

# Exercise Science

*What can I do with this major?*

*This sheet will provide you with different options of career opportunities within Physical Fitness, Athletic Training, Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Education, Business, and Sports Medicine.*

## **Physical Fitness**

- Exercise Physiology
- Personal Training
- Performance Enhancement/Management
- Strength & Conditioning Coaching
- Group Fitness Instruction
- Health Club Management
- Consultation

*Where can I work?*

- Health clinics
- Fitness centers
- Retirement centers
- Nursing homes
- Daycare centers
- Correctional facilities
- Resorts
- Camps and Park districts
- Cruise lines
- Community centers
- Rehabilitation centers
- Healthcare programs: Clinical, Industrial, Corporate
- Sport facilities
- Individual athletes
- Self employed

*What does it take?*

- Maintain up to date knowledge of trends in fitness and safety practices.
- Obtain necessary certification in addition to CPR certification.
- Develop computer skills and familiarity with technology used in the field.
- Maintain excellent personal fitness and athletic proficiency.
- Volunteer at a gym or fitness facility to gain familiarity with methods of fitness instruction.
- Remain calm under pressure and maintain a positive, outgoing personality.
- Develop excellent interpersonal skills for working with clients, coaches, and team physicians.
- Volunteer to work with college or high school sport teams or lead exercise programs for local, nonprofit organizations.

## **Athletic Training**

- Performance Enhancement/Management
- Strength & Conditioning Coaching
- Biomechanics
- Consultation

*Where can I work?*

- High Schools
- Colleges and Universities
- Health clinics
- Sports Medicine clinics
- Fitness centers
- Retirement centers
- Nursing homes
- Resorts
- Cruise lines
- Community centers
- Rehabilitation centers
- Healthcare programs: Clinical, Industrial, Corporate
- Professional sport teams
- Private sport organizations
- Sports facilities
- Individual athletes
- Private or group practice

*What does it take?*

- Certified Athletic Trainers must earn a degree from an accredited institution. 70% of Athletic Trainers hold a Master's degree or higher. Obtain certification through the National Athletic Trainer's Association.
- Athletic training is not the same as personal training.
- Develop communication and decision making skills, and the ability to work well under pressure.
- Demonstrate ability to establish close and trusting relationships with others.
- Be willing to work long and irregular hours and travel with sport teams.
- Build your reputation in smaller programs to move up.
- Obtain an internship or part – time job with a sports team, athletic organization, or fitness facility.
- Join fitness orientated associations and organizations.
- Volunteer to work with college or high school sport teams, or to run exercise programs for non – profit organizations.

## Physical Therapy

- Clinical Practice:
  - Acute care
  - Neuro – rehab
  - Out - patient
- Management
- Education
- Research
- Consultation
- Specialties include:
  - Pediatrics
  - Geriatrics
  - Sports Medicine
  - Orthopedics
  - Neurology
  - Cardiopulmonary

### *Where can I work?*

- Hospitals
- Clinics
- Home healthcare agencies
- Nursing homes
- Sports medicine facilities
- Rehabilitation centers
- Doctor's offices, particularly orthopedic
- Schools
- Health clubs, and fitness centers
- Group or private practices
- Universities or colleges
- Federal and state government:
  - Armed Forces
  - Public Health Service
  - Veterans Administration

### *What does it take?*

- Obtain knowledge of several basic sciences including anatomy, physiology, biology, chemistry, and physics.
- Attain superior grades in pre – physical therapy course work due to intense competition for admittance to physical therapy programs.
- Volunteer for a physical therapist in a hospital or clinic to gain experience and improve chances of acceptance into a program.
- Develop strong interpersonal and communication skills. Must possess patience and a desire to help individuals of all ages with disabilities. A positive attitude is important when working with patients.
- Manual dexterity and physical stamina are important in succeeding in physical therapy work.
- Earn a master's degree or doctorate in physical therapy from a program accredited by the American Physical Therapy Association.
- All states require licensure which includes passing an examination.
- Obtain a doctoral degree for teaching and research positions.
- Some physical therapists specialize in an area after gaining several years of general experience.

## Occupational Therapy

- Screening
- Evaluation
- Treatment:
  - Physical
  - Psychosocial
  - Social
  - Vocational
- Follow – up
- Administration
- Teaching
- Research

### *Where can I work?*

- Hospitals (including psychiatric and rehabilitative)
- Schools
- Group or private practice
- Nursing homes
- Community mental health centers
- Adult daycare programs
- Job training centers
- Residential care providers
- Out – patient rehabilitation facilities
- Home healthcare agencies
- Federal and state government:
  - Armed Forces
  - Public Health Service
  - Veterans Administration
- Universities and colleges

### *What does it take?*

- Build a solid foundation in physical, biological, and behavioral sciences.
- Develop excellent communication skills which are important when interacting with patients and their families
- Volunteer in an occupational therapy or related healthcare setting to experience the field firsthand and improve chances of program admittance.
- Individuals working in occupational therapy should possess patience and a true interest in helping people with disabilities reach their full potential.
- Learn to work well within a team. OT's work with many other professionals in the rehabilitation of patients.
- Earn a master's (MOT, MA, MS) or doctoral (OTD, less common) degree in occupational therapy to gain entry in the field.
- Doctoral degree is often preferred for university teaching and administrative positions.
- All states regulate OT licensure. Requirements include passing a certification exam given by the American Occupational Therapy Certification Board and a supervised clinical internship. Those who have passed the exam become Occupational Therapists Registered (OTR).
- Occupational therapists may choose to specialize in a particular age group or type of disability.

## Education

- Research
- Teaching
- Assessment and Evaluation
- Program Development

*Where can I work?*

- Colleges and universities
- Athletic associations
- Research facilities

*What does it take?*

- Develop strong computer, mathematics, science, and both written and oral communication skills.
- Obtain teaching or instructional experience through volunteering or internships.
- Seek opportunities to join faculty in research projects to gain experience.
- Join related student and professional organizations.
- Acquire a master's degree for community college teaching and a Ph.D. for colleges and universities.

## Business

- Product Development
- Program development
- Biomechanics
- Sales:
  - Pharmaceutical
  - Healthcare
  - Sport and Fitness

*Where can I work?*

- Sporting goods manufacturers
- Exercise equipment manufacturers
- Sports facilities
- Health clubs and fitness centers
- Pharmaceutical companies
- Hospitals
- Clinical and corporate healthcare programs

*What does it take?*

- Develop outstanding communication skills, written, and oral.
- Take additional courses in marketing, advertising, and public relations.
- Gain experience with public speaking and sales.
- Obtain a part – time job or internship in the areas of wholesaling or retail.
- Build relationships with coaches, athletic directors, and college equipment/uniform representatives.
- Consider working with manufacturers of exercise equipment or nutritional supplements to learn more about the field and make contacts.

## **Sports Medicine**

- Orthopedics
- Osteopathic
- Chiropractors
- Prosthetics
- Biomechanics
- Physiology
- Kinesiology
- Psychology
- Cardiopulmonary rehabilitation
- Research

### *Where can I work?*

- Hospitals
- Clinics
- Home healthcare agencies
- Nursing homes
- Sports medicine facilities
- Rehabilitation centers
- Group or private practices
- Universities and colleges

### *What does it take?*

- Develop strong computer, science, mathematics, and verbal and written communication skills.
- Join related professional and student organizations and seek leadership roles.
- Find internship and research opportunities with professors and other experts in the field to gain experience.
- Meet with a pre – health advisor periodically to discuss curricular decisions.
- Maintain a high grade point average and secure strong recommendations for graduate or professional schools.
- Look at entrance requirements for desired institutions.
- Be aware of any standardized test requirements, minimum grade point averages, and prerequisites.
- After earning an undergraduate degree, the Doctor of Medicine (MD) requires 4 years of medical school, followed by 3 – 8 years of internship and residency depending on specialization chosen.

## General Information

- There are many different ways to work within the health and fitness industry. Identify a particular area of interest and then seek to gain the best combination of education preparation, experience, and skills because requirements will vary by field.
- Most careers in these fields require professional certification. Though many entry – level positions may be obtained with an undergraduate degree, most will require additional clinical experiences and a graduate or professional degree.
- Given the growing number of aging adults, many positions available in these areas will involve working with the elderly.
- Join professional associations. Read their publications and attend their meetings, seminars, and conventions to learn more about the field and make contacts.
- Get involved with local sport teams, intramurals, or recreational programs and facilities. Seek leadership roles, manage equipment and facilities, or plan events.
- Look for jobs in the minor leagues as a way to enter the sport industry.
- Fitness communication is also a growing field offering opportunities to write, research, and report on health and fitness related topics for newspapers, magazines, and websites. If interested in this area, take supplemental course work in English, journalism, or broadcasting and seek opportunities to volunteer with local or campus newspapers or television/radio stations.
- Earn a graduate or professional degree for increased opportunities.
- Maintain excellent personal fitness and athletic proficiency.
- Learn to relate well to people with varying personalities and backgrounds.
- An undergraduate degree in exercise science offers excellent preparation and meets many pre – requisites for a variety of pre – professional programs in the field of healthcare. Meet with a pre – health advisor to identify any additional prerequisites for entry into a particular graduate school.