

# TRAINING ROOM TIPS

First In A New Series

by

Michael G. Popson, A.T., C.

Since the time of the Ancient Greeks and the introduction of Athletics through the Olympic Games, there has evolved five primary factors of Athletics; 1) Sports, 2) Athletics, 3) Coaches, 4) Physicians and 5) Athletic Trainers. The Athletic Trainer has been dedicated to the Athlete's health and safety (1).

In the multidisciplinary field of Sports Medicine many changes have taken place over the years and one of these is the specialization of all those involved within the field. The Athletic Trainer is no exception. This paramedical professional has become more and more specialized in the practice of Athletic Medicine. The Athletic Trainer is responsible for: preventative medicine, emergency care for diseases and/or injuries related to exercise and the rehabilitation of those diseases and/or injuries to functional or competitive levels. The main responsibility of any Athletic Trainer lies in the major link they play between the Athletic Program and the Medical Community (1,2). The Athletic Program provides the correct and proper injury prevention, emergency care and rehabilitation protocols quickly and safely.

The educational and practical experiences are coupled together at most colleges and universities throughout the country and are quite extensive. The National Athletic Trainers Association, Inc. (N.A.T.A.), (the Trainer's governing body), has approved programs throughout the country that offer both Bachelor or Master degrees in Sports Medicine.

All Athletic Trainers possess a Bachelors degree and some a Masters degree in Sports Medicine or closely related field. The typical divisions within a curriculum are; 1) Pre-Med classes, 2) Physical Therapy classes, 3) Athletic Training classes and 4) Related Electives, combined with their practical work experience covering varsity intercollegiate sports.

The undergraduate student trainer puts in a full class load of 12-16 credit hours and works 25-30 hours of Athletic Training per week, plus traveling with varsity teams. As a graduate student trainer, a full class load is 6-9 credit hours and work is 40-60 hours of Athletic Training per week, plus traveling with varsity teams.

Athletic Trainers are very dedicated, intelligent individuals with a wealth of beneficial knowledge. Putting the course work to practical use in the Training Room daily, which makes these programs unique. Athletic Trainers are ready for immediate and beneficial



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**Editor's Note:** BFS recognizes the ever increasing role and importance of athletic trainers in our American sports system. We therefore are excited to present a new series of articles by Michael G. Popson which should be valuable to all coaches and trainers.

employment on the day of graduation.

The education and practical work is not the only obstacle the Athletic Trainer must overcome on their way to professional practice; there is yet the National Athletic Trainers Association, Inc. (N.A.T.A.) Certification Examination to prove competency within the field of Athletic Medicine. The N.A.T.A. is recognized as one of the oldest Paramedical Professional Organizations, founded in 1950, to establish the professional standards for the Athletic Trainer (3).

The core requirements of the N.A.T.A. examination that must be met before taking the exam are: 1) course requirements, 2) 1500 practical hours, 3) proof of a Bachelors degree (transcript), 4) American or Heart Assoc. certification in Standard First Aid and C.P.R., 5) 25% of practical hours must be in contact sports and 6) sponsored by a N.A.T.A. member. The Examination is an all day event involving 3 parts of testing: 1) written, 2) written simulation and 3) oral practical (4). Upon the successful completion of this Certification process, the Athletic Trainer student now becomes as Athletic Trainer, Certified (A.T., C.) and is recognized by the

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N.A.T.A. and the medical community.

It doesn't end there however, the Athletic Trainer now must uphold both the Code of Ethics and Constitution set forth by the N.A.T.A. as a standard for the profession (3). Continuing Education must be met each year to keep the Trainer updated with the latest changes in Sports Medicine that occur frequently. In some states it is required to obtain a license to practice within the state of residence, as well as providing individual malpractice insurance in addition to the blanket coverage provided by their employer.

The duties are numerous and different for every avenue of Athletic Training that one chooses. The Athletic Trainer could choose: 1) Professional Sports ranks, 2) Collegiate ranks, 3) High School ranks, 4) Industrial Work Place, or the most popular and fastest growing field, 5) Sports Clinic ranks. Whichever the Trainer chooses as his/her profession, the common denominators remain; 1) preventative therapy or conditioning, 2) emergency injury care, 3) proper and prompt medical mainstreaming and 4) sports rehabilitation therapy to return the athlete to functional and/or competitive level.

Most traditional duties include but are not limited to: protective and preventative taping, wrapping and padding, flexibility and home rehabilitation programing, nutritional guidance and proper physical conditioning for sports. One of the foremost responsibilities is that of education of the community to injury prevention and care; not to mention rehabilitation.

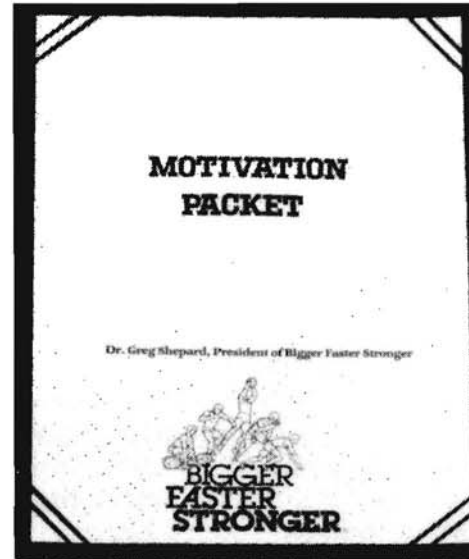
An Athletic Trainer works with the coaching staff in both education and evaluation of athletic injuries and planned programs for a safe and quick return to activity. Your sports programs can benefit from such a Professional: an Athletic Trainer.

## References

1. Arnheine, Daniel O.: Modern Principles of Athletic Training, Seventh Edition, St. Louis, MO (1989), The C.V. Mosby Company.
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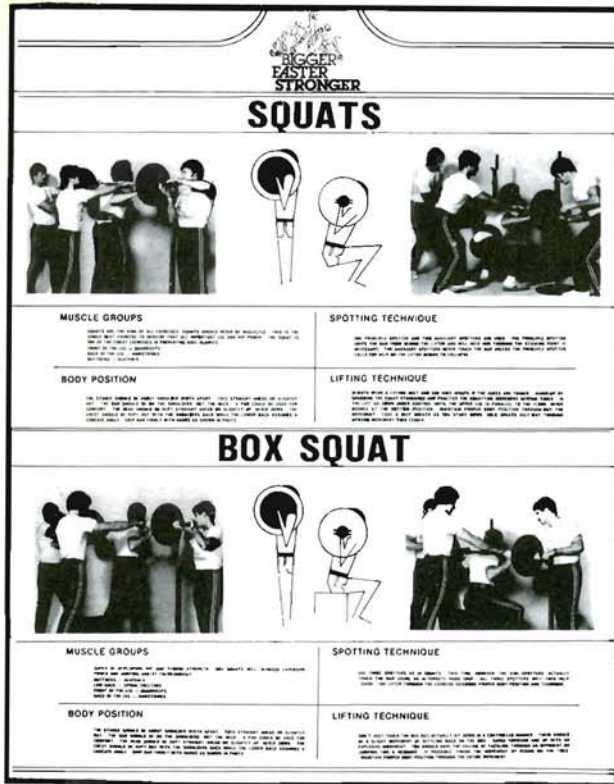
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