

Exploring the path of a Veterinary Technician Specialist in Physical Rehabilitation

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Embarking on a career in veterinary medicine is a noble pursuit, driven by deep love for animals and the desire to improve their lives. For many, the journey begins with becoming a veterinary technician, a role that contains medical expertise with compassionate care. Some of us, however, will take it a step further, and decide to specialize in what makes us passionate about veterinary medicine. For me, it was physical rehabilitation. I remember seeing my very first limping dog, and wondered what I could do to make it better. He was an older dog, and surgery was not really an option. So, what WERE the options?

It was a long time ago, and physical rehabilitation it was in its infancy where I am from. At the time, I was working with a veterinarian that had an affinity for orthopaedic surgery. She showed me how motion and mobility can affect just about everything. I caught the bug and needed to know more.

I researched continuing education programs and found the Canine Rehabilitation Institute.

Education and Experience in the Making...

During my certification, I gained in depth knowledge about the mechanics of canine movement, pain management, surgical procedures and so much more. It was eye-opening for me to now have the knowledge to help these animals both for conservative management or post operative to improve function, or even improve performance for working dogs. There was nothing more rewarding to me.

When the North American Association of Veterinary Technicians finally recognized physical rehabilitation as a specialty, I knew my passion had driven me towards something great, and I found the Academy of Physical Rehabilitation Veterinary Technicians

Now, the APRVT is different than every other specialty. All other specialty associations do not have a certification that is attributed to them initially. They will historically have to practice with a specialist for the course of five years, and then can apply to become a specialist in their respective fields. They are different. We are already educated in our specific field. So why pursue a veterinary technician specialty in physical rehabilitation if we are already trained?

Knowledge of Everything but Nothing all at Once

This has been a question that certified canine rehabilitation practitioners have been asking themselves, and limiting themselves from becoming a veterinary technician specialist in physical rehabilitation. In my experience, attaining my VTS in physical rehabilitation has been a game changer. While I'd been practicing at that time for 12 years, when I read the requirements from the APRVT in order to apply for the examination, I knew that this was a step up from anything I knew before, and that this would set me aside from the crowd.

While the application is strenuous, it allowed me to I put my knowledge to the test, and let's face it, we all like a challenge. This also allowed me to discover more about myself, and my capabilities than I knew was possible. And that was just the application!

My application was not accepted on the first try, I made some crucial errors along the way, but now knew what I needed to do to fix them, let alone learn from them!

Self Realization

Once my application was accepted, now came the studying. During this phase of my journey, I discovered that what I had learned during my initial certification, was not nearly as in-depth as I thought. Somethings were review, but many things were NEW to me (to my surprise). Which was eye opening again to say the least! This is when I knew I made the right choice. This is when I knew that the acquisition of veterinary technician specialist designation, would make me just that, a specialist. It was so much more than the certification alone could have ever given me.

I'm not going to lie, it is not easy. It really did challenge me and push me to the brink of my sanity at times. But when it was done, I knew that I was capable of so much more than I initially thought. Sometimes, we need something that challenging to show us who are really are inside. To show us that we are capable, knowledgeable and we will not shy away from a challenge, because let's face it, physical rehabilitation is challenging. It is very rare that you see two cases they're exactly the same. At times, using your imagination to accomplish therapeutic exercises with patients can be an interesting feat, but my VTS gave me so many more tools in my toolbox.

So please, ask the questions, push yourself to know more and don't be afraid a challenge. It'll be worth it.