

# What is a Naturopathic Sports Medicine Doctor?

BY DR. BRITTANY LONG, TRUE HEALTH MEDICINE PC

Before I can really answer “What is a Naturopathic Sports Medicine Doctor?” I believe it is first important to truly understand what a Naturopathic Doctor (ND) is, what we do and how we can help you to achieve your best health possible.

A licensed Naturopathic Doctor (ND) is an individual who has completed an undergraduate degree with the appropriate pre-requisite course required to be accepted into an accredited Naturopathic medical school. These accredited Naturopathic medical schools are overseen

by the Council for Naturopathic Medical Education (the naturopathic equivalent of the American Medical Association) and there are currently six accredited schools in the United States. Once accepted into this program, naturopathic students complete a four-year program of formal medical education.

The classes that make up part of the naturopathic medical program include (but are not limited to) basic science courses such as biochemistry, anatomy, physiology, clinical lab education, orthopedics, biomechanics along with organ and disease specific classes such as neurology, gastroenterology, dermatology, endocrinology, gynecology, urology, nephrology, ophthalmology, otolaryngology, and others. The wonderful thing (in my humble opinion) about the naturopathic medical school program is that



aside from learning the basics of diagnosing and treating disease through western medical protocols such as pharmaceuticals, we have a vast ‘toolbox’ to help our patients heal from disease. The naturopathic-specific treatments that make up this ‘toolbox’ include specific diets for different disease processes, physical manipulation, herbal medicine, supplemental therapy with amino acids, vitamins, minerals, etc., homeopathy, massage therapy and IV therapy, minor surgery and many others.

In addition to completing rigorous coursework, our medical knowledge is assessed through two separate rounds of medical board exams. Our first round of medical boards assesses our knowledge of clinical practices and basic sciences and is taken after our second year of school, before we enter clinic as naturopathic medical student interns. Our second round of medical boards assesses our knowledge of clinical practices and basic sciences as well as patient assessment, diagnosis and treatment and is completed after graduation. It is only after we pass the first and second rounds of medical boards that we are fully licensed and legally able to practice naturopathic medicine as a medical provider in our state or state(s) of choice (there is further testing if you wish to be licensed in multiple states).

PHEW – that was a lot but laying the ground work for a full and robust knowledge of what a naturopathic doctor is and how they vary from other medical providers is so incredibly important. Now that you have

the basic information, we can dive into “What is a Naturopathic Sports Medicine Doctor?” Naturopathic Sports Medicine Doctors synthesize all the education learned in naturopathic medical school but also build off of that foundation in order to treat a vast array of disease and health complaints specific to athletes and patients with varying degrees of activity. Diseases and health complaints a NSMD might see include pain from everyday use/overuse, pain from involvement in sports or exercise, complaints of tight muscles, weight loss, body composition optimization, improvement guidance in meeting athletic performance or exercise related goals, increasing longevity in lifespan and in the ability to stay active later in life. Tools that a NSMD might use include targeted dietary interventions, targeted supplemental therapy, physical manipulation techniques, manual therapy with and without tools, soft tissue manipulation, cupping, and at-home stretching and strengthening techniques.

If you have not yet experienced working with a Naturopathic Doctor and you have some nagging health issues, are looking for a new perspective or are just looking to be as healthy as possible I would encourage you to schedule a visit and check out for yourself just what we’re all about! If some of the topics, health conditions or treatment options I have mentioned in this article have piqued your interest, I welcome you to schedule a visit at True Health Medicine and look forward to speaking more with you. Wishing you good health and fulfillment.



**Dr. Brittany Long** is a naturopathic physician with True Health Medicine, PC, a group practice in Tualatin serving the whole family with naturopathic primary care and acupuncture. The clinic is located at 8555 SW Tualatin Rd, 503-691-0901.