Ask the Exercise Physiologist

Q: *I have been doing squats on a Bosu Ball. Can you tell me how this is helping my training?*

A: This question starts with asking two questions: “What am I trying to achieve and what are my training goals?” If your goals are to reduce the load you are lifting, to try and activate smaller stabilizer muscles (deep gluteal muscles, for example), then perhaps training on an unstable surface will be beneficial. However, there is minimal evidence that this training effect would occur more frequently on an unstable surface (bosu, balance board, etc.) than on a stable one (ground). A study published in 2013 in the *Journal of Strength and Conditioning*, showed similarities in muscle activation when squatting on a Reebok Core Board and squatting on the ground. (Li, Yongming, 2013, p. 1349-1353). Unstable surface training may be implemented as a maintenance phase, post-physical therapy, if the exercise professional feels it is needed. If your goal is to generate force (building strength and power), then a stable surface is the only way to train, as an unstable one will relentlessly restrict force production (an unstable surface absorbs and disperses the force that your muscles are trying to produce). To summarize, always ask yourself the question, “What am I trying to achieve with my current training program?” Posing this question generally brings clarity to what one is really trying to accomplish, and begins to lay out a better picture of an effective exercise program for the individual.

**Congratulations, Tanger Be Well Olympians!**

Congratulations to all of the Tanger Be Well Center members who participated in the Summer Olympics! This was a fabulous few weeks that showcased the true community values of the Center. Through integrity, adversity, and compassion, members pushed themselves to try new activities while supporting one another. Trying something unfamiliar for the first time in a setting where peers can watch is the definition of ‘uncomfortable,’ yet in the Olympic atmosphere at Be Well, many thrived under these conditions. These few weeks have shown yet again why the Tanger Be Well Center is so unique. In the few minutes it takes to try a new, uncomfortable exercise, the room for growth becomes astounding. Olympians understood this fully, and took advantage of the opportunity for growth while giving and receiving peer support.

Thank you all!
The Be Well Team