National Athletic Trainers' Association

Athletic Trainers – not "Trainers"

The world today is on the move, and people are more active, more interested, more educated. We're trained in fitness, sports, computer applications even parenting. As a result, the word "trainer" has lost its meaning. Here are the differences between a certified athletic trainer and personal trainer.

CERTIFIED ATHLETIC TRAINER

An athletic trainer is a person who meets the qualifications set by a state licensure and/or the Board of Certification, Inc. and practices athletic training under the direction of a physician.

Certified athletic trainers:

- Must have at least a bachelor's degree in athletic training, which is an allied health profession
- Must pass a comprehensive exam before earning the ATC credential
- Must keep their knowledge and skills current by participating in continuing education
- Must adhere to standards of professional practice set by one national certifying agency

Daily duties:

- Provide physical medicine and rehabilitation services
- Prevent, diagnose, treat and rehabilitate injuries (acute and chronic)
- Coordinate care with physicians and other allied health professionals
- Work in schools, colleges, professional sports, clinics, hospitals, corporations, industry, military, performing arts

PERSONAL TRAINER

A personal trainer is a person who prescribes, monitors and changes an individual's specific exercise program in a fitness or sports setting.

Personal trainers:

- May or may not have higher education in health sciences
- May or may not be required to obtain certification
- May or may not participate in continuing education
- May become certified by any one of numerous organizations that set varying education and practice requirements

Daily duties:

- Assess fitness needs and design appropriate exercise regimens
- Work with clients to achieve fitness goals
- Help educate the public about the importance of physical activity
- Work in health clubs, wellness centers and various other locations where fitness activities take place

If you have questions about the person providing health care for you, for your student or for a colleague, speak up! Be sure you're getting the right health care for the right condition.

About the National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA):
Athletic trainers are unique health care professionals who specialize in the prevention, diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation of injuries and illnesses. The National Athletic Trainers' Association represents and supports 30,000 members of the athletic training profession. NATA advocates for equal access to athletic trainers for patients and clients of all ages and supports H.R. 1846. Only 42 percent of high schools have access to athletic trainers. NATA members adhere to a code of ethics. www.nata.org.

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