Chi balls

Chi balls are soft rubber balls that fit in your palm; they come in nonweighted versions (some of which are scented with essences like lavender and cinnamon) as well as ½ pound to 10-pound weighted versions (also called mini Kerbals). The nonweighted balls are used during tai chi, yoga, and Pilates as focal points during moves and stretches; weighted balls can substitute for dumbbells during resistance moves.

Body bonus: Weighted chi balls can perform double-duty as a relaxation tool: Just lie on a mat with the ball underneath you. Press the ball against a knotted muscle, such as in the neck, and roll back and forth, says fitness trainer Leigh Crews, spokesperson for the American Council on Exercise and American College of Sports Medicine, who uses weighted chi balls in her Strength in the Balance video. (For similar results with nonweighted balls, see “Relax on the Ball,” page 110.)