



Working in sports therapy



Sports enthusiast Michael Cole chose a degree in sports therapy before setting up his own sports injury business

With a strong interest in sport, and A levels in physical education, English and business studies, Michael chose the BSc Honours in Sports Therapy degree course at London Metropolitan University. His chosen career has already brought him huge satisfaction and even a role in a high profile football television drama series.

Were you interested in sport at school?

Yes, I originally wanted to be a professional footballer. Sadly I didn't make it due to injuries, although I still play locally for Old Brentwood's FC in Essex. I also play squash regularly now and go to the gym. I do like to keep fit as well as getting other people fit. I recently completed the Commando Challenge in Exmouth - it's a 7 mile endurance and assault course

Why did you choose the business route?

While I was in my last year at University I did some work experience at Dagenham and Redbridge Football Club in Essex which was really good for building confidence. It also gave me a good insight into the profession. We had a sports injury clinic at the university as well and that helped too. I really enjoyed the rehabilitation aspect of my degree and the practical learning so I suppose, starting my own business, when I finished my degree, was a natural progression.

Is there a typical week for you?

Being a self-employed Sports Therapist you don't generally have a 'typical week'. Currently I am at my private clinic around three days a week and lecture in Sports Injuries and Body Massage for two days, whilst also studying

for a Post Graduate Certificate in Education. I also work a couple of evenings with a football club. A few months ago I would also have had to fit in a number of days on set for Dream Team!

What about your starring TV role?

Well, I wouldn't have said it was a starring role! I was originally asked to be the sports injury consultant for Sky One's 'Dream Team' series; it's a football focused drama. They wanted someone to advise on the injury scenes and show them how to make the treatment and rehab scenes realistic.

As a sports therapist it was fun, once I understood how a production works. I had to set up rehabilitation drills for particular scenes, advise actors on how to pronounce anatomical terms and advise them on what action would usually be taken in a specific circumstance. Being called upon to do some minor acting, including my own dialogue was a major bonus, but slightly daunting to say the least: I had to hark back to my student days of revising muscle attachments to help remember my lines! Overall, the experience was amazing as I was able to closely observe actors and directors at work - something which interests me as I am a real amateur film enthusiast.

But this wasn't your first TV work?

No, that's quite true, I worked on the '118-118' television ads for Directory Enquiries. I'm sure you remember the two runners. My main role there was to help minimise injury risk to them. I put them through a series of warm-up and cool-down procedures and had to assess and treat any injuries they picked up during filming.

Do you enjoy this aspect of your job?

Yes I do and we now provide sports therapy as a service to TV and Film production companies but it isn't always as glamorous or as easy as it might look. Working as a TV advisor requires flexibility and dedication - some days may require you to be on set for two hours, some for 14 hours.

What would you say is the best thing about being a Sports Therapist?

Being able to work with different people and in sport most of the time - I couldn't sit behind a desk!

What qualities do you think are needed to be a Sports Therapist?

They should definitely be friendly, positive and motivated - these factors help you get on with colleagues and exude the right message to patients.

What advice would you give to anyone thinking about starting a career in Sports Therapy?

The Society of Sports Therapists website is a good starting point for information. The Society is the lead organisation for sports therapists in the UK. You will find a list there of all the universities which have collaborative agreements with the Society for the BSc Honours Degree in Sports Therapy.

What about the future?

My future plans include expanding my clinic STAR and I would really like to work full-time with a Premiership Football Club.



Michael is a member of The Society of Sports Therapists, the lead professional body for Sports Therapists in the UK.

For further information about sports therapy courses and careers contact the society on 0845 600 2613 or admin@society-of-sports-therapists.org www.society-of-sports-therapists.org

Further information on Michael's STAR Sports Therapy and Rehabilitation Clinic can be found at www.starinjuries.com