SIDE BEND

with Ball in overhead snatch position, perform a lunge reaching lower arm toward floor. During the lunge motion, laterally flex the spine further while maintaining a stable top arm. If mobility allows, touch fingers to floor

4. SAGITTAL-TO-FRONTAL SWINGS

swing Ball forward and back in the sagittal plane using whole body weight transfer to create an effortless swing quality keeping the sand in the Ball “silent” (smooth moments will prevent the sand in the Ball from being tossed around). Then, follow the motion of the Ball as it swings in back direction by laterally rotating back leg, rotating pelvis and turning body to face side with arms swing wide to side. Follow the forward swing of the Ball returning the body back to lunge position facing forward (this is a forward-back swing of the Ball but the motion of the body creates a sagittal-frontalsagittal arm swing)

variation: can be performed as a perpetual swing or swing/catch/throw

5. ALTERNATING LUNGES WITH SWING

begin with Sagittal to Frontal Swings as above. Then, as Ball swings forward, simultaneously step back foot forward. With Ball at chest level, switch hands to prepare to swing the Ball on the other side. As Ball swings backward, simultaneously step back with same side leg. Repeat alternating lunges with swing finishing on other side then repeat Swing Series on the other side (1-5)

STOTT PILATES™ TWIST BALL™ WORKOUT CONT'D

SINGLE LEG STANDING SERIES

focus: building dynamic strength in a single leg stance, managing weight transfer

start: standing in neutral spine, feet hip-distance apart with Ball on floor in front of one foot. Place foot on Ball with knee and hip flexed, pelvis level (avoid laterally tilting the pelvis)

1. SQUAT TO KNEE LIFT

squat with foot on Ball reaching arms forward for balance, on return, stand and simultaneously lift foot off the Ball, lower foot back to Ball and repeat squat

2. PICK-UP, FOOT IN HANDLE

standing in neutral spine with one foot inside handle, hands on hips, keeping pelvis level, lift Ball slightly off floor. Return to start

3. PICK-UP WITH SQUAT

standing in neutral spine with foot in handle, squat reaching arms forward for balance, on return, stand and simultaneously lift Ball slightly off the floor. Lower Ball back to floor and repeat squat

4. SIDE TOSS

standing in neutral with one foot inside handle, hands on hips, keeping pelvis level and stable, lift Ball slightly off the floor and horizontally abduct leg then lower Ball, lift Ball and horizontally adduct leg to return to start position

Repeat series on other side

SPIRALS

focus: managing weight transfer, pendulum swings, whole body movements, pendulum swing mechanics, upper body plyometrics, pretension/recoil, engaging long myofascial chains

start: neutral spine, athletic stance, one hand holding handle other hand holding Ball, begin holding Ball over opposite shoulder to hand holding handle

1. PUSH THE BALL

forward and down with both hands letting free hand leave the Ball, holding only the handle, swing the Ball in a downward spiral pathway around the body while performing a squat, catch the Ball behind the body with free hand. From the squat position, push Ball in backward direction with both hands but let free hand leave the Ball, swing Ball in an upward spiral pathway around the body while returning to a standing position, catch the Ball over the shoulder with the free hand

variations: add weight transfer, add rotation, add pivot to lunge stance, add side step pattern

MATWORK

AB PREP / ROLL UP SERIES

focus: balance between push/pull forces, building dynamic strength through core and upper kinetic chain

start: supine, neutral spine, knees and hips flexed with feet hip-distance apart, both hands holding one handle with arms long reaching up to ceiling at chest level, Ball resting on tops of forearms

1. ARM ARCS

reach Ball overhead as far as shoulder mobility will allow, maintaining neutral alignment. Return to start position

variation: add Ab Prep reaching arms on a high diagonal when in thoracic flexion resting Ball on tops of forearms

2. ROLL UP TO HIGH DIAGONAL

starting in supine position arms overhead, articulate through flexion to seated position (neutral spine) reaching arms on a high diagonal, legs can be long or hips and knees flexed.

Roll down to start position

3. SINGLE ARM ARC WITH OBLIQUES

with one hand in handle other hand behind head, reach arm overhead as far as shoulder mobility will allow maintaining neutral, then flex and rotate thoracic spine reaching arm on a high diagonal. Return to start position

variation: Add Half Roll Up using bottom arm to assist

QUADRUPED ARM SERIES

focus: managing weight transfer, upper body dynamic strength, push/pull upper body motions, engaging long myofascial chains

start: quadruped, neutral spine with one hand holding handle. Ball is under shoulder

1. OVERHEAD TOSS

maintaining neutral spine and without shifting pelvis off-center, lift Ball and move to overhead position then lower Ball to floor, pick up Ball and return to start position

2. CIRCLE DRAG

with Ball in overhead position and resting on floor, drag Ball in a circular pattern until the arm is by the side. Complete movement by dragging the Ball in a circular path back to the overhead position

3. PICK-UP, ARM BY SIDE

arm long by side of body with hand in handle, palm facing up, maintaining neutral spine and without shifting pelvis off-center, lift Ball off mat and return to mat

variation: Add opposite leg hip abduction in knee flexion

4. PICK-UP WITH ROTATION

arm long by side of body with hand in handle, palm facing up, maintaining a neutral spine without shifting pelvis to side, lift Ball and shoulder rotating thoracic spine, lower Ball and return to start position

variations: (1-3) lengthen opposite leg and add leg lift variations

STOTT PILATES™ TWIST BALL™ WORKOUT CONT'D

QUADRUPED LEG SERIES

focus: managing weight transfer, whole body movement with load, engaging long myofascial chains

start: quadruped on hands or forearms, handle around ankle with top of foot resting on top of Ball

1. BACKWARD TOSS WITH KNEE EXTENSION/FLEXION

lift Ball slightly and lengthen leg as much as spinal and pelvic stability can be maintained and lower Ball, lift Ball and return to start position

2. STRAIGHT LEG PICK-UP

lift Ball as high as pelvic and spinal stability can be maintained, lower Ball

3. PICK-UP WITH PELVIC ROTATION

lift Ball and rotate the pelvis toward the ceiling, lower Ball and return to start position

variations: add alternating arm lift with trunk rotation. Lift Ball and rotate trunk lifting same side arm off the floor toward the ceiling, lower Ball and return to start position, then rotate trunk in the opposite direction lifting opposite arm off the floor toward the ceiling. Return to start position

*Before switching sides continue to Side-Lying Pick-Up

SIDE-LYING SERIES

focus: engaging long myofascial chains, dynamic abductor strength

start: side-lying, neutral spine, bottom leg bent, top leg long in line with body, handle around ankle

1. STRAIGHT LEG PICK-UP

maintaining neutral spine and pelvis, lift and lower Ball

2. FORWARD TOSS WITH KNEE FLEXION / EXTENSION

maintaining neutral spine and pelvis, lift Ball and flex knee and hip to carry Ball forward as far as pelvic stability can be maintained then lower Ball, pick up Ball and return to start position

Repeat series on other side beginning with Quadruped Legwork

BRIDGE SERIES

focus: managing weight transfer, engaging long myofascial chains

start: supine, neutral spine, hips and knees in flexion, feet hip-distance apart, one foot in handle with foot resting on Ball, arms long by sides

1. FORWARD TOSS WITH KNEE EXTENSION / FLEXION

lift Ball slightly and lengthen leg as much as spinal and pelvic stability can be maintained, then lower Ball, lift Ball and return to start position

2. FORWARD TOSS HIPS UP

with the pelvis slightly lifted off the mat, lift Ball slightly and lengthen leg as much as spinal and pelvic stability can be maintained and lower Ball, lift Ball and return to start position

3. COMBO

lift pelvis up to full shoulder bridge position then lower pelvis to a slightly off the floor, then lift Ball slightly and lengthen leg as much as spinal and pelvic stability can be maintained and lower Ball, lift Ball and return to a more flexed knee position then lower pelvis to the mat

4. FREE LEG KICK

lift pelvis up to full shoulder bridge position then keep the foot on the Ball and développé the foot on the floor up toward the ceiling, return foot to the floor

PLANKS WITH DRAG

focus: push/pull upper body motions, engaging long myofascial chains

start: plank or modified plank (one knee or both knees down), feet hip distance or slightly wider, one hand holding handle with arm reaching wide, Ball resting on floor

1. SIDE DRAG

stabilizing in plank position, drag Ball under torso as far across midline as stability can be maintained, drag Ball back to start position

variation: add slight thoracic rotation as Ball drags across midline, add trunk rotation as Ball drags away from midline in modified plank (one knee extended) or full plank position, roll from Balls of feet to sides of feet

SUPINE ROTATIONAL DRAG

focus: push/pull upper body motions, engaging long myofascial chains

start: supine, neutral spine with arms overhead holding one handle, Ball resting on floor, knees and hips flexed with feet wider than hip-distance apart

1. PELVIC ROCKS WITH KNEE DROPS

keeping Ball still, rotate pelvis side-to-side allowing legs to drop (internal/external rotation at hips) rocking to inside and outside edges of feet

2. SINGLE ARM CIRCLE DRAG

start in side-lying knee drop position with bottom arm reaching forward on floor at chest level, top arm long holding handle with Ball at waist level, drag Ball overhead in a circular motion while rotating torso toward ceiling, finish reaching top arm wide to side at approximately chest level, circle drag back to side-lying start position. Repeat on other side

3. TWO HAND CIRCLE DRAG

start in side-lying knee drop position with both arms long holding one handle at waist level, drag Ball overhead in a circular motion to other side while rotating torso to supine then to side-lying on the other side, circle drag back to start position

variations: add pull/push – flex elbows as Ball moves toward pelvis (pull) then extend elbows (push) and circle drag Ball overhead to opposite side

SIT-TO-STAND

focus: sit-to stand transition move, managing weight transfer and swing mechanics

start: seated on Ball with hips and knees flexed, one leg laterally rotated with knee and lower leg on floor, other leg more parallel with foot on floor

1. SIT-TO-STAND PREP

practice transitioning from sitting on the Ball to preparing to stand from a single leg kneeling stance back to a seated position

2. CIRCLE DRAG

in single leg kneeling stance, drag Ball in a circle pattern moving spine through rotation and lateral flexion

variation: add circle swing to stand to transition to other side

Repeat Sit-to-Stand Prep and Circle Drag on the other side. Finish in standing

Handwriting practice lines for notes.