

Therapy and Rehabilitation

Includes:

- Athletic trainer
- Occupational therapist
- Occupational therapy assistant

- Physical therapist
- Physical therapist assistant
- Recreational therapist

Athletic Trainer

Athletic training is practiced by athletic trainers (ATs), health care professionals who collaborate with physicians to optimize activity and participation of patients and clients. Athletic training encompasses the prevention, diagnosis, and intervention of emergency, acute, and chronic medical conditions involving impairment, functional limitations, and disabilities.



History

Work on establishing standards for athletic training educational programs was initiated in 1959 by the National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA), with the first two programs approved in 1969. By 1979, there were 23 undergraduate programs and two graduate programs approved by NATA. By 1997, NATA had approved 87 entry-level and 13 graduate athletic training educational programs.

The Board of Certification, Inc. (BOC) was incorporated in 1989 from the NATA to provide a certification program for entry-level Athletic Trainers (ATs). The BOC establishes and regularly reviews both the standards for the practice of athletic training and the continuing education requirements for BOC Certified ATs. The BOC has the only accredited certification program for ATs in the US. In 1997, the BOC office was moved from Raleigh, North Carolina to Omaha, Nebraska.

In 1989, NATA applied to the AMA Council on Medical Education (CME) for recognition of athletic training as an allied health occupation; recognition was granted in 1990. Also in 1990, an initial meeting was conducted to develop the Standards (Essentials) for accreditation of educational programs for athletic trainers; standards were subsequently adopted in 1991.

Following the separation of the AMA from the Committee on Allied Health Education and Accreditation (CAHEA), the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) was formed, with the Joint Review Committee for Athletic Training functioning as a Commission on Accreditation of that group. On July 1, 2006, the JRC-AT separated from CAAHEP and became the independent accreditor CAATE (Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education). At this time, all CAAHEP-accredited athletic training education programs became CAATE-accredited.



Career Description

Past role delineation studies/practice analyses have concluded that the role of an athletic trainer includes, but is not limited to:

- Injury/illness prevention and wellness protection, which includes:

- Minimize risk of injury and illness of individuals and groups impacted by or involved in a specific activity through awareness, education, and intervention.
- Interpret individual and group pre-participation and other relevant screening information (e.g., verbal, observed, written) in accordance with accepted and applicable guidelines to minimize the risk of injury and illness.
- Identify and educate individual(s) and groups through appropriate communication methods (e.g., verbal, written) about the appropriate use of personal protective equipment (e.g., clothing, shoes, protective gear, and braces) by following accepted procedures and guidelines.
- Maintain physical activity, clinical treatment, and rehabilitation areas by complying with regulatory standards to minimize the risk of injury and illness.
- Monitor environmental conditions (e.g., weather, surfaces, client work-setting) using appropriate methods and guidelines to facilitate individual and group safety.
- Maintain or improve physical conditioning for the individual or group by designing and implementing programs (e.g., strength, flexibility, CV fitness) to minimize the risk of injury and illness.
- Promote healthy lifestyle behaviors using appropriate education and communication strategies to enhance wellness and minimize the risk of injury and illness.

Clinical evaluation and diagnosis, which includes:

- Obtain an individual's history through observation, interview, and/or review of relevant records to assess injury, illness, or health-related condition.
- Utilize appropriate visual and palpation techniques to determine the type and extent of the injury, illness, or health-related condition
- Utilize appropriate tests (e.g., ROM, special tests, neurological tests) to determine the type and extent of the injury, illness, or health-related condition.
- Formulate a clinical diagnosis by interpreting the signs, symptoms, and predisposing factors of the injury, illness, or health-related condition to determine the appropriate course of action.
- Educate the appropriate individual(s) about the clinical evaluation by communicating information about the injury, illness, or health-related condition to encourage compliance with recommended care.

Immediate and Emergency care, which includes:

- Coordinate care of individual(s) through appropriate communication (e.g., verbal, written, demonstrative) of assessment findings to pertinent individual(s).

- Apply appropriate immediate and emergency care procedures to prevent the exacerbation of health-related conditions to reduce the risk factors for morbidity and mortality.
- Implement appropriate referral strategies, while stabilizing and/or preventing exacerbation of the condition(s), to facilitate the timely transfer of care for health-related conditions beyond the scope of practice of the Athletic Trainer.
- Demonstrate how to implement and direct immediate care strategies (e.g., first aid, Emergency Action Plan) using established communication and administrative practices to provide effective care.

Treatment, and rehabilitation, which includes:

- Administer therapeutic and conditioning exercise(s) using appropriate techniques and procedures to aid recovery and restoration of function.
- Administer therapeutic modalities (e.g., electromagnetic, manual, mechanical) using appropriate techniques and procedures based on the individual's phase of recovery to restore functioning.
- Apply braces, splints, or other assistive devices according to appropriate practices in order to facilitate injury protection to achieve optimal functioning for the individual.
- Administer treatment for injury, illness, and/or health-related conditions using appropriate methods to facilitate injury protection, recovery, and/or optimal functioning for individual(s).
- Reassess the status of injuries, illnesses, and/or health-related conditions using appropriate techniques and documentation strategies to determine appropriate treatment, rehabilitation, and/or reconditioning and to evaluate readiness to return to a desired level of activity.
- Provide guidance and/or referral to specialist for individual(s) and groups through appropriate communication strategies (e.g., oral and education materials) to restore an individual(s) optimal functioning.

Organization and professional health and well-being, which includes:

- Apply basic internal business functions (e.g., business planning, financial operations, staffing) to support individual and organizational growth and development.
- Apply basic external business functions (e.g., marketing and public relations) to support organizational sustainability, growth, and development.
- Maintain records and documentation that comply with organizational, association, and regulatory standards to provide quality of care and to enable internal surveillance for program validation and evidence-based interventions.
- Demonstrate appropriate planning for coordination of resources (e.g., personnel, equipment, liability, scope of service) in event medical management and emergency action plans.
- Demonstrate an understanding of statutory and regulatory provisions and professional standards of the practice of Athletic Training in order to provide for the safety and welfare of individual(s) and groups
- Develop a support/referral process for interventions to address unhealthy lifestyle behaviors.

Source: http://www.bocac.org/images/stories/resources/rdpa6_content_outline.pdf



Employment Characteristics

Athletic trainers typically provide their services in one or more of the following settings: secondary schools, colleges and universities, professional athletic organizations, physician offices, hospital-based clinics, private sports

medicine, rehabilitation and therapy clinics, industrial/occupational commercial facilities, military, and performing arts.



Salary

Entry-level salaries in 2008 averaged \$35,000. The average overall salary is \$45,000, with the upper ranges from \$55,000 to \$85,000.

Data from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics (www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes299091.htm) from May 2009 show that wages at the 10th percentile are \$26,170, the 50th percentile (median) at \$42,400, and the 90th percentile at \$65,970.

For more information, go to www.ama-assn.org/go/hpsalary.



Employment Outlook

Employment of athletic trainers is projected by the BLS to grow 30% from 2010 to 2020, much faster than the average for all occupations, because of their role in preventing injuries and reducing healthcare costs. Job growth will be concentrated in the healthcare industry, including hospitals and offices of health practitioners.



Educational Programs

Length. Baccalaureate degree programs require 4 years of study. Postbaccalaureate programs are generally 2 years.

Prerequisites. Applicants for the 4-year baccalaureate degree programs must have a high school diploma or equivalent and meet institutional entrance requirements. Applicants for post-baccalaureate programs should have a baccalaureate degree that includes appropriate course work and clinical experience, as specified by the institution.

Curriculum. The professional curriculum includes formal instruction in:

- Risk management and injury/illness prevention
- Pathology of injury/illness
- Clinical examination and diagnosis
- Acute care of injuries and illnesses
- General medical conditions and disabilities
- Therapeutic modalities
- Therapeutic exercise
- Conditioning and rehabilitative exercise and therapy
- Health care administration
- Psychosocial intervention and referral
- Medical ethics and legal issues
- Pharmacology
- Professional responsibilities

The didactic curriculum is augmented by a series of structured laboratory and clinical experiences.



Licensure, Registration, Certification

Almost all states require that athletic trainers hold the ATC® (Athletic Trainer, Certified) credential, which is issued by the Board of Certification, Inc. (BOC). The ATC credential is supported by three pillars: the BOC certification examination, BOC Standards of Practice and Disciplinary Process, and continuing competence requirements. The computer-based examination verifies that the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for competent performance as an athletic trainer have been met.

At the time of publication, 48 states have some form of athletic training regulation, of which 47 states require the BOC examination in order to obtain regulation. It is important to recognize, however, that passing the BOC examination is only a precursor to athletic training practice. Compliance with state regulatory requirements is

mandatory and the only avenue to legal athletic training practice. For specific details regarding state regulation, contact the state regulatory agency.



Inquiries

Careers

National Athletic Trainers' Association, Inc
2952 Stemmons Freeway, Suite 200

Dallas, TX 75247
(214) 637-6282
(800) TRY-NATA
(214) 637-2206 Fax
www.nata.org

Certification

Board of Certification, Inc (BOC)
BOC Administrative Offices
1415 Haney Street, Suite 200
Omaha, NE 68102
(402) 559-0091
(402) 561-0598 Fax
www.bocatc.org

Program Accreditation

Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education
(CAATE)

2201 Double Creek Drive, Suite 5006

Round Rock, TX 78664

(512) 733-9700

(512) 733-9701 Fax

Email: sheila@caate.net or caateinfo@caate.net

www.caate.net

Note: Adapted in part from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, US Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, Athletic Trainers, at www.bls.gov/oco/ocos294.htm.