Abdominal Crunch on Exercise Ball with Tubing Proven Highly Effective, Announces Performance Health

Study demonstrates inexpensive and portable Thera-Band® products produce similar if not better results than bulky and expensive exercise machines.

Akron, OH (PRWEB) December 10, 2012 -- A recent Danish research study showed that an abdominal crunch performed on an exercise ball with elastic resistance tubing is in fact more effective than abdominal crunches performed on an isotonic abdominal training machine. An abdominal crunch is a fundamental exercise for strengthening core muscles that are vital for supporting and stabilizing the spine during even the most mundane everyday activities, such as standing and sitting. Weak abdominal muscles can negatively impact overall strength, stability and mobility, and are often associated with medical issues such as low back pain.(1)

Previous research showed that an exercise ball is useful for stability enhancement, balance assessment and inducing proprioceptive alteration making it an appropriate exercise for improving joint position, posture and balance, but not for increasing muscle strength. For this study, Danish researchers(2) compared muscle activation while performing ab crunches on an easy-to-use, inexpensive Thera-Band® exercise ball with added elastic resistance and on an isotonic abdominal training machine. The researchers elected to add elastic resistance to the exercise ball crunch believing it would provide adequate additional loading and result in an effective muscle strengthening exercise. Their study did indeed demonstrate that the Thera-Band products can produce similar, and often times, better results.

The study showed that the Thera-Band exercise ball with Thera-Band elastic tubing crunch activated cores muscles more than on the machine, including significantly greater activation of the abdominal muscles by 24%. In addition, the abdominal crunch on an exercise ball with elastic tubing resulted in significantly less activation of the hip flexors by 160%. The abdominal-to-hip flexor activation ratio was also much higher in the exercise ball and elastic tubing exercise, providing yet another benefit over the exercise machine. Abdominal exercises should minimize hip flexor activation to better isolate abdominal muscle activation. The researchers speculated that the 90-degree sitting position of the abdominal machine promoted activation of the hip flexors compared to the neutral hip position on the exercise ball.

The researchers stated, “Abdominal crunches performed on an exercise machine in a seated position may not be desirable for individuals with lumbar disk pathologies, low back pain or weak abdominal musculature.” Interestingly, participants in the study, either with or without back pain, benefited equally from the exercises. Furthermore, younger and older subjects demonstrated similar results regardless of their age.

“This study is significant because it demonstrates that readily available, inexpensive, and portable exercise equipment such as Thera-Band exercise balls and elastic tubing can produce similar if not better results compared to bulky and expensive exercise machines,” stated Dr. Phil Page, Director of Clinical Education and Research for Performance Health. “This allows anyone with access to an exercise ball and elastic tubing to increase their abdominal strength, which may increase the stability of the spine, enhance an individual’s overall physical strength, and decrease the occurrence of lower back pain.

“We are grateful to the researchers, including Lars Andersen, for their work on this study, just one of countless studies validating the effectiveness of our Thera-Band resistance products,” continued Page. “But it’s
particularly gratifying when our products work to together and prove to provide multiple benefits, such as this study does.”

Click here to view study abstract.

About the Academy
The Thera-Band Academy was formed to scientifically document the benefits of resistance exercise and pain relief, guide the company in its development of new products and exercise programs, and to promote therapeutic exercise and pain management through professional and consumer education. The Academy web site is a unique resource that connects healthcare professionals and consumers to the ever growing body of knowledge on exercise. Registration is free and provides access to the largest database of rehab exercises, protocols, research and education in the world.

About Performance Health
Featuring leading brands like Thera-Band®, Biofreeze® and Pedigenix®, Performance Health offers a broad portfolio of products for the therapy, rehabilitation, wellness, massage, podiatric and performance markets. In addition to market-leading products, Performance Health provides practice building support, evidence-based protocols, clinical and product education, turn-key dispensing and pain management solutions.


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