



Scope of Practice

Certified Athletic Therapist (CAT)

Approval Authority: ARTI Executive Board

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Certified Athletic Therapist Scope of Practice

A Certified Athletic Therapist (CAT) is an autonomous health care practitioner to whom members of the public can seek direct access. Whether working independently, as part of a multi-disciplinary team or with referrals from other health care professionals, CATs maintain this professional autonomy as well as the responsibilities that accompany it.

A CAT practices under the scope of five main domains:

- 1) Prevention of injuries and illnesses associated with sport, physical activity and the workplace
- 2) Evaluation of neuromusculoskeletal injuries, including comprehensive examination and assessment; interpretation of findings to support clinical decision-making; formulation of diagnosis and prognosis; and development of patient-centered outcomes and management plans.
- 3) Acute care of injuries and illnesses associated with sport, physical activity and the workplace
- 4) Management, treatment, rehabilitation and reconditioning of neuromusculoskeletal injuries and illness including exercise therapy, therapeutic modalities, and the facilitation of safe return to activities of daily living and sport
- 5) Professional responsibility and continual professional education

Domain 1: Prevention of Injuries

A CAT may evaluate and implement interventions to prevent injuries and illnesses by means including, but not limited to, the following:

Assess and Manage the Intrinsic Risk of Injury by:

- a. Identifying, assessing and managing any and all risks associated with physical activity, sport and the workplace.
- b. Identifying conditions that may limit or compromise participation in physical, sporting and occupational activity.
- c. Designing and conducting pre-participation health, sporting, and workplace screening processes.
- d. Applying and advising on appropriate custom-made or commercially available protective and prophylactic equipment including but not limited to tapes, insoles, orthotics, splints and braces.
- e. Design, implementation and facilitation of the administration of appropriate protocols and procedures to manage intrinsic risk factors of injury.

Assess and Manage the Extrinsic Risk of Injury by:

- a) Recognising conditions that would predispose individuals to extrinsic risk
- b) Using appropriate methods to gather and interpret information regarding environmental conditions
- c) Implementing, monitoring and screening techniques to test an individual's response to environmental conditions

- d) Implementing and facilitating appropriate protocols and procedures to help address the environmental risk
- e) Inspecting facilities and recognizing risks in the sporting and occupational environment and recommending interventions to address potential hazards
- f) Inspecting and supervision of maintenance of athletic equipment

Domain 2: Evaluation of Neuromusculoskeletal Injuries

A CAT can conduct a comprehensive examination and assessment, interpret findings to support clinical decision-making; formulate a diagnosis and prognosis plan to identify neuromusculoskeletal injuries and risk factors and aid in the development of patient-centered outcomes and management plans of a patient including referral to other health care professionals. This is achieved by means including, but not limited to, the following

- a) Possessing a knowledge and understanding of the pathology of injuries and illnesses.
- b) Completing a general and specific assessment for the purpose of screening and referring to common medical conditions, treating these conditions when appropriate, and determining a patient's readiness for physical activity when appropriate.
- c) Conducting a subjective evaluation that includes a thorough history of the patient's presenting condition in order to identify conditions that warrant musculoskeletal assessment and/or referral to another member of the health care team.
- d) Performing a neuromusculoskeletal assessment of upper extremity, lower extremity, head/face, and spine for the purpose of determining risk factors predisposing to injury, and diagnosing a neuromusculoskeletal injury.
- e) Counselling a patient in proper nutrition, recognising eating disorders and nutritional requirements and referring patients to appropriate medical professionals when indicated.
- f) Recognising, intervening, and referring, when appropriate, patients exhibiting sociocultural, mental, emotional, and psychological behavioural problems/issues. They may also assist in the recovery of an individual by understanding psychosocial factors relating to rehabilitation and performance.

Domain 3: Acute Care of Injuries and Illnesses

A CAT may provide acute care of injuries and illnesses by means including, but not limited to, the following: surveying the scene, conducting an initial/primary assessment, utilising universal precautions, developing and activating an emergency plan, implementing appropriate emergency techniques and procedures, conducting a secondary assessment, implementing appropriate first aid techniques and procedures and using emergency care equipment to aid the injured athlete/patient by facilitating safe transportation to an appropriate medical facility. They may do this by means including, but not limited to, the following:

1. Surveying the scene to determine whether the area is safe and determine what may have happened.
2. Performing an initial assessment including, but not limited to, the following:
 - a) Airway
 - b) Breathing
 - c) Circulation
 - d) Level of ConsciousnessOther life-threatening, or limb-threatening injuries or conditions.
3. Implementing appropriate emergency treatment strategies including, but not limited to:
 - a) Activating an emergency plan.
 - b) Establishing and maintaining an airway in an infant, child and adult.
 - c) Establishing and maintaining an airway in an athlete wearing protective equipment and/or with a suspected spinal injury.
 - d) Performing one and two person CPR on an infant, child and adult.
 - e) Utilising a bag-valve mask on an infant, child and adult.
 - f) Utilising an automated external defibrillator (AED) according to current accepted practice protocols.
 - g) Normalising body temperature in situations of severe/life threatening heat or cold stress.
 - h) Controlling bleeding using universal precautions.

4. Implementing appropriate emergency treatment strategies including, but not limited to:
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 - h) Controlling bleeding using universal precautions.

5. Performing a secondary assessment and employing the appropriate management techniques for non life-threatening situations including, but not limited to, the following:
 - a) Open and closed wounds using universal precautions.
 - b) Closed head trauma using standard neurological tests and tests for cranial nerve function.
 - c) Environmental illness.
 - d) Seizures.
 - e) Acute asthma attack.
 - f) Different types of shock.
 - g) Thoracic, respiratory and internal abdominal injury or illness.
 - h) Acute musculoskeletal injuries (e.g. sprains, strains, fractures, dislocations)
 - i) Spinal cord and peripheral nerve injuries.
 - j) Diabetic coma.
 - k) Toxic during overdose.
 - l) Allergic, thermal and chemical reactions of the skin

Domain 4: Management, Treatment, Rehabilitation and Reconditioning of Neuromusculoskeletal Injuries and Illnesses

A CAT may synthesize the information obtained in a patient encounter and examination to determine the indications, contraindications and precautions for the selection, patient set-up, and the best practice application of treatment techniques and rehabilitation programs for acute and chronic injuries to the upper extremity, lower extremity, trunk, head and spine and when to return to sport/physical activity and work. A CAT can achieve this by means including, but not limited to, the following:

1. Therapeutic interventions including, but not limited to, soft tissue techniques, stretching techniques, manual therapy, joint mobilisation techniques, aquatic therapy, application of braces, orthotic and protective equipment, and taping and strapping techniques.
2. Therapeutic Modalities including, but not limited to, heat modalities, cold modalities, light modalities, energy modalities, chemical modalities and electrical modalities, ultrasonic transduction modalities in accordance with best practice guidelines and while maintaining proper service interval requirements for all machines and equipment.
3. Design and implementation of conditioning and rehabilitative exercises by integrating the assessment of injury, fitness and functional status which is appropriate to the injured individual/party.
4. Obtain and communicate patient education materials regarding physician prescribed medications, over the counter drugs, and performance-enhancing substances using appropriate references. They may also identify which therapeutic drugs and non-therapeutic substances are banned by sport and/or workplace organisations in order to properly advise patients about possible disqualifications and other health consequences.
5. Pharmacologic applications and governing pharmacy regulations relevant to the treatment of injuries, illnesses, and diseases.

Domain 5: Professional Responsibility and Continual Professional Education

A CAT must abide by the ARTI's Code of Ethics and Scope of Practice policies and any institutional or regulatory requirements. A CAT must fulfil the continuing professional development requirements as determined by the ARTI Executive Board and Educational Committee. A CAT may educate, counsel and instruct athletes, the general public, students, and other health professionals on sports and exercise health related topics.

A CAT may gain further knowledge and skills in a variety of associated and related neuromusculoskeletal evaluative techniques and interventions while abiding by the ARTI Code of Ethics and this Scope of Practice.