

Athletic Therapist

The person on the sideline who decides whether an injured player comes off. In the United States the job title is athletic trainer.

TYPICAL PAY

\$62,520

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$48k to \$89k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

6 to 7 years

after high school

DEMAND

Very high

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

High schools, colleges, pro teams, clinics, factories, military bases

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
 Biology, anatomy if offered, and get yourself into the training room as a student aide for your school's teams.
- 2 Bachelor's degree** 4 years
 Exercise science, kinesiology, biology or anything with strong anatomy and physiology. Keep your grades up, because accredited master's programs are competitive.
- 3 Accredited master's degree** 2 years
 A professional program accredited by CAATE (the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education). Classroom work plus supervised clinical rotations with real teams and patients.
- 4 Pass the certification exam** Final semester
 The Board of Certification exam. Your program director has to confirm you before you can sit it.
- 5 Get your state license** Weeks
 Apply to the state board where you will work. Then keep your certification alive with continuing education every two years.

Pros and cons

- + Real medical responsibility from your first season
- + Hiring is growing fast across schools, clinics and industry
- + You are part of a team, not just a clinic
- Evenings, weekends and travel during the season
- A master's degree for a median around \$62,000
- Emotionally hard: you end seasons and sometimes careers

Good to know

It is not the same job as a personal trainer

An athletic trainer is a licensed health care provider who evaluates and treats injuries under a physician's direction. A personal trainer writes workout programs and needs no license in most states. The na...

Regulated in every single state

The National Athletic Trainers' Association reports that athletic trainers are licensed or otherwise regulated in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. There are not many health jobs with that clean a...

Optional boosts

Strength and conditioning certification. Emergency and tactical care training. Industrial and occupational health. Physician practice extender.

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Athletic Trainers (29-9091.00)
 Board of Certification for the Athletic Trainer: candidates
 National Athletic Trainers' Association: about athletic training
 Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in United States dollars, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics wage data and published pay scales. They vary by state, employer and experience. Tuition is for in-state students at public schools unless the card says otherwise. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/us/careers/athletic-therapist>



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