

Sports Medicine Doctor

You keep athletes moving and get them back after injury. It is a full medical degree first, then a residency, then a fellowship.

TYPICAL PAY

\$265,930

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$69k to \$452k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

12 to 14 years

after high school

DEMAND

Moderate

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

Clinics, hospitals, orthopedic practices, university athletic dep...

How you get there

- 1 Bachelor's degree** 4 years
Any major, but you must finish the premedical science courses and keep a high GPA. Then sit the MCAT (Medical College Admission Test).
- 2 Medical school** 4 years
Two years of classroom science, two years of hospital rotations, leading to an MD (Doctor of Medicine) or a DO (Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine).
- 3 Residency** 3 to 5 years
Family medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics, emergency medicine or physical medicine and rehabilitation takes 3 to 4 years. Orthopedic surgery takes 5.
- 4 Sports medicine fellowship** 1 year
One extra year of accredited training in musculoskeletal injury, concussion, ultrasound guided injections and team coverage.
- 5 License and board certification** After fellowship
A state medical license, board certification in your base specialty, then a CAQ (Certificate of Added Qualification) in sports medicine.

Pros and cons

- + A median around \$266,000 and very secure employment
- + Patients who want to get better and will do the work
- + Sideline and team medicine is genuinely good fun
- Twelve to fourteen years and usually over \$200,000 of debt
- Paid less than most other outcomes of a medical degree
- Evenings and weekends covering games, often for little or nothing

Optional boosts

Diagnostic and interventional ultrasound. Concussion management. Event and team coverage. Research.

Good to know

The pay survey undercounts this job

The federal wage survey measures what employers pay employees. A large share of American physicians are self-employed or partners in a practice and simply do not appear in it. So treat the published media...

It is an added qualification, not a separate board

Sports medicine is not its own medical specialty in the way cardiology or surgery is. You certify in a base specialty such as family medicine first, then add a Certificate of Added Qualification in sports medicine...

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Sports Medicine Physicians (29-1229.06)
American Medical Society for Sports Medicine
Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education
United States Medical Licensing Examination

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/sports-medicine-doctor>



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