

UNSTABLE STABILITY

Bench pressing on stable and unstable surfaces—how your muscles *really* respond

It is all about enhancing your strength, power, and sports performance. Or is it? We pose this question because when you look at the weight training market you will note a lot of products that promise you enhanced strength and power, which are supposed to turn you into a great athlete. So on one hand, we absolutely have to recognize the potential passion being put into developing new products for you so that you may realize your dreams; on the other hand, we also wonder why this is so often done *before* any research is completed on the products. Could it be because your zeal and drive to become the best athlete possible are being taken advantage of? One of the products that promise to increase your training gains is the Swiss ball. It is said that because the Swiss ball offers an unstable surface on which you exercise, your muscles have to work harder to maintain balance; thus you will make greater training gains. Though this sounds reasonable, without researching this hypothesis it remains conjecture. We have covered this topic before, but now we expand your knowledge to include how training on the Swiss ball may impact the bench press and shoulder press.

Power Key: Swiss ball, bench press, unstable, muscle activation



Our publisher knows that his world-class raw benching cannot rely on scientifically unproven claims regarding strength development.

Original Research

Uribe, B., et al. Muscle activation when performing the chest press and shoulder press on a stable bench vs. a Swiss ball. *Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research* 24(4):1028-1033, 2010.