

APTA-NSCA Joint Principles Statement



The American Physical Therapy Association and the National Strength and Conditioning Association are united in their commitment to advancing client and athlete health, performance, and well-being through evidence-based practices and interdisciplinary collaboration. This joint principles statement affirms the complementary roles of physical therapists and strength and conditioning coaches, or SCCs, in contributing to athletic performance, preventing injuries, and facilitating safe return-to-play processes, grounded in shared values of client- and athlete-centered care, scientific rigor, and professional excellence.

APTA-NSCA Shared Values

Client- and Athlete-Centered Care: APTA and NSCA agree to prioritize health and safety while fostering interdisciplinary collaboration and teamwork between PTs and SCCs to integrate return-to-play processes and performance training for optimal outcomes.

Scientific Integrity: APTA and NSCA support the integration of peer-reviewed research into practice, ensuring interventions align with the latest advancements in performance and sport science.

Injury Prevention and Resilience: APTA and NSCA encourage the use of proactive strategies to reduce injury risk and enhance durability across all levels of sport participation and active populations.

Ethical Practice: APTA and NSCA agree to uphold professional standards, including the delivery and support of accredited credentials, continuing education, and adherence to safety protocols.

Collaborative Framework Across the Continuum

APTA and NSCA endorse a collaborative model to ensure quality care and Client and athlete safety and outcomes. The role of each profession in the rehabilitation, transition, and performance phases of the performance continuum varies by client and athlete population, condition, and setting. Both professions seek interventions to improve strength, power, agility, and performance to meet clients' and athletes' desired outcomes for sports or athletic participation.

Rehabilitation Phase: PTs lead injury assessment, treatment, and early rehabilitation with SCCs providing support to guide the maintenance of physical fitness and conditioning levels within the parameters of the injury or surgery.

Reconditioning Phase: PTs and SCCs jointly integrate therapeutic exercises with strength training to implement a gradual return to sport process.

Performance Phase: SCCs lead strength, power, and agility training, with PTs providing support to maximize health and safety.

Commitment to Professionalism

APTA and NSCA commit to collaboration and joint efforts to promote quality professional practices, including legislative efforts, public relations initiatives, and interprofessional practice.