

## Working life (SEM)

This page provides useful information about the roles and responsibilities of SEM physicians, where they work, who they work with and what they feel about their role.

"SEM allows me to combine a broad-based medical training and practice with a love of physical activity, sport and exercise. It is what I wanted to do from the moment I started at medical school and now provides a stimulating and varied working life." - **Consultant in sport and exercise medicine**

### How your time is spent

There is no such thing as a typical day for a SEM doctor. It can vary from outpatient clinics reviewing sports injuries, to pitch-side immediate care at the highest level of elite sport. Some SEM doctors may run specialist clinics performing image-guided interventional procedures while others may be concerned with assessment and rehabilitation of military personnel.

There are many opportunities for research and several SEM doctors are employed by universities, actively involved in education and research.

The work of the SEM doctor includes the field of exercise medicine which is becoming more relevant to the current healthcare landscape. It is envisaged that doctors with specialist skills in exercise testing and prescription will be used in the delivery of exercise referral schemes, specialist exercise medicine clinics and to educate and advise on the use of exercise to promote healthy lifestyles, treat and prevent chronic diseases.

### Working hours

The type of work and working hours for a Sport and Exercise Medicine doctor can vary greatly depending on the role and type of work completed. On a full time NHS contract an SEM doctor would fulfil a standard job plan, however most SEM doctors have a varied portfolio career and working hours can vary greatly.

- Expand / collapse  
Who you will work with?

Doctors in sport and exercise medicine work closely alongside:

- physiotherapists [1]
- occupational therapists [2]
- coaching staff
- podiatrists [3]

- dietitians [4]
- sports scientists
- psychologists [5]
- strength and conditioning coaches
- Exercise rehabilitation specialists
- medical secretaries and administrative staff [6]

They also work closely with specialists in:

- radiology [7]
- orthopaedics [8]
- cardiology [9]
- rheumatology [10]
- rehabilitation [11]
- neurology [12]
- surgery [13]
- oncology [14]
- endocrinology [15]

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Attractions and challenges of the role

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The variety of work available to SEM doctors provides the opportunity to develop their career in a way that suits their individual medical and sporting interests. SEM has an enormous application in public health, with the potential for an SEM doctor to work across both primary and secondary care [16] it is one of the few specialties with such a broad application.

On an individual basis, working in sport can occasionally be isolating with long hours often spent away from home and away from immediate contact with peers in SEM. Working with sports participants, teams and associations, especially at the elite level, carries with it pressures and demands that can be very different to that of a 'standard' medical career. Despite some of these challenges it is an extremely rewarding speciality with high levels of patient satisfaction and exciting opportunities for working with a vast array of patients from 'weekend warriors' to elite sports professionals.

The opportunity to improve individual and population health using physical activity and the ability to treat musculoskeletal conditions means that SEM doctors can help everyone not just sportsmen.

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**Source URL:** <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/roles-doctors/medicine/sport-and-exercise-medicine/working-life>

### Links

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[15] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/medicine/endocrinology-and-diabetes>

[16] [https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Secondary\\_care](https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Secondary_care)