

Athletic Therapist

The person who runs onto the field when a player goes down, and rehabs them after. A 4-year degree and a national exam.

TYPICAL PAY

\$67,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$46k to \$103k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

4 to 5 years

after high school

DEMAND

Moderate

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

Sports teams, rehab clinics, universities, pro and varsity sport

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
Grade 12 English and biology, plus one of physics, chemistry or math. Sheridan asks for at least 65% in each.
- 2 Accredited athletic therapy degree** 4 to 5 years
Programs accredited by CATA (Canadian Athletic Therapists Association) include Sheridan in Ontario and Concordia in Montreal, with a handful of others in Calgary, Toronto and Winnipeg. Anatomy, injury assessment, taping, emergency care and rehab.
- 3 Supervised hours** During the degree
Well over a thousand hours during the degree, split between field work with teams and clinic work with patients. This is where your evenings and weekends go.
- 4 First responder certification** Days
You must hold an emergency first responder level certificate, above standard first aid, before the national exam.
- 5 National certification exam** After graduation
A written exam and a practical exam run by CATA (Canadian Athletic Therapists Association). Pass both to use the title Certified Athletic Therapist.

Pros and cons

- + Inside the sport, on the bench, every game
- + Hands-on work with fit, motivated patients
- + Real emergency skills that save lives on the field
- Evenings, weekends and travel for the whole season
- Modest pay for the hours, especially early on
- Very few full-time salaried team jobs exist

Good to know

The first person on the ice

When a hockey player goes down and stays down, the person who jumps over the boards first is almost always the team's athletic therapist, not a doctor. They are trained to stabilize a neck or spine b...

Taping is a craft

Students spend hours learning to tape ankles, wrists and thumbs so the joint is supported but the athlete can still move. An experienced therapist can tape an ankle in about a minute, and does it dozens of t...

Optional boosts

Pro and national team work. Concussion management. Strength and conditioning. Clinic ownership.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Athletic therapists, wages (updated Aug 2026)

Canadian Athletic Therapists Association

Sheridan College: Honours Bachelor of Applied Health Sciences, Athletic Therapy

Concordia University: Athletic Therapy (Bachelor of Science)

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in Canadian dollars, based on Government of Canada Job Bank wage data and published salary grids. They vary by province, employer and experience. Tuition is for domestic students. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/ca/careers/athletic-therapist>



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