**Exercise Equipment for Home Exercise Programs** **April 14, 2021**

**Stretch out Strap** with Exercise booklet from OPTP $18 on Amazon. Other manufacturer’s products are also on Amazon for prices of $7 to $20. The Trideer stretching strap for $10 also looks very acceptable and may be helpful as the loops are lettered to help keep track of what length is most helpful to you. It is also longer than the Stretch out Strap by OPTP.

**Strengthening Elastic Bands/Tubing** Theraband elastic bands in 3 levels of resistance come in latex and non latex models for those who may be allergic to latex. Prices range from $13 to $16 in general. They do not come with loop handles in this price range. On Amazon there is a brand called Cortnoe Pull up Assistance Bands that come with padded handles, 4 levels of resistance and a door anchor for $30 which are made of a fabric material and look like they might have greater longevity than the Theraband but I haven’t tested them out yet. There are many varieties of exercise tubing of varying resistance with handles available on both Amazon and Walmart websites. If you are new to resistance training, purchase ones in the lighter resistance ranges (usually 3 resistances). You may obtain bands from a physical therapist that you have developed a relationship with. If you can’t move through an almost complete range of motion at a joint then you need light resistance. Each muscle group or limb will benefit from different resistances.

**Stability Balls** These balls are the large balls that you sit or lie on to practice seated balance skill and trunk control. This is for higher functional challenges and are not for the faint of heart. The price range is in the $16-$25 range and make sure it comes with a pump. There is a Mantra Body Ball model for $40 on Amazon that comes with a base that can make it possible to use it as an office chair and has stretch band attachments for use for an upper body work out. These balls tend to last a long time but you need to think about where you will place it in your house because stability balls take up some space. If used as an office chair know that you use it for limited amounts of time because even for the fit person it can be exhausting to use. Also, a word of caution-pets can puncture them with rough use.

**Calf stretching slant board** Very helpful tool but a good quality one will cost $50 to $75 on Amazon. A homemade quickie model can be fashioned with a couple of large text books duct taped together. It can be adjusted to a steeper angle by adding another textbook. If placed between the backs of 2 kitchen chairs to assist with balance it can be very safe or use with a walker. Also hanging off a stair is an alternative if you have sufficient balance.

**Grip strengtheners** There are as many as there are stars in the sky. The homemade style is to use layers of rubber bands of varying thicknesses to increase resistance for opening of the hand or pliable sponges and play balls to vary the range of motion and resistance of gripping activity. If individual finger strength and dexterity is the goal, a nice tool often used by musicians is a 3-pack finger strengthener on Amazon in 3 resistances for $15. This works on individual finger flexors (like playing a trumpet) For $12 there is a pack of 6 different silicone hand exercise pieces that would be more durable that rubber bands. PNRSKTER is the brand name. This is also available on Amazon.

**Advanced Standing balance tools** Strong Tek Balance Wobble balance board for $32 on Amazon looks like a safe home standing balance board. One can be fashioned at home if you have a good carpenter but for durability and safety I would go with a commercially available one. There is no need to purchase one until you feel you have mastered balancing on a couch cushion with eyes closed and one foot in front of the other. “Walking the line” on a 2x4 or 2x6 can be plenty challenging as well. Make sure you are near a wall or in a hallway when you try this and that the board is very flat. Also walking between two ropes laid out on the floor in a heel-toe pattern can be a challenge.

**Exercise Mats** these are readily available for $15-20 wherever exercise equipment is sold. They make floor workouts more comfortable and help keep your feet in place when attempting exercises.

**Adjustable weight dumbbells** These can get very pricey, you may not use them enough for the expense and I would keep an eye out at garage sales or eBay etc. if you choose to invest. Plastic milk jugs of varying sizes and with different amounts of water can work just as well. Pick a container that you can maintain a good grip on. If you get beyond this level it might make sense to look into a gym membership and seek out a qualified personal trainer who may have some background in senior exercise training to avoid an overly aggressive training regimen.

**Self-Massage tools** Rolling pins or an $8-$10 massage roller for athletes can be helpful if using 2 hands. Play balls of different sizes and densities, thumb saver trigger point massage tools ($8 on Amazon), or a Theracane massage tool ($32 on Amazon) works for hard to reach spots and can easily adjust to varying self-induced pressures.