

The following information is provided by the  
[National Athletic Trainers' Association](#)  
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### **What is an ATC?**

The Certified Athletic Trainer is a highly educated and skilled professional specializing in athletic health care. In cooperation with physicians and other allied health personnel, the athletic trainer functions as an integral member of the athletic health care team in secondary schools, colleges and universities, sports medicine clinics, professional sports programs and other athletic health care settings.

### **Education**

Certified athletic trainers have, at minimum, a bachelor's degree, usually in athletic training, health, physical education or exercise science. In addition, athletic trainers study human anatomy, human physiology, biomechanics, exercise physiology, athletic training, nutrition and psychology/counseling. Certified athletic trainers also participate in extensive clinical affiliations with athletic teams under appropriate supervision.

### **Certification**

Certified athletic trainers have fulfilled the requirements for certification established by the National Athletic Trainers' Association Board of Certification, Inc. (NATABOC). The certification examination administered by NATABOC consists of a written portion with multiple choice questions; a practical section that evaluates the psychomotor skill components of the domains within athletic training; and a written simulation test, consisting of athletic training related situations designed to approximate real-life decision making. This last portion of the test evaluates athletic trainers' ability to resolve cases similar to those they might encounter in actual practice. The examination covers a variety of topics within the six domains of athletic training:

- Prevention of athletic injuries
- Recognition, evaluation and immediate care of athletic injuries
- Rehabilitation and reconditioning of athletic injuries
- Health care administration
- Professional development and responsibility

Once athletic trainers pass the certification examination proving skills and knowledge within each of the five domains, they use the designation "ATC."

### **A Typical Day**

Some high school athletic trainers are hired by school systems and may also teach. These individuals must manage their time carefully to ensure students receive professional academic instruction in the classroom and quality health care in athletic endeavors.

Before practice, the athletic trainer tapes, bandages, wraps, braces and completes similar preventive measures.

During practice, the athletic trainer evaluates injuries and determines whether to refer athletes to a physician or follow standing orders and manage minor injuries. The athletic trainer must ensure continual communication between the injured athlete, physician, coach and family on when and how the athlete can return to practice and competition.

As specialists in the prevention, recognition and rehabilitation of injuries incurred by athletes, athletic trainers administer immediate emergency care and -- under the supervision a licensed physician -- use their knowledge of the injuries incurred by the physically active individual and the factors influencing them to develop a treatment program based on medical, exercise and sports sciences.