



NATA Style Guide

Athletic trainer and AT: “Athletic trainer” and “AT” are the preferred terms. Never use “trainer” or “certified trainer.” Only use “certified athletic trainers” when the circumstance requires distinction.

ATC: Only use ATC when referring to the credential, not to a person. Don’t use ATC/L, ATC/R, LATC or any other combination of ATC as the credential is trademarked. (See more credential guidelines below.)

AT and setting: When denoting an AT’s setting, put “AT” before the setting, not vice versa.

Correct: Athletic trainers in the collegiate setting; athletic trainers in the secondary school setting

Incorrect: Collegiate athletic trainers; secondary school athletic trainers

Athletic training: “Athletic training” and “athletic trainer” are not capitalized unless part of a proper noun. Don’t using “AT” as an acronym for athletic training as a noun. It may be used as an acronym in the adjective form.

Correct: The new AT facility was unveiled.

Incorrect: Learn more about a career in AT.

Correct: Learn more about a career in athletic training.

Athletic training facility: The preferred term is “athletic training facility,” not “athletic training room” and never “training room.”

Athletic training students and athletic training student aides: College students are referred to as “athletic training students,” never “student trainers.” High school students are referred to as “athletic training student aides,” never “student trainers.”

Athletic training education programs: The new acronym is “ATP.” We no longer use “ATEP.”

Athletic training “customer”: Per the Uniform Terminology Project group, athletic trainers treat patients or clients. “The committee recognizes that athletes still comprise a significant proportion of the population who receives our care. However, once an athlete (or any other individual who receives our services) becomes injured, he or she is a patient. Client should be used for situations where individuals receive our services usually preventative in nature – on a fee-for-service basis.”

Continuing education and CEUs: When describing a numerical amount of units earned or available, the proper acronym is CEU and is acceptable in all references. When describing the general term of “continuing education,” CE is an acceptable acronym. When obtaining CE credit, the person receives a “Statement of Credit” instead of the former term, “certificate.”

Correct: Up to 14 CEUs are available, with the opportunity to earn 5 CEUs after the event.

Correct: Don’t forget to use your CE credits.

Convention terminology: The proper name is “[number] NATA Clinical Symposia & AT Expo.” On subsequent references, “NATA convention” and “NATA [year]” are acceptable. Don’t use “NATA Meeting,” “Annual Meeting” or “NATA Annual Meeting.”

Correct: Join us for the 75th NATA Clinical Symposia & AT Expo. The NATA convention is a great opportunity to connect with peers. Learn more about hot topics during NATA 2024.

Cool first, transport second: No hyphens, separate with a comma

Credentials: Use credentials on first reference. (Check NATA’s member database to confirm.) Follow the BOC’s guidelines on listing and abbreviating (degree, license, credential). Don’t use periods within credentials (contrary to AP Style) and separate with commas. Use a maximum of three credentials, with educational degrees listed before professional certifications (don’t include bachelor’s degrees). At least one of the three credentials must be ATC (if the person is certified).

Correct: John Doe, PhD, LAT, ATC, works for Mercy Hospital.

Districts and states: Write out each district number, even District Ten and District Eleven, which is contrary to AP Style. In 2022, District Four split into two districts – District Four and District Eleven – both of which comprise GLATA; similar to how Districts One and Two comprise EATA.

- District One or Eastern Athletic Trainers’ Association (EATA)
 - Connecticut Athletic Trainers’ Association (CATA)
 - Maine Athletic Trainers’ Association (MATA)
 - Athletic Trainers of Massachusetts (ATOM)
 - New Hampshire Athletic Trainers’ Association (NHATA)
 - Rhode Island Athletic Trainers’ Association (RIATA)
 - Vermont Association of Athletic Trainers (VAAT)
- District Two or Eastern Athletic Trainers’ Association (EATA)
 - Delaware Athletic Trainers’ Association (DATA)
 - Athletic Trainers’ Society of New Jersey (ATSNJ)
 - New York State Athletic Trainers’ Association (NYSATA)
 - Pennsylvania Athletic Trainers’ Society (PATS)
- District Three or Mid-Atlantic Athletic Trainers’ Association (MAATA)
 - District of Columbia Athletic Trainers’ Association (DCATA)
 - Maryland Athletic Trainers’ Association (MATA)
 - North Carolina Athletic Trainers’ Association (NCATA)
 - South Carolina Athletic Trainers’ Association (SCATA)
 - Virginia Athletic Trainers’ Association (VATA)
 - West Virginia Athletic Trainers’ Association (WVATA)
- District Four or Great Lakes Athletic Trainers’ Association (GLATA)
 - Indiana Athletic Trainers’ Association (IATA)
 - Michigan Athletic Trainers’ Society (MATS)
 - Ohio Athletic Trainers’ Association (OATA)

- District Five or Mid-America Athletic Trainers' Association (MAATA)
 - Iowa Athletic Trainers' Society (IATS)
 - Kansas Athletic Trainers' Society (KATS)
 - Missouri Athletic Trainers' Association (MoATA)
 - Nebraska State Athletic Trainers' Association (NSATA)
 - North Dakota Athletic Trainers' Association (NDATA)
 - Oklahoma Athletic Trainers' Association (OATA)
 - South Dakota Athletic Trainers' Association (SDATA)
- District Six or Southwest Athletic Trainers' Association (SWATA)
 - Arkansas Athletic Trainers' Association (AATA)
 - Texas State Athletic Trainers' Association (TSATA)
- District Seven or Rocky Mountain Athletic Trainers' Association (RMATA)
 - Arizona Athletic Trainers' Association (AzATA)
 - Colorado Athletic Trainers' Association (CATA)
 - New Mexico Athletic Trainers' Association (NMATA)
 - Utah Athletic Trainers' Association (UATA)
 - Wyoming Athletic Trainers' Association (WyoATA)
- District Eight or Far West Athletic Trainers' Association (FWATA)
 - California Athletic Trainers' Association (CATA)
 - Hawaii Athletic Trainers' Association (HATA)
 - Nevada Athletic Trainers' Association (NEVATA)
 - FWATA also includes American Samoa and Guam
- District Nine or Southeast Athletic Trainers' Association (SEATA)
 - Alabama Athletic Trainers' Association (ALATA)
 - Athletic Trainers' Association of Florida (ATAF)
 - Georgia Athletic Trainers' Association (GATA)
 - Kentucky Athletic Trainers' Society (KATS)
 - Louisiana Athletic Trainers' Association (LATA)
 - Mississippi Athletic Trainers' Association (MATA)
 - Tennessee Athletic Trainers' Society (TATS)
 - SEATA also includes Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands
- District Ten or Northwest Athletic Trainers' Association (NWATA)
 - Alaska Athletic Trainers' Association (AATA)
 - Idaho Athletic Trainers' Association (IATA)
 - Montana Athletic Trainers' Association (MTATA)
 - Oregon Athletic Trainers' Society (OATS)
 - Washington State Athletic Trainers' Association (WSATA)
- District Eleven or Great Lakes Athletic Trainers' Association (GLATA)
 - Illinois Athletic Trainers' Association (IATA)
 - Minnesota Athletic Trainers' Association (MATA)
 - Wisconsin Athletic Trainers' Association (WATA)

Doctor vs. physician: Use the term “physician” instead of “doctor” to avoid confusion since “doctor” can designate a PhD as well.

En-dashes: NATA prefers to use en-dashes (contrary to AP, which prefers em-dashes). Include a space before and after the en-dash.

Health care: Two words, never hyphenated; the only exception is to name of an organization or company.

Correct: Athletic trainers are essential to health care.

Correct: United HealthCare is an insurance provider.

LGBTQIA+: The correct acronym for those in the LGBTQIA+ community. Note that NATA's committee is the LGBTQ+ Advisory Committee.

NATA and NATA committees: The National Athletic Trainers' Association is plural possessive. When communicating to the public/nonmembers, write out the full name on first reference and use "NATA" for all subsequent references. When communicating to members, use "NATA" for all references. When using "NATA" as a noun, do not include "the" before it; however, include "the" when using "NATA" as an adjective. Always include "NATA" in front of a committee's name on first reference; use committee's acronym without "NATA" on subsequent references.

Correct: NATA was founded in 1950.

Correct: The NATA Secondary School Athletic Trainers' Committee is meeting this weekend. SSATC is working on several projects.

NATA Research & Education Foundation: Write out the full name on first reference. Use "NATA Foundation" on all subsequent references. Don't use "Foundation," "the Foundation" or "REF."

NATA Safe Sports School Award: Include "NATA" in the award's name on first reference. While the award has two tiers, this distinction doesn't need to be made when writing about an award winner.

Correct: Hillside High School recently earned the NATA Safe Sports School Award.

National Provider Identifier (NPI): Write out on first reference and use NPI on all subsequent references. Avoid "NPI number."

Nonmember: One word, no hyphen

On-site, off-site: Two words, hyphenated

Orthopedic/Orthopaedic: Per AP Style, use the American spelling (orthopedic, orthopedics). Use the British spelling (orthopaedic) only as part of a proper noun.

Correct: The American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons has issued a new position statement on orthopedic injuries.

Payor: NATA uses "payor" in all references (not "payer," contrary to AP Style).

Pre-participation exam: Hyphenate "pre-participation." This is contrary to AP Style, which typically doesn't hyphenate "pre-" prefixes.

Résumé: Include accents over the e's (contrary to AP Style)

Return-to-play vs. return to play: Return to play is hyphenated only when used as a compound modifier.

Correct: The AT is in charge of making return-to-play decisions.

Correct: John will return to play tomorrow.

Skill set: Two words, no hyphen

Student athlete: Two words, no hyphen

Task force and work group: Two words, no hyphen

Third party reimbursement: For consistency with already established usage, don't hyphenate "third party" in "third party reimbursement"

Time, date and location: The correct order is always "[time], [date], [location]." With time, use "a.m." and "p.m."; don't use ":00." For virtual events, include the time zone, which is always the time zone in which the NATA office is located (CST or CDT, depending on the time of the year). For in-person events, use the time zone of the city in which the event is taking place. Don't include the day with dates. Don't include the year if it's occurring in the year we're currently in.

Correct: Join us from 9 to 11:45 a.m. CST March 8 on Zoom.

Correct: The event is from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. CDT Sept. 8-10 in Dallas.

Toolkit: One word

URLs: Don't include "https://" in front of a URL or "/" at the end of a URL. Do include "www." if the URL has it.

Young professional terminology: The following terms are used when referencing the young professional demographic:

- **Young professional:** The umbrella term used for those zero to 12 years certified
- **Early in career; early professional:** Those zero to six years certified
- **Advanced in certification; advancing in careers; career-advancing ATs:** Those seven to 12 years certified