



# WHAT IS AN ATHLETIC TRAINER

Athletic trainers (ATs) are health care professionals who provide a safer approach to work, life and sport. ATs are unique health care providers specifically trained in the prevention of injury and illness.



## ATHLETIC TRAINERS:

- ✓ Are diverse and unique health care professionals. ATs follow a medical-based education model.
- ✓ Must graduate from an accredited educational program and pass a comprehensive certification exam.
- ✓ Are licensed and otherwise regulated in 49 states and the District of Columbia. Efforts continue to gain regulation in California.
- ✓ Must keep their knowledge and skills current by participating in continuing education.
- ✓ Work in middle schools and high schools; colleges and universities; professional and amateur sports organizations; hospitals and clinics; corporate workplaces; the military; police and fire departments; performing arts; and private practice.



## HEALTH TOPICS:

Some of the health topics that ATs are educated in include\*:

- Orthopedic Injuries
- Concussion
- Heat Stroke and Other Heat Illnesses
- Sudden Cardiac Arrest and Other Cardiac Emergencies
- Eating Disorders
- Infectious Diseases
- Diabetic Episodes
- Exertional Sickling
- Early Onset Osteoarthritis
- Substance Abuse
- Mental Health
- Weight Management
- Environmental and Weather-Related Health Conditions
- Dental and Oral Injuries

*\* ATs refer to specialists for health care topics that are outside their scope of practice.*



# AT: CORE COMPETENCIES

ATs master essential skills in order to fulfill their role as health care providers and render services in a safe and efficient manner. These core competencies, known as domains, define the areas of patient care and professional responsibility for the AT. State regulation provides the framework by which ATs can practice.

## Injury and Illness Prevention and Wellness Promotion



ATs promote healthy lifestyle behaviors through education to enhance individual and community wellness. ATs use risk mitigation strategies to reduce the risk of injury and illnesses in their patients.

## Immediate and Emergency Care



ATs have the responsibility to be prepared to handle a variety of injuries and illnesses. The injuries can be minor to life-threatening and ATs must be prepared to render care.

## Healthcare Administration and Professional Responsibility



ATs integrate best practices in policy development and implementation, documentation and basic business practices to promote optimal patient care. ATs must adhere to a high level of ethical and professional integrity.

## Examination, Assessment and Diagnosis



ATs implement evidence-based practice to examine, assess and diagnose an injury or illness. ATs integrate their robust knowledge of injury pathology and patient history to determine a diagnosis and/or refer for any additional testing.

## Therapeutic Intervention



ATs rehabilitate and recondition injuries, illnesses and general medical conditions with the goal of achieving optimal activity level using the applications of therapeutic exercise, modality devices and manual techniques.

For more information, visit  
[AtYourOwnRisk.org](http://AtYourOwnRisk.org)