

HEALTH SPECIALISTS

As a high-level athlete, you are faced with many decisions about your health and well-being. Whether you are injured or trying to improve your performance on court, finding the right specialist is important. The following information will help you make the right decision.

- Beware of individuals making unrealistic claims or those that just say they work with elite athletes.
- Check the facility and credentials of the specialist; you could save yourself from ineffective treatment and even bodily harm.
- Professional health care providers are licensed and/or certified, formally trained, and participate in annual continuing education course work.
- Licensing and certification indicate that there are specific educational requirements

There are many different types of specialists, including:

- **Medical Doctor/Physician**

An individual who has completed an accredited medical school or school of osteopathic medicine, and who may practice medicine as a medical doctor.



- **Certified Athletic Trainers**

A non-physician clinician who specialises in managing athletic preparedness (e.g., taping before play) and basic injury treatment.

- **Dentist**

A non-physician clinician who diagnoses and manages disorders of the teeth and oral cavity, and who provides preventative care for the teeth and gums.

- **Nutritionists and Dieticians**

- Nutritionist: a non-physician clinician who advises on matters of food and impact in relation to health and physical performance. A nutritionist does not have a governed degree.
- Dietician: a non-physician clinician who advises on proper food and nutrition in order to promote good health. A dietician has a governed degree.

- **Optometrist**

A non-physician clinician who specialised in diagnosing and managing visual acuity problems, through the use of glasses and contact lenses.

- **Physical Therapists**

A non-physician clinician who specialises in rehabilitation, using a combination of modalities, hands-on treatment, and exercise protocols.

- **Podiatrist**

A non-physician clinician who specialises in treating disorders of the feet through the use of medications, injections and surgery.

- **Psychologist**

A non-physician clinician who specialises in diagnosing and managing psychological conditions

- **Strength and Conditioning Coach**

A non-physician clinician who works with athletes to improve performance through a customised exercise program.

When seeking a Health Care Professional, you can screen the specialist by asking the right questions:

- Licensed or unlicensed?
- Board-approved or certified?
- Traditional or Non-traditional methods?
- Years of experience?
- Years in practice?
- From which university or school did you receive your training/graduate?
- Have you received any advanced training such as a fellowship, doctorate or clinical specialty?
- Are your treatment techniques based on theory, experience or research?
- Can you supply me with references with whom I can speak?
- Are elite athletes common clients in your practice? If so what kind?

A Qualified Health Care Professional in the tennis arena:

- Is a good communicator and a good listener
- Provides pros and cons to clinical decisions
- May refer you to a specialist if your medical issue is beyond the scope of his/her skills
- Bases clinical decisions on proven outcomes
- Is honest
- Has a good understanding of tennis health issues
- Is well respected and recognised in the field
- Keeps your longevity on the court in perspective
- Encourages both mental and physical well-being