

## **What is a Certified Athletic Trainer?**

In the USA, the Certified Athletic Trainer (ATC) is an allied health care professional that is certified by the Board of Certification, Inc. (BOC). Certified Athletic Trainers are also sometimes referred to as sports medicine practitioners or athletic therapists, and are the centerpiece of the sports medicine team. They serve as a liaison to the athlete, coach, physician and other supplemental personnel providing care to people sustaining physical or emotional trauma. Specifically, the Certified Athletic Trainer's role delineation encompasses six domains:

Athletic Injury Prevention and Risk Management

Recognition, Evaluation and Assessment of Injuries and Illnesses

Immediate Care of Injuries

Treatment, Rehabilitation and Reconditioning

Health Care Organization and Administration

Professional Development and Responsibility

As a part of the complete sports medicine team, the Certified Athletic Trainer works under the direction of a licensed physician and in cooperation with other health care professionals, athletics administrators, coaches and parents.

A day in the life of a certified athletic trainer

Certified Athletic Trainers work in a wide range of areas. They work in athletics as well as in clinic settings. In clinic settings, they work with people of all ages and all activity levels specializing in injury and illness prevention, assessment, treatment and rehabilitation for all people. Certified Athletic Trainers are also highly involved in the day to day processes of professional, intercollegiate, or high school athletics. They are responsible for the preparation and maintenance of athletes that are poised for competition. Some duties of a Certified Athletic Trainer will include:

Prepping athletes for practice or competition including taping, bandaging, bracing or applying other forms of risk management

Evaluating injuries to determine the best course of action in regard to the health and welfare of the athlete

Developing and implementing conditioning programs

Implementing treatment and rehabilitation programs

Certified Athletic Trainers that are not integrated in the athletics community may function as a sports rehabilitation specialist. The rehabilitation specialist spends their days in a private, corporate or hospital based rehabilitation clinic constructing rehabilitation protocols, monitoring therapeutic exercise regimens and performing treatments with the various therapeutic modalities that may be offered for patient care. A Certified Athletic Trainer must have a strong knowledge of the human anatomy and health and human performance, and strong decision making skills through education and training.

## Places of employment

Certified Athletic Trainers can be found almost anywhere. Whether it's on the playing field or in the industrial setting, Certified Athletic Trainers are in place to help people avoid injuries, embrace health and wellness, and perform to the best of their abilities. Certified Athletic Trainers are employed in secondary schools, intercollegiate athletics, professional athletics, sports medicine clinics, the military, the sets of the movie industry, professional dance settings, or industrial and commercial settings. Hospitals and health clubs are also venues that create job opportunities for Certified Athletic Trainers.

## Athletic training education

Athletic Training Education Programs are accredited by the [Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education] (CAATE). Entry level athletic training education uses a competency-based approach in both the classroom and clinical settings. Using a medical based education model, athletic training students are educated to serve in the role of physician extenders, with an emphasis on clinical reasoning skills. Educational competencies are based on cognitive (knowledge), psychomotor (skill), affective competencies (professional behavior), and clinical proficiencies (practice oriented outcomes). Students must receive instruction in the foundational courses of human physiology, human anatomy, exercise physiology, kinesiology/biomechanics, nutrition, acute care of injury and illness, statistics and research design, and strength training and reconditioning. The student must be introduced to professional coursework that encompasses the following domains:

Risk management

Pathology of injury/illness

Prevention and assessment of injuries/illness

General medical conditions and disabilities

Therapeutic modalities

Strength and Conditioning

Therapeutic massage

Emergency medicine

Weight management and body composition

Psychosocial intervention and referral

Medical ethics and legal issues

Pharmacology

Professional development and responsibilities