

# ORTHOTIC & PROSTHETIC PROGRAMS

## SPOKANE FALLS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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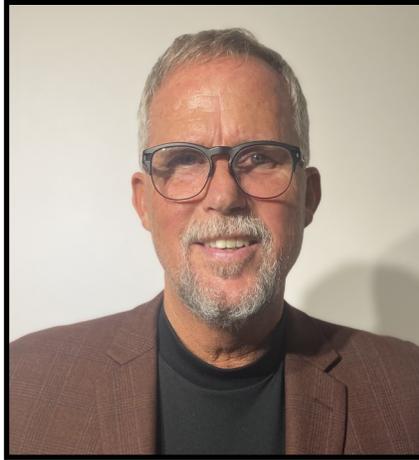
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## THE NEED FOR CERTIFIED TECHNICIANS WILL INCREASE



The national market for Orthotic & Prosthetic services is evolving, with an increasing emphasis on custom-fitted and custom fabricated devices. The demand for these devices will continue to grow due to people living longer, more amputations related to diabetes, and projected increases in various types of orthopedic injuries.

With only six Orthotic and Prosthetic Technician Programs accredited in the USA by the National Commission on Orthotic and Prosthetic Education (NCOPE) and the Commission on accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP), there is growing concern that there may not be enough qualified technicians in the future. The need for certified O&P technicians is expected to outpace the number of students who are graduating, creating a scenario where trained technicians

– including those just entering the field – will have many options for where they choose to work and live.

Among the various professional and support positions in the O&P industry, Certified Orthotic Technicians (CTO), Certified Prosthetic Technicians (CTP) and Certified Prosthetic/Orthotic Technicians (CTOP) could be in the highest demand. In addition to job opportunities in O&P clinics, there are central fabrication facilities and companies that rely on the skills of O&P technicians to manufacture custom prosthetic and orthotic devices.

Historically, within the O&P field, many technicians have received on-the-job training and never attended an accredited program. While this creates an alternative pathway for technicians to gain experience and become certified, new students coming out of an accredited O&P technician program possess the core knowledge to immediately be a valued employee for an O&P business.

While knowledge of technology and fabrication methods is paramount, technicians who want to excel in the O&P industry should also invest time in understanding factors that can impact the financial health of an O&P business. By doing topic searches on the internet, it is easy for technicians to learn about government regulations, Medicare and medical insurance programs, component manufacturers, emerging technology, and information about their company's competitors.

To get ahead and bring added value to their employer, technicians can also actively engage with others in the O&P profession. One way to stay informed about a wide range of topics that can impact O&P providers is to read journals and online information available from organizations such as the American Orthotic & Prosthetic Association (AOPA), the American Academy of Orthotists and Prosthetists (AAOP), and the Amputee Coalition. Employers can also invest in their technicians by sponsoring attendance at national or regional continuing education courses.

For O&P technicians, there will be plenty of opportunities to help improve mobility, function and quality of life for patients who experience injuries, amputations or health conditions that require O&P care. Once you are established in the industry, there are also opportunities to continue your education to become a certified clinician. Unlike other industries where careers are less stable, skilled O&P technicians, with a good work ethic and ability to get along with others, will have job security and many opportunities for a productive and meaningful career.

Rick Riley

**Rick Riley has worked in the O&P industry for nearly 25 years, including 16 years as the CEO of Townsend Design, a leading manufacturer of lower extremity orthopedic braces. He is a member of the board of directors for the American Orthotic & Prosthetic Association and the California Orthotic and Prosthetic Association.**

## 2020 CONTINUING EDUCATION COURSES

Offered by the O&P Technology Programs Spokane Falls Community College

### TECHNICIANS and CAD/CAM: Who, What, When, Whatever!

Friday, March 13, 2020

**Registration Fee: Early \$245 until February 21; Late \$320 February 22 – March 11, 2020** (includes refreshments, lunch, parking pass)

A one-day continuing education course for O&P technicians focusing on their role and involvement with the CAD processes in a central fab or clinical practice. The one-day CE course will include 4-hours of education on prosthetic CAD processes and 4-hours on orthotic CAD processes establishing the role of the technician in the workflow. Each presentation will include descriptions of the entire CAD/CAM workflow and the extent of the tech's involvement and role. Demonstrations of vacuum forming and laminating over the foam models will be presented with time for questions and answers throughout the day.

**This course is approved for 9 CEU credits ABC; 10 CEU credits BOC; 6 MCE credits OPC.**

### INTRO TO FABRICATING WITH HIGH CONSISTENCY SILICONE RUBBER

Friday, May 1, 2020

**Registration Fee: Early \$295 until April 10; Late \$370 April 11 – April 29, 2020** (includes refreshments, lunch, parking pass)

HCR silicone rubber is a versatile material that is inert, very flexible, and suitable for prosthetic use. Available as a two-part system, this compound is mixed with the help of a two-roll mill and baked at a low temperature to achieve cured, durable rubber in several compatible formulations that produce different finished firmness. Add new power to your problem-solving capabilities with these adaptable, elastic, ultra-strong materials making liners, partial feet, and hand and finger appliances. All attendees will have the opportunity to make a silicone liner during the hands-on lab. **This course has been approved for 8 CEU credits ABC; 9.25 CEU credits BOC; 6 MCE credits OPC.**

### PEDORTHIC BOOT CAMP

Friday and Saturday May 29 – May 30, 2020

**Registration Fee: Early \$350 Until May 8; Late \$425 May 9 – May 27** (includes refreshments, lunch, parking pass)

This hands-on course will provide practitioners and participants with additional techniques and knowledge in the areas of clinical Pedorthic evaluation, general foot and ankle biomechanics, diagnoses specific orthotic modification, extrinsic posting, advanced shoe modification, and casting techniques. The course objective is to provide practical skills and knowledge that can be directly applied in the field by attending practitioners. Participants are required to bring a pair of old athletic shoes that will be used for the modification aspect of the course. **This course has been approved for 12.5 CEU credits ABC; 14 CEU credits BOC; 12 MCE credits OPC.**

### ORTHOTIC FITTER Pre-Cert/CE Course SFCC Campus Online begins 09/28/20; Ends 10/26/20 Lab October 30 – 31, 2020

**Registration Fee: Early \$475 until August 31; Late \$ 525.00 September 1 – September 23** (includes refreshments, lunch, parking pass)

An orthotic fitter is an allied health professional specifically educated and trained in the provision of certain orthoses. This includes fitting, adjusting, or modifying devices that reflect the level of education and training received. This is a hybrid course with 25-hours online didactic and a 16-hour in-class fitting lab conducted in Spokane, Washington on October 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020. This course is intended as the pre-certification course required by the ABC and BOC and as a refresher course for experienced orthotic fitters. **This course has been approved for 32 Category II credits ABC; 40.25 CEUs (37.25 Scientific and 3 Business) BOC.**

#### FOR INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT

ruthie.dearing@sfcc.spokane.edu (509) 533-3231

### PROSTHETIC TECHNICIAN

PENTLAND'S is looking to hire an experienced Prosthetic Technician for its location in Prince George, BC, Canada. The job will entail working with a Certified Prosthetist to manufacture prosthetic treatments for all level of amputees. Experience with plastic work, laminations and finishing a must. Individual must be motivated, have good organizational skills and able to interact with the clients. Starting salary of up to \$33.00/hr for the right candidate.

Contact [g Dillon@pentlands.ca](mailto:g Dillon@pentlands.ca)



## IN THE FLURRY OF FABRICATION, EVERY DAY IS FINALS DAY!



In the field of Orthotics and Prosthetics, there are lots of ways of making things, doing projects, creating and completing devices. There is the easy way, the fast way, the most efficient way, the methodical way, the best way, your way, and my way.

While each of these ways work, some work better than others. At Spokane Falls Community College, I learned the fundamentals of O and P fabrication. We were taught that speed and accuracy were the two most important qualities to becoming a successful technician. In technician school, every day focused on learning, practicing and achieving these standards. It was not until I was in the field, in a fast-paced working lab, that I finally realized the importance of doing things right the first time, even if it takes a little longer.

For students just entering the field, remember that the way we're taught in school is just the foundation, and that there are, in fact, many different ways to achieve the end result. Being successful involves exploring and developing as many different techniques as possible. That's why it's so important in the first few months to listen and learn. Be open to trying different ways of doing things until you develop your skills and find the technique that works best for you and that meets--or exceeds--your employer's requirements.

The value of a skilled technician is the ability to do a good job regardless of the complexity of the project or the limitations of the physical setting. In the classroom setting, there was lots of time, plenty of room and many great tools right at your fingertips. But in the real-world work place, there can be a variety of differences. When I'm fabricating a project, the most important factors are my physical workspace, enough time and the appropriate tools for the job.

### **Looking for a place to work:**

Whether a new graduate or a seasoned expert, when interviewing for a job, ask yourself the following questions:

- ◆ What type of people do I want to be around?
- ◆ What kinds of devices do I want to make?
- ◆ What work environment works best for me?
- ◆ What do I want to learn?
- ◆ What do I want to contribute to the field of O and P?

These fundamental questions are necessary to identify the optimal situation. Finding the right lab with the right team of people can be the ultimate factor in your success or failure. Before you meet for an interview, request a full 8-hour job-shadowing visit and have lunch with your future co-workers. See first-hand what it will be like working in this practice or central fab. Can you imagine working in this lab and making devices while communicating and working well with the coworkers?

### **Visiting and Interviewing:**

When you are looking for a job, visiting sites and talking to people, the most important thing, just like you learned all those years ago, is to be yourself. Not only will you be more comfortable, but those around you will be more comfortable, too. Personalities are a large part of the O&P world and your best chance of success is finding common ground with your co-workers so that you can form a solid team. This dynamic leads to the most enjoyable and productive working environment.

Luckily, there are lots of different jobs in the field. Be honest about what you can do and make. Realize that some companies are looking to fill a specific position and it may or may not be the best fit for you. Be patient and find a job that you are excited about and be realistic when describing your skills. Fresh out of school, you will have favorite tasks; as well as tasks that require more practice. Develop your strengths and have a plan to improve any areas that are challenging for you.

As technicians, we always need to work on improving our skills and being aware of new developments in the field. Talk to other technicians in--and outside of--the field of O and P. Develop specialized skills with your job and be well-rounded in all aspects of your work, recognizing that the more information you have the better prepared you will be. At times, you might be the only technician working at the location, so being self-reliant is critical.

Get Good at Making, Get Good Fast! Timing is the key to making a project turn-out well. You can always cut another piece of plastic and re-pull a project, but you may not have the time to heat it and let it cool. Each project is similar from the previous and different from the next, but each person for whom you are building the device is unique. Compare the project only to itself. The trick is--determining what is best and correct for each individual or fabricated device.

As O and P technicians, our job is to understand the workflow, the movement of materials, and how the pieces fit together. Being resourceful, flexible, and adaptable are extremely valuable traits for a well-rounded and successful technician.

### **Joshua M Unterman**

Certified Orthotic Technician, UCSF  
SFCC O & P Technology Program Graduate 2016

## ALTHEA'S FOOTWEAR SOLUTIONS - LAKEWOOD, WASHINGTON

### Job Description: On-Staff Certified Pedorthist

**Althea's Footwear Solutions**, a medical footwear supplier and retail shoe store, was established 19 years ago with practices in Everett and Lakewood, Washington. We now seek two more Certified Pedorthists to join our team of 8 Certified Pedorthists.

Our team assists with the provision of care for insured patients, including diabetic patients and others with special footwear needs. We work with the Veterans Administration, Medicare and most insurance companies fabricating custom foot orthotics in-house.

Responsibilities include, but are not limited to the following:

- \* Assist in the evaluation, casting, fitting, and delivery of shoes and pedorthic devices.
- \* Ensure that all products and services are ready and available for scheduled delivery appointments.
- \* Enter into patient files all bio-mechanical evaluations, patient history and pertinent patient issues in a clear concise manner.
- \* Assort shoe work including the modification of foot orthotics and shoes.
- \* Demonstrate knowledge and skills working with machinery, including grinders and buffing wheels.
- \* Assist on the retail sales floor as needed, being comfortable in a retail environment.
- \* Project a friendly and professional demeanor when interacting with patients and retail customers.
- \* Provide excellent written and verbal communication skills in person and on the phone.
- \* Work with the computer database and point-of-sale system after training.
- \* Work quickly and efficiently in a fast-paced environment seeing 6-10 patients per day.
- \* Maintain a clean, organized, and safe work environment.
- \* Enjoy being part of a collaborative, professional healthcare team.

If you are a C. Ped with an outgoing personality and a high degree of professionalism, we invite you to join our team of specialists at Althea's. Please respond to: [althea@altheas.net](mailto:althea@altheas.net)

## 2019 TECH CE COURSE

