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ORIGINAL RESEARCH

THE SWISS BALLOON AND ITS USAGE INSIDE THE PHYSICAL EDUCATION LESSON

Niculescu I,¹
¹University of Pitesti

Key words: the Swiss balloon, the gymnasium cycle, the Physical Education lesson.

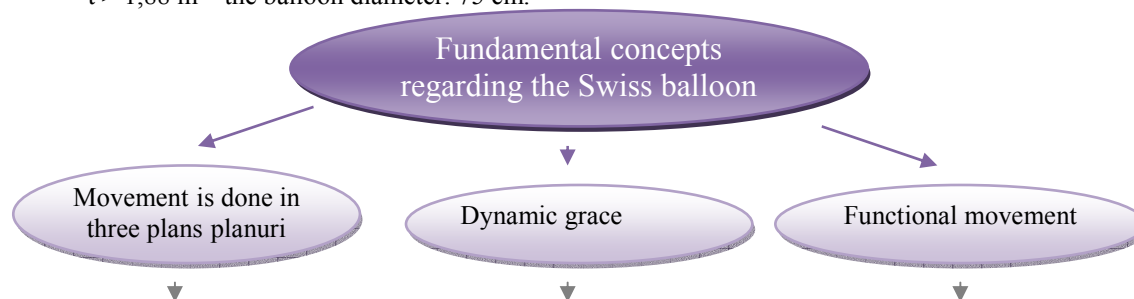
Each Physical Education lesson begins by warming-up, a phase when the exercises must be nice and have to eliminate the tension accumulated during the other classes. The Swiss balloon actions allow us to notice the manner in which our body is capable of working in all three plans (forward, backwards, lateral).

Before beginning training, it is *especially important* that we very well know the Swiss balloons exercises, for these not only solicit the great muscular groups, but also the deeper ones, not forgetting the muscles from around joints.

The unstable surface of the Swiss balloon forces us to focus on the stabilizing muscles. If this condition is not fulfilled, we are not able to practice any exercise. Right before each particular execution, the muscles of the energy center must be contracted. (the area surrounding the basin, the back and the bottom).

The balloon shapes are adapted to the natural curves of the backbone and through their unstable surface force the body to establish equilibrium and keep this state of balance, the moves being perfectly coordinated. The usage of these exercises is inspired from the Pilates method, requiring good focus and detachment from the exterior world. If we execute moves in all three plans, the muscles are strengthened, are elongated. The first activity the children must do is adjustment, the balloon being selected in function of height:

- t < 1,50 m – the balloon diameter: 45 cm;
- t = 1,50 – 1,70 m – the balloon diameter: 55 cm;
- t = 1,71 – 1,88 m – the balloon diameter: 65 cm;
- t > 1,88 m – the balloon diameter: 75 cm.



In order to maintain balance on the immobile surface of the Swiss balloon, the executant must solicit the posture muscles surrounding his chest. During the contraction, the stabilizing muscles stretch the spine and develop its flexibility. The chest is more elongated, while the abdomen is flat.

The Swiss balloon exercises are based on force and agility. While part of the body works a certain muscle, the opposing one, just as active, ensures the body equilibrium.

When the balloon moves, the executant also moves. The proposed exercises prove that the Swiss balloon is a useful tool, allowing for the relation between body and brain. *între corp și creier.* A muscle never works alone, especially if the movement executed solicits a particular muscle group.



With the scope of correctly executing exercises, we must find our gravitational centre, to find the best possible balance. The basin corresponds to the energy ceter. The balloon must not be over-inflated. The instable surface of the balloon allows for the application of the Pilates method, on the condition of ensuring balance.

	CLASS							
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
The seated position								
The facing down position								
The facing up position								
Balloon exercises								
Izometric exercises								
Object exercises								

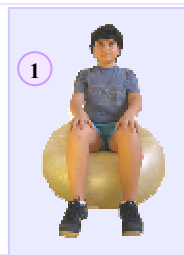
EXAMPLE OF A COMPLEX OF EXERCISES BY USAGE OF THE SWISS BALLOON

Description: from a balloon- seated position, arms bended, palms on thighs, arms lifting and come-back

Dosage: 4 X 8T

Methodical indications:

- straight back;
- stretched elbows.



Description: from a balloon-seated position, arms stretched sideways, wriggling the arms backwards and come-back.

Dosage: 4 X 8T

Methodical indications:

- straight back;
- stretched elbows.

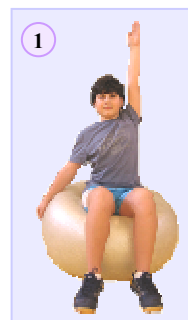


Description: from a balloon-seated position, the left arm stretched up, the right one next to the body, trunk bending to the right. Coming back to the initial position and executing the exercise on the other side.

Dosage: 4 X 8T

Methodical indications:

- straight back;
- stretched elbows.



Description: from a kneed position, arms stretched upwards, the balloon held between palms, left trunk bending. Coming back to the initial position and executing the exercise on the other side.

Dosage: 4 X 8T

Methodical indications:

- straight back;
- stretched elbows.



Description: from a balloon-seated position, the right leg stretched and supported on the ground, right leg lifting forward and come-back. Same exercise, by use of the left leg.

Dosage: 4 X 8T

Methodical indications:

- straight back;
- the working leg well stretched.

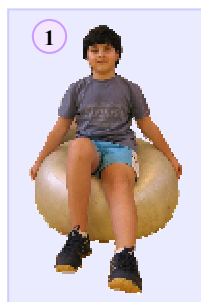


Description: from a balloon-seated position, the right leg stretched and supported on the ground, right leg bending and lifting and come-back. Same exercise, by use of the left leg.

Dosage: 4 X 8T

Methodical indications:

- straight back.



Evaluations forms:

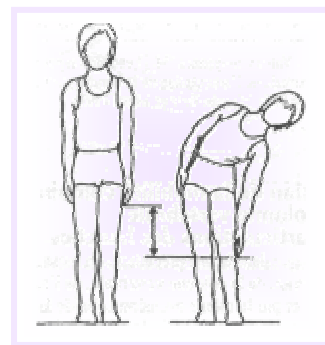
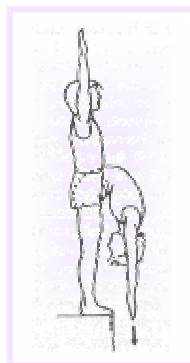
The front trunk bending test:

One of the elementary evaluation tests for the trunk-hip-legs flexibility is that of bending the trunk towards the front.

Execution – one sits on the edge of a bench and the trunk is bended forward (the knees are stretched); the distance from the tip on the toes to the tips of the fingers is the one measured.

Evaluation of the lateral trunk flexibility:

Execution: lateral bending of the trunk; the distance covered by the finger tips from a vertical position to the bending position (in cm). This test can also measure the extension capacity of the right and oblique abdomen muscles. The test is applied to both sides.



Conclusions:

- The balloon exercises can be used without restrictions in the primary school, as well as during the gymnasium cycle;
- The Pilates method can be applied in combination with the Swiss balloon;
- This type of activity is solicited by pupils, being positively appreciated;
- Mixed exercises can be used, by appealing to objects, partners and under various other conditions of an applied character.

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