

How I Became an Athletic Trainer
Tiffany M. Phillips, M.Ed, LAT, ATC

Dear Parents,

Thank you for taking the time to read my thoughts about my life and passion. Talking about myself is not something I frequent nor thoroughly enjoy, so please bear with me. One day I hope to create this post into a nice blog, but for now this google doc will have to do.

When I was 5 years old, I fell in love with the sport of cheerleading. For any of you who have been involved or around cheerleading, you know it is a beast of its own. My entire school career I grew up cheering little league (equivalent to your MP Football), competitively and into high school where I cheered Varsity for 3 years. In this time, I was named captain multiple years, have 2 national titles, and named all american.



(I already regret sharing this photo, but enjoy baby Tiffany, circa 3rd grade. National titles are cool and all, but we all know these are the pictures we really want to see)

It was during this time that I also battled multiple injuries including severe knee pains, and a chronically dislocating shoulder. At my high school, there was 1 certified athletic trainer employed at the time; it has since grown to 2. Koby, my athletic trainer, is the person responsible for my cheer career continuing. After my 2nd partial dislocation was when he stepped in and began my rehab and treatment plan. I spent every day of my senior year in his athletic training room, and every day of the summer after graduation doing rehab with him. If it weren't for him, I wouldn't have been able to compete my senior year. I also wouldn't have been able to continue on and cheer in college. It was also there where I fell in love with athletic training, and knew what I wanted to do with my life.



(College freshman Tiffany cheering at SWOSU, peep the knee brace)

I was lucky enough to cheer one more year into college, however at the end of that year I began my application process for the athletic training program and doing both was not an option. I chose athletic training, of course. For a bit, I was lost after walking away from the one thing I had known for the past 14 years, but it made sense that I was still on a sideline where I grew up. Fun fact: the same football field I stepped onto happens to be where I met my now husband.

I spent all four years at Southwestern Oklahoma State University in Weatherford, Oklahoma where I graduated with a Bachelor's of Science in Athletic Training. After graduation I went to work at Union High School in Tulsa, Oklahoma working with their 8 time state championship football team and 6 time state championship baseball team. During this time, I finally got over my pride and stubbornness and had my shoulder fixed. If I'm ever doing shoulder rehab with your kids, trust me when I say it's no joke! After leaving Union, I moved to Kansas City for an internship with the Kansas City Chiefs. I had taken a mental health break from school, and began my masters at the end of my internship in KC. I moved to Tahlequah, Oklahoma and took a graduate assistant athletic trainer position at Northeastern State University working with their football and nationally ranked women's tennis teams. From there, I earned a Master's of Education with an emphasis in Classroom Teaching. Towards the end of my masters, I was offered an assistant athletic trainer position at Oral Roberts University working with

their cross country, track and women's tennis programs. I spent 2 years there before finally setting some roots in Grapevine, Texas.



(Here is only a few pictures of my career, because the only person that photographs the athletic trainer is their mom, lol. Thanks, Mom!)

Being in Grapevine these past two years has been the biggest blessing of my life. Before moving, I was contemplating going into professional baseball and it is no secret that God called me to Texas instead. It is an honor to work with your children every single day; one that I'm blessed beyond measure to do.

This is only the short version of my story, but I'm happy to share what brought me here.



Go Mustangs,

Tiffany