

SIMPLE MESSAGE (elevator pitch)

*Athletic trainers (ATs) are **health care professionals** who **collaborate** with **physicians** to provide emergency care and prevent, diagnose and treat injuries and medical conditions for people in work, life and play including athletes, industrial workers, military service members and public servants. More information about athletic trainers and the health care services they provide are available at nata.org and/or atyourownrisk.org.*

SECONDARY POINTS:

Athletic trainers are experts. Working to prevent and treat musculoskeletal injuries and sports-related illnesses, athletic trainers offer an unparalleled continuum of 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 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 managed. ATs are equipped to treat acute injuries on the spot. Active people can have chronic illnesses as well. People with diabetes and asthma can and do safely work and exercise, and ATs help manage these critical health issues as they relate to physical exertion.

Not all athletes wear jerseys. ATs can be the first line of defense in workplace health and wellness. The duties of many workers – such as baggage handlers, dancers, soldiers and police officers – require range of motion, strength and stamina and pose a risk for musculoskeletal injuries. ATs work with individuals in various settings to help prevent injuries and return patients to full activity.

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 are present when injuries occur, provide immediate care and rehabilitate patients after injuries or surgery. It is 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 mitigate 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 for doing so. Treating injuries at school or at work, rather than sending the patient to the emergency department, saves money and time loss – and gets the patient back to activity faster. Just as professional athletes do, recreational athletes should have access to athletic trainers.