As massage therapists, it’s easy for us to get caught up in caring for clients; however, our work makes us especially prone to injury. This is why practicing regular self-care is so important, particularly when it comes to posture and body mechanics, both of which play a role in causing pain and injury to therapists.

The human body is made up of systems that work together to create balance and homeostasis. When one system is out of balance, it subsequently disrupts the other systems. For example, an individual with poor flexibility and a lack of strength will exhibit improper movement patterns that affect their posture, gait and ergonomics, which, in turn, affect form (anatomy), which then affect function (physiology).

Dr. Vladimir Janda, a Czech neurologist, categorized muscles into two groups: those prone to tightness or shortness and those prone to weakness or inhibition. He states that muscular imbalance occurs when muscles become too short or too weak, and that the key to total balance is strength and length.

This brings me to my “Personal Daily Self-Care Program,” which helps me build the strength, flexibility and balance my body needs to stay healthy. But I also like to have fun, which is why I use an exercise ball.

When I stretch on the ball, my breathing becomes easier, my muscles loosen, my rib spaces expand and my body relaxes. Spending a few minutes on the ball each day has greatly improved my flexibility, strength, coordination and posture.

The Self-Care Wellness Authors

Self-Care Tips for Using a Professional Exercise Ball

Type: Slow deflate  
Size: Choose the size according to manufacturer recommendations.  
Posture: Maintain good posture before, during and after each movement.  
Breathing: Breathe properly both at rest and during movement.  
Control: Maintain control throughout the entire movement.  
Plan: Develop a strategy to use the ball for a few minutes each day.  
Goals: Set realistic goals for improving the performance of your body’s systems.

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