



## National Athletic Training Month (NATM)

Kick-off: March 1, 2015

Theme – **We Prepare – You Perform**

Our goal is to continue to reach those individuals and organizations that can help make a difference for athletic trainers when it comes to legislation, employment and public health. Please review the items in this toolkit in order to be better equipped when educating stakeholders on the importance and value of athletic trainers to athletes,

patients, clients and the public. Get yourself and others involved! Challenge other schools, universities, clinics, and other ATs. Some of these activities take less than 30 minutes to complete. The grassroots activities, along with media coverage, will improve the awareness and position of the profession.

At this time of heightened media focus on concussion and youth sports safety, this is a good time to remind reporters and others of the breadth and depth of athletic trainer expertise in taking care of all kinds of injuries and all kinds of active people.

This year's theme is "**We Prepare – You Perform**" with a focus on AT preparedness for any and every situation that might arise, such as developing an emergency action plan, rehearsing emergency situations, and communicating with administration, EMS, coaches, employees, etc.

If you have any questions or need additional information, contact your PR Committee and Governmental Affairs Committee district representatives (see last page) or NATA Public Relations Manager Ellen Satlof at (972) 532-8859 ([ellen@nata.org](mailto:ellen@nata.org)).

### ***When promoting the profession, remember the following:*** \_\_\_\_\_

- Always refer to yourself as an "athletic trainer" or "AT." When referring to more than one athletic trainer, the correct acronym is "ATs." State this clearly when talking with others. According to the Board of Certification, "ATC" can only be used following a name (e.g., "John Smith, ATC") and cannot be used as a noun. If you get a puzzled look from someone, educate him or her on what an athletic trainer does.
- Never use the term "trainer." In doing so, you are not distinguishing yourself and your peers from personal trainers.
- Reinforce that athletic trainers are health care professionals who work in a variety of settings and with all kinds of people – not just athletes. Examples are physician extender, performing arts, industrial settings, clinics and hospitals, law enforcement, military and sports officiating. \_\_\_\_\_

# NATM – Let NATA know what you did! ✓

## Submit your efforts into the NATM PR Contest

Winners receive bragging rights and a \$150 gift certificate for NATA logo merchandise. Honorable mentions may be recognized as well. Categories include:

- Best State Association Effort
- Best Student Effort
- Best Athletic Trainer Effort - group (7 or more ATs)
- Best Athletic Trainer Effort - individual/small team (6 or fewer ATs)
- Best Overall Campaign

### ***Tips for entering the NATA PR Contest:***

1. The NATA Public Relations Committee is looking for the most creative, outside-the-box submissions. While anything you do is great, the more creative, the better chance you have at winning!
2. How did your effort impact your stakeholders? How far did your effort reach?
3. Do you do the same thing every year? Mix it up – try new things and see how far you can go!
4. Be as detailed about your effort in your submission as possible. How many people were involved? What was the reaction to the effort? What was the demographic of the people reached during the effort?
5. Make your effort relevant to the theme: **“We Prepare – You Perform.”** Show others the many different ways athletic trainers prepare for anything and everything so their athletes, patients, performers, etc. don’t have to worry about anything BUT performing at their best. Let them know that if something does happen, their athletic trainers are there for them.

### Quality of Life of Athletic Trainers

Increase awareness of the role of athletic trainers in your workplace and encourage a balanced quality of life. This can be accomplished through discussions with human resources, leaders of other departments and colleagues.

## National Athletic Training Month 2015 to-do list

- Meet with your staff, students and athletic trainers in your area to develop an NATM plan.
- Determine your target audience (e.g., school board, legislators, athletic directors, coach groups, parents, employers, hospital administration, rehab directors, medical and other health care societies, etc.).
- Seek advice from colleagues who work in marketing, public relations and sports information.
- Educate school officials, other health care professionals and employers about NATM and the athletic training profession.
- Review NATA videos and podcasts (<http://vimeo.com/user1930386/videos>) to see which ones will fit into your plan.
- Develop local media contact lists. You can look up your local and state newspaper media at [www.usnpl.com](http://www.usnpl.com).
- Establish and renew media relationships through emails, phone calls and meetings.
- Define specifics of selected activities.
- Create a schedule of confirmed activities.
- Send news releases and promotional materials to print and broadcast media, local/organization newsletters, medical societies, local government officials and others. Follow up with phone calls and e-mails.
- Contact TV, radio and newspaper reporters and producers about story ideas.
- In addition to sportswriters, contact health care, business and possibly education reporters. Which reporter you contact depends on your particular story angle.
- Send links to videos and to "Resources for Employers" (<http://nata.org/employers>).
- Send NATM electronic greeting card (<http://nata.org/national-athletic-training-month>).
- Take photos and save all media coverage.
- Thank reporters and producers who cover your events.
- Send a summary of your NATM activities to your PR Committee district representative (see last page for contact information).
- Utilize social media to announce NATM, and continuously update throughout the month with facts, pictures, etc. of how you are celebrating. Refer to the social media section later in this document.
- Promote the [athletictrainers.org](http://athletictrainers.org) advocacy website.
- Collaborate with advocates of athletic training such as members of the Youth Sports Safety Alliance ([www.youthsportssafetyalliance.org](http://www.youthsportssafetyalliance.org)).



# Make the most of National Athletic Training Month

Since our first NATM in 2001, NATA members have creatively and effectively generated awareness for our profession — to the public, employers, health care colleagues, elected officials, other stakeholders and the news media. Below are successful activities you can use to help spread the word in your area.

## ***Political involvement:*** \_\_\_\_\_

- Host an athletic training day at your statehouse, and include complimentary health screenings conducted by local athletic trainers.
- Host a site visit for federal or state legislators at your place of employment. Members of Congress especially need to see first-hand what you do, in order to understand who you are.
- Schedule visits with hospital administrators and rehab directors to leverage the vital role of athletic trainers in these settings. Check out employer resources at <http://www.nata.org/employers>.
- Meet with local legislators to heighten awareness of the athletic training profession.
- Invite federal, state and local legislators to attend NATM events in your community.
- It is very important to work with your state association's governmental affairs committee chair to augment similar efforts. Find a list on the last page of this document.
- Conduct outreach to state medical societies and other health care professions to build a coalition of groups that will assist you in current and future legislative and PR efforts. Start building long-term partnerships to strengthen your public position for years to come. It is very important that the athletic training state leaders be included in this effort.
- If you need help in planning a day at the state Capitol, check with the Government Affairs Committee member from your district; or log on to <http://www.nata.org/state-government> for NATA's Legislative Toolkit. \_\_\_\_\_

## ***Build relationships with local and state professional groups:*** \_\_\_\_\_

- Contact medical and health societies, insurance companies, workers' comp providers and influential employer groups to educate them on the real work of athletic trainers. Why? Because these groups are potential political allies and employers who can help assure patient access to athletic trainers. Your state leaders must be included to ensure a coordinated effort.
- Set up meetings with school boards and administrators to reinforce the vital role athletic trainers have in maintaining the health and wellness of students and athletes in the secondary school setting. Prepare material that demonstrates the unique qualifications of athletic trainers. Visit <http://www.authorstream.com/Presentation/nata1950-396931-value-model-valuemodel-education-ppt-powerpoint/> to view the "Secondary School Value Model."
- Target HR directors from select corporations/businesses in your community. Communicate the value of having athletic trainers on site, and illustrate how they offer a terrific return on investment, boost productivity and help get employees back to work quickly, effectively and safely. \_\_\_\_\_



## **Make the most of National Athletic Training Month continued...**

### ***Community activities:***

- Send information about local NATM events to members of local organizations, health care facilities and government offices — and specifically public health, Medicaid/Medicare, workers' compensation and insurance commissioner offices.
- Utilize the NATM e-card (<http://nata.org/national-athletic-training-month>).
- Organize charity events, volleyball tournaments, food drives, health fairs and other high-profile events, and donate proceeds to support research through the NATA Research & Education Foundation. Set up information booths and insert athletic training materials inside registration packets.
- Create NATM flyers for display at local medical facilities, health fairs, corporate sites and schools.
- Design billboards for display along major roads.
- Set up multimedia displays at shopping centers and distribute athletic training information. Arrange for athletic trainer messages to be posted on local business marquees.
- Develop creative material addressing time changes and clocks "springing forward" in March. Tips could include preparing for daylight savings time and even time zone changes for those who participate on travel teams.
- Contact local professional sports teams to explore potential partnerships to promote NATM at March sporting events.
- During halftime at high school and college sporting events, recognize local athletic trainer efforts over the loud-speaker and on scoreboards.
- Work with wellness centers to offer free injury screenings.
- Host a luncheon with school administrators, health care administrators, rehabilitation directors and physicians, and invite a local athletic trainer to be the keynote speaker.
- Arrange to give multimedia presentations before local civic, professional, health care and education groups. Ask them to support athletic trainer legislation and access by patients of all ages.
- Send athletic trainer volunteers to staff telephones at local PBS television fundraising drives, in exchange for airtime, in order to promote the athletic training profession.

### ***Student & parent outreach:***

- Coordinate a fundraiser for AEDs.
- Promote NATM to booster clubs, PTAs, youth leagues, club sports organizations, park/recreation boards and sports performance enhancement and wellness clinics. Explore possible speaking opportunities with each group.
- Host health career nights for students and their parents to educate them about the athletic training profession. Explain your qualifications, and talk about why you are ideally suited to care for the students' health care needs. Provide take-home information packets.



## Make the most of National Athletic Training Month continued...

### **Examples:**

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The Athletic Trainers' Society of New Jersey produced a 30-second promotional video which aired prior to movie showings in three theaters in the state. Nearly 200,000 people saw the video – the impact was huge!

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To make a great impact, your effort doesn't always have to be large. It might be that a small town school hires its first athletic trainer who holds an open house for parents and administrators. While there may be only 200 students in the school and 100 open house attendees, this sort of impact does not require a great commitment of time.

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- Host career workshops and seminars for students who are considering athletic training as a career.
- Sponsor contests for students to design posters, websites, videos and Internet blogs about NATM.
- Organize a silent auction to raise scholarship funds for a deserving athletic training student.

### **Workplace efforts:**

- Change your voicemail greeting to include the message: "March is National Athletic Training Month," and answer your phones in the same manner.
- Include "March is National Athletic Training Month" and the special NATM logo (<http://nata.org/national-athletic-training-month>) below your signature line on all e-mails you send.
- Set up an exhibit booth at your workplace with athletic training information.
- Work with your employer's communications personnel to have NATM information printed in game-day programs, company newsletters and websites.
- For those employed in clinical or corporate settings, meet with your human resources vice president or CEO to explain why athletic trainers can save money for the company. Make sure they understand why you are valuable to them and that you are not a personal trainer providing fitness services (unless you are).
- Invite your administrators to do a site visit to see what you do.
- Ask your employer to sponsor an athletic trainer recognition day.
- Design a special web page highlighting events for NATM.
- If your secondary school has not received the Safe Sports School Award, March is a great month to apply: [www.athletictrainers.org](http://www.athletictrainers.org)

### **Tips to motivate the media:**

- Prepare a press kit that includes athletic training information, NATA/state association fact sheets, membership statistics and information on local NATM events. Visit [www.nata.org](http://www.nata.org) for general resources.
- Send news releases and press kits about local events to daily and weekly newspaper reporters and calendar listings editors, and follow up with them regularly.
- Customize NATA's national news releases by adding quotes from local athletic trainers and tailoring them to reflect your area.



## Make the most of National Athletic Training Month continued..

- Invite local radio and television health and sports reporters and producers to create segments about the value of athletic trainers — and offer to be a resource for the segments. Encourage them to produce call-in shows where athletic trainers can provide important health and wellness information and answer timely questions. Also invite them to your special events.
- Contact media to immediately and politely clarify and correct terminology — especially if they confuse “athletic trainers” with “personal trainers” or “trainers.”
- Write 15- and 30-second radio and TV public service announcements, and urge local stations to run them during March.
- Invite members of the media to tour your facility — a first-hand look will help them understand your role as a health care professional.
- Contact your local business news editors and producers about assigning a story on athletic training.
- Write an article or letter to the editor on how athletic trainers help others be active and stay healthy, and submit it to your local newspaper or employee newsletter.
- Develop print advertisements for local newspapers.
- Distribute links to NATA videos to expand interest.
- Make a creative, fun video with your staff demonstrating how ATs “prepare” for everything.
- Use social media to help spread the word, and post pictures, videos and events to all social media outlets using #NATM2015.

### ***Tips for Social Media:***

- Fully embrace social media as a way to not only reach out to athletic trainers, but to also connect with the public to promote athletic training and sport safety.
- Access Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn.
- Post daily or weekly facts about heat illness, head and spine injuries, EAPs, etc. and incorporate the **“We Prepare – You Perform”** theme.
- Check NATA’s twitter for a schedule of “Social Media Blasts” that get #NATM2015 trending to the world.

### ***Terminology***

- The # **symbol**, called a hashtag, is used to mark keywords or topics in a Tweet. It was created organically by Twitter (now also on Instagram and Facebook as well) users as a way to categorize messages (<http://support.twitter.com>). The # is used immediately before a word that you want to emphasize. Others should use the # in front of the same word. Anytime that you see the #, you can click on the word following it and find more people who have used the # for the same word. If enough people use the # in front of the same word, it will “trend.” Use the # when on Instagram and Twitter. **Example: March 1 kicks off #NATM2015**

- The **@ symbol** is used to mention a person or an account. When you mention someone on Twitter, you either click “reply” on one of his or her tweets or you open that individual’s profile and write your tweet in the box provided. You can also simply mention in your tweet with “@username” – take care there’s no space between the username and the @ sign. Use @ while on Twitter. **Example: @NATA1950 March 1 kicks off #NATM2015.** This is also done on Facebook now as well.
- **Trend – Trending** occurs when many people use the same word behind a hashtag at or around the same time. Trending allows your topic to be popularized.

## PR tools at your disposal: ✓

NATA has outlined some useful PR recommendations that will help you promote NATM in your local community. Visit <http://nata.org/national-athletic-training-month> to find samples and step-by-step tips on how to write a news release, public address and public service announcements (PSAs) and government proclamations. In addition, you’ll find the NATM logo and e-mail greeting card.

## NATA key messages: ✓

### Athletic trainers are experts

Working to prevent and treat musculoskeletal injuries and sports-related illnesses, athletic trainers offer a continuum of care unparalleled in health care. ATs are part of a team of health care professionals – they practice under the direction of and in collaboration with physicians. ATs work with those individuals who are physically active or involved in sports participation through all stages of life to prevent, treat and rehabilitate injuries and medical conditions. Athletic trainers should not be confused with personal trainers or “trainers” who focus solely on fitness and conditioning. Always refer to an “athletic trainer” or “AT” to ensure clarity of profession and quality of care.

### Athletic trainers save lives

Sports injuries can be serious. Brain and spinal cord injuries and conditions such as heat illness can be life threatening if not recognized and properly handled. ATs are there to treat acute injuries on the spot. Athletes have chronic illnesses, too. People with diabetes and asthma can and do safely work and exercise, and the athletic trainer can help manage these critical health issues as they relate to physical exertion.

### Not all athletes wear jerseys

The duties of many workers – such as baggage handlers, dancers, soldiers and police officers – require range of motion and strength and stamina, and hold the potential for musculoskeletal injuries. ATs work with individuals in various settings to help with the prevention and treatment.

### The athletic trainer is the health care system for athletes and others

Athletic trainers are on site. They work with patients to avoid injuries; they’re there when injuries happen and they provide immediate care; and they rehabilitate patients after injuries or surgery. It’s a continuum of care. They know their patients well because they are at the school, in the theater or on the factory floor every day.

### Athletic trainers take responsibility and lower risk

School administrators, athletics directors and coaches have their own jobs, which may pose a conflict of interest with athlete safety; they are not experts in managing injuries or sports-related illnesses, nor should they be responsible to do so. Handling injuries at school or at work, rather than sending the patient to the emergency department, saves money and time loss – and gets them back to their activity faster. Just as professional athletes do, recreational athletes should have access to athletic trainers.

# Need Help?

Contact your NATA representatives from the Public Relations (PR) and Governmental Affairs (GAC) Committees:

## CHAIRS

PR: Marisa Brunett, MS, ATC, LAT  
(407) 579-4923  
marisabhrt@earthlink.net

GAC: Michael Chisar, MPT, ATC, SCS  
(925) 827-3321  
mchisar@dvc.edu

## DISTRICT 1

PR: Erin Brashear, MS, ATC, CSCS  
(617) 349-8976  
e.cicone@comcast.net

GAC: Jamie Musler, LPD, ATC  
(617) 373-5355  
j.musler@neu.edu

## DISTRICT 2

PR: Michael Prybicien, MA, ATC,  
CSCS  
(973) 591-1897  
mikep@atsnj.org

GAC: Ryan Wantz, MS, ATC, PES  
(717) 448-8610  
wantzadc@hotmail.com

## DISTRICT 3

PR: Brandy Jones, MS, ATC, LAT  
(704) 645-4561  
bnjones13@catawba.edu

GAC: Anna M. Sedory, MS, ATC,  
CSCS  
(562) 237-1509  
amasedory8@gmail.com

## DISTRICT 4

PR: Ryan Weible, MEd, AT, CES  
(614) 506-2743  
publicrelations.glat@gmail.com

GAC: Michael Medich, ATC  
(614) 851-7082  
Medich10@aol.com

## DISTRICT 5

PR: Doug Long, PhD, ATC, LAT  
(308) 696-7456  
longd@gphealth.org

GAC: Rusty McKune, MS, ATC  
(402) 250-5720  
rmckune@nebraskamed.com

## DISTRICT 6

PR: Kendall Goldberg, MLA, ATC,  
LAT  
(254) 552-6425  
kendall.goldberg@sவில்.us

GAC: BJ Maack, ATC  
(501) 680-2245  
bjmaack@gmail.com

## DISTRICT 7

PR: Jeb Davis MS, ATC  
(970) 247-7539  
jcdavis@fortlewis.edu

GAC: Valerie Herzog, EdD, ATC  
(801) 626-7656  
valerieherzog@weber.edu

## DISTRICT 8

PR: Sarah Lyons, MS, ATC, PES  
(650) 724-3303  
contact@fwatad8.org

GAC: Lauren Forsyth, MS, ATC, CES  
(707) 349-5199  
lforsyth@berkeley.edu

## DISTRICT 9

PR: Kristan Yates, EdD, ATC, LAT  
(270) 809-5741  
kyates8@murraystate.edu

GAC: Gerald Stevens, ATC, LAT  
(908) 208-0713  
gasatc428@gmail.com

## DISTRICT 10

PR: Josh Holliday, MS, ATC, CSCS  
(360) 509-8983  
jhollidayatc@gmail.com

GAC: Marty Matney, MBA, ATC, LAT  
(425) 591-1522  
mmatney@work-fit.com

## NATA STAFF

PR: Ellen Satlof  
(972) 532-8859  
ellen@nata.org

## INCOMING CHAIR

PR: Jamie Woodall, ATC, LAT  
(979) 229-2247  
jamie.woodall@bryanisd.org