

Using a Stress Ball



Why use a stress ball?

When you tighten your fist around a stress ball, the muscles in your hand and wrist tighten up. When you release the ball, the muscles relax which can release tension and stress. Manipulating a stress ball can stimulate the nerves that are present in your hands. These nerves are connected to parts of the brain - especially the limbic region - that are associated with your emotions. Its kind of like acupuncture for your brain where you stimulate one area of your body to affect another area of your body. The brain stimulation that is associated with stress ball use can also release endorphins which act as pain relievers and sedatives. This can improve your mood.

Stress balls can also be used to improve hand, wrist and finger strength. They are often used to help people with arthritis or carpal tunnel syndrome both as a prevention and a treatment tool.

Stress balls may be a good behavior replacement tool for people with autism. If an individual with autism is squeezing others with his/her hands providing a stress ball may meet the same function and movement as squeezing a person.

Individuals with ADHD may also be able to focus on tasks if they have something to keep their hands busy that doesn't distract from the assigned task.

When are stress balls not a good idea?

Some students may throw stress balls which could be harmful to others. They can also become a distraction to the child who continuously picks away at the balloon or covering until it breaks. You need to provide boundaries for when and how to use the stress ball.

The social story that follows may be helpful.

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Using a Stress Ball Social Story



















































Sometimes I get angry.  I need to calm down 

I can squeeze a stress ball  to calm down. 

I can squeeze the stress ball  and count to 5. 1 -2- 3-4-5. 

Then I will relax my hand  and count to 5 1-2-3-4-5. 

I will do this 10 times.

1.      ☐
2.      ☐
3.      ☐
4.      ☐
5.      ☐
6.      ☐
7.      ☐
8.      ☐
9.      ☐
10.      ☐

Now I feel better

