

**Making Everything Easier!™**

# **Medical Transcription**

FOR  
**DUMMIES®**

## **Learn to:**

- Navigate medical transcription training
- Explore opportunities in this exciting field
- Use your healthcare experience to make extra money as a medical transcriptionist

**Anne Martinez**  
*Medical Transcriptionist*



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# Medical Transcription For Dummies®

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[www.dummies.com/cheatsheet/medicaltranscription](http://www.dummies.com/cheatsheet/medicaltranscription) to view this book's cheat sheet.

## Table of Contents

[Introduction](#)

[About This Book](#)

[Conventions Used in This Book](#)

[What You're Not to Read](#)

[Foolish Assumptions](#)

[How This Book Is Organized](#)

[Part I: So, You Want to Be a Medical Transcriptionist](#)

[Part II: Getting the Job Done: Medical Transcriptionist How-To](#)

[Part III: Looking At the Types of Reports You'll Transcribe](#)

[Part IV: Employment Matters: Landing and Managing a Medical Transcriptionist Job](#)

[Part V: The Part of Tens](#)

[Part VI: Appendixes](#)

[Icons Used in This Book](#)

## Where to Go from Here

### Part I: So, You Want to Be a Medical Transcriptionist

#### Chapter 1: Just the Facts

##### Getting the Skinny on the Medical Transcription Field

Where the jobs are  
How much they pay  
What it takes to break in

Looking at What Goes into Good Transcription  
Anticipating What You'll Transcribe  
Making a Career of Medical Transcription

#### Chapter 2: The What, How, Who, and Why of Medical Transcription

##### What Medical Transcriptionists Do

Officially: It's about documentation  
Unofficially: Critical contributions to  
patient care

How Medical Transcription Works  
Who Makes for Good Medical  
Transcriptionists: The Traits You Need

Knowledge of medical terminology and  
procedures  
English grammar and punctuation skills

Top-notch reference skills

Keen listening skills

Ability to work under pressure

Ability to work with little or no supervision

A perfectionistic streak

Laserlike focus

Assessing yourself: Do you have what it takes?

## Why Medical Transcription Can Be a Great Career

You can train at home

You can do it from almost anywhere

It's fascinating and intellectually challenging

You make a difference in patient care

Your work schedule is often flexible

Nobody cares how old you are, what you look like, or how you dress

## Chapter 3: Getting a Handle on Job Prospects and Employment Options

### Where You Can Work

For a physician or physician group

For hospitals

For a medical-transcription service

### Your Job Prospects

Watching the occupational forecasts

Knowing the facts on speech recognition technology

Going E: The move to electronic medical records

Grasping the impact of global outsourcing

## Financial Facts

How much you can expect to earn

How you're paid: By the line or by the hour?

Employee or independent contractor

Health insurance and other benefits

## Chapter 4: Becoming a Working Medical Transcriptionist

Getting off the Launch Pad: What You'll Need to Break In

Educational credentials

Professional certification

## Getting Educated

Scoping out the medical transcriptionist curriculum

Seeing where you can study

Comparing your options

Paying for your education

## Part II: Getting the Job Done: Medical Transcription How-To

## Chapter 5: Medical Language Boot Camp

### The Anatomy of a Medical Word

Word roots: Brushing up on your Latin and Greek

Prefixes: Looking at what comes first

Word endings: There's a suffix for that

Getting to the meaning

### Commonly Confused Medical Words

#### Drugs and Dosages

Generic versus brand name

Dosages: How much how often

## Chapter 6: Formatting: The Basics

### Report Headings and Subheadings

#### Capitalization

Drugs, diseases, and organisms

Titles of people, places, and trademarked things

#### Punctuation

Separators: Commas, semicolons, and colons

Connectors: Hyphens and apostrophes

#### Numbers

Arabic, ordinal, and Roman  
Guidelines for transcribing numbers  
Fractions  
Pluralizing numbers  
Ranges and ratios

## Abbreviations and Acronyms

When to spell them out  
When to leave them be  
How to avoid dangerous abbreviations

## Chapter 7: Cracking the Code: Deciphering Difficult Dictation

Aiming for Efficiency  
Filling in the Blanks, Step by Step

Step 1: Play with the controls  
Step 2: Leave it blank (for now).  
Step 3: Consider the context  
Step 4: Refer to previous reports  
Step 5: When in doubt, leave it out

## Understanding Heavy Accents

Relax and then dive in  
Common tendencies of ESL dictators

## Chapter 8: Mastering the Key Medical Transcription References

Considering the Source



## Tracking Down Medical Words and Phrases

Beyond definitions: Mining a medical dictionary

Medical word books

Abbreviation and acronym finders

## Nailing Down Drugs and Dosages

Top drug references for medical transcriptionists

Clearing up cloudy medication details

Checking Up on Laboratory Tests

Consulting the Book (of Style)

Calling on Colleagues for Help

## Chapter 9: Meeting the Need for Speed

Mastering the Number-One Speed Tool: Word Expanders

Choosing a word expander

Becoming an expander ninja

Taking Advantage of Macros

Your Computer on Steroids: Using Dual Monitors

## Part III: Looking at the Types of Reports You'll Transcribe

### Chapter 10: History and Physical Examination

[Overview](#)  
[Chief Complaint](#)  
[History of Present Illness](#)  
[Review of Past History](#)

[Past Medical History](#)  
[Past Surgical History](#)  
[Family History](#)  
[Social History](#)

[Allergies](#)  
[Current Medications](#)  
[Review of Systems](#)  
[Physical Examination](#)  
[Diagnostic Studies](#)  
[Assessment and Plan](#)

## [Chapter 11: Consultation](#)

[Overview](#)  
[Consulting and Primary Physicians](#)  
[Reason for Consultation](#)  
[Details of Present Illness](#)  
[Review of Past History](#)  
[Current Symptoms](#)  
[Laboratory and Diagnostic Findings](#)  
[Physical Examination](#)  
[Impression and Recommendations](#)

## [Chapter 12: Operative Reports](#)

[Overview](#)  
[Physicians and Assistants](#)

Preoperative and Postoperative Diagnoses

Procedure Performed

Anesthesia

Indications for Procedure

Findings

Description of Procedure

Disposition

Additional Headings

Complications

Tourniquet time

Estimated blood loss

Drains

Hardware and implants

Specimens

Sewing Up the Case

## Chapter 13: Discharge and Death Summaries

Discharge Summary

Overview

Admitting and Discharge Diagnoses

History

Hospital Course

Laboratory Data

Procedures Performed

Physical Examination on Discharge

Discharge Medications

Plan/Disposition

Discharge Instructions

Additional headings

Death Summary

Chapter 14: Beyond the Big Four: Other Common Reports

Procedure Notes

Indications for Procedure

Medications

Procedure in Detail

Findings and Recommendations

Chart and Progress Notes

Radiology and Imaging Reports

Study details

Reason for Study

Technique

Findings

Impression

Summary of Labor and Delivery

Psychiatric Assessment

Presenting Problem

Past Psychiatric History

Substance Abuse

Past Medical History

Family History

Social History

Current Medications

[Mental Status Examination](#)  
[Diagnoses](#)  
[Treatment Plan](#)

## [Independent Medical Evaluation](#)

[Introduction](#)  
[History and Present Complaints](#)  
[Physical Findings](#)  
[Diagnostic Studies](#)  
[Records Review](#)  
[Diagnosis](#)  
[Conclusion](#)  
[Physician Certification](#)

## [Part IV: Employment Matters: Landing and Managing a Medical Transcriptionist Job](#)

### [Chapter 15: Medical Transcriptionist Job Hunting](#)

#### [Getting Organized: Prelaunch Planning](#)

[Identifying your perfect job](#)  
[Keeping a log](#)  
[Creating a cheat sheet](#)

#### [Knowing Where to Find Job Opportunities](#)

[Your training school's job resources](#)  
[Medical transcription websites](#)  
[All-purpose job boards](#)

Crafting Your Résumé  
Facing and Acing Employment Tests

Conquering the mind game  
Knocking off the knowledge  
assessment  
Meeting the transcription challenge  
Tools to use

Evaluating and Comparing Job Offers

Questions to ask before accepting a  
job offer  
Delaying acceptance, tactfully  
Being mindful of your long-term goals

Chapter 16: Managing On-the-Job Issues

Your First Job: Knowing What to Expect  
Navigating the Quality Assessment  
Process

Understanding the challenges  
Challenging a quality assessment  
penalty

HIPAA and Patient Privacy: What You Need  
to Know

Understanding HIPAA regulations  
Safeguarding patient privacy

Chapter 17: Climbing the Career Ladder

[Mapping Out Common Career Paths](#)  
[Keeping Current through Continuing Education](#)

[Where to find courses and seminars](#)  
[How to fund your ongoing learning](#)

[Joining Up: Professional Organizations for Medical Transcriptionists](#)

[Association for Healthcare Documentation Integrity](#)  
[American Health Information Management Association](#)

[Getting Certified](#)  
[Switching Employers the Right Way](#)

## [Chapter 18: Working from Home](#)

[Staying Connected: Internet Service](#)  
[Choosing a Computer Setup](#)

[Laptop or desktop?](#)  
[Specs: Operating system, hard drive, and RAM](#)  
[Monitors: How to choose?](#)  
[Keyboard](#)  
[Mouse or trackball](#)

[Scoping Out Transcription Gear](#)

[Headphones](#)

[Foot pedals](#)

[Tackling the Technical Details](#)

[Protecting your assets](#)

[Backing up](#)

[Finding tech support](#)

[Keeping Work in Its Place \(And Interruptions Out\)](#)

[Chapter 19: Financial Considerations for Independent Contractors](#)

[Keeping Good Records](#)

[Tracking your income and expenses](#)

[Keeping the paper trail](#)

[Paying Uncle Sam](#)

[Understanding self-employment tax](#)

[Making estimated tax payments](#)

[Introducing 1099s](#)

[Adding a Schedule C to your tax return](#)

[Deducting everything you can](#)

[Getting Insured](#)

[Health insurance](#)

[Errors-and-omissions insurance](#)



Homeowner's and renter's insurance riders

## Chapter 20: Staying Healthy for the Long Haul

Go Ergonomic or Go Home: Preventing Aches and Pains

Your workstation: Assume the position

Your work environment

Keeping Carpal Tunnel Syndrome at Bay

Dodging Computer Vision Syndrome

Avoiding Stuffed Pretzel Syndrome

Beating Burnout

## Part V: The Part of Tens

### Chapter 21: Ten Keys to Career Success

Use the Right Tools

Craft a Regular Work Routine and Stick to It

Become a Master of Faster

Mind Your Body

Project Professionalism

Get a Mentor

Tune In to the MT Network

Keep Your Balance

Don't Get Sucked into a Negativity Vortex

Be Adaptable, Embrace Change, Nourish Your Career

## Chapter 22: Ten Myths about Medical Transcription

You'll Make \$50,000 a Year Working from Home

You Can Work and Take Care of the Kids at the Same Time

If You Can Type Really Fast, You're in Like Flynn

You, Too, Can Become an MT with Little or No Training

Speech Recognition Technology Will Make Medical Transcriptionists Obsolete

Electronic Health Records Will Eliminate the Need for Medical Transcriptionists

Most Medical Transcription Work is Being Outsourced Overseas

Getting Certified Is the Best Way to Break Into Medical Transcription

It's Low-Stress Work

Real Men Don't Become Medical Transcriptionists

## Chapter 23: Ten Great Online Resources

Meet at the Corner on Facebook

Check Multiple Sources with OneLook

Find What's-Her-Name from Somewhere

Solve Drug Problems

[Samplify Your Work Life](#)  
[Talk Productively about Productivity](#)  
[Get Industrial-Strength Updates](#)  
[Go Shopping for Transcription Gear](#)  
[Healthy Computing in Exquisite Detail](#)  
[Tax Advice Straight from the IRS](#)

## [Part VI: Appendixes](#)

[Appendix A: Glossary](#)  
[Appendix B: Commonly Dictated Phrases and  
How to Transcribe Them](#)

[A para what? Transcribing obstetric  
history](#)  
[Labor-in-progress reports](#)  
[Heart sounds and murmurs](#)  
[Transcribing EKG findings](#)

[Appendix C: Sample Reports](#)

[Cheat Sheet](#)

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**by Anne Martinez**



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# About the Author

**Anne Martinez** and medical transcription met for the first time in 2005. She had no idea what she was getting in to. Desiring a little “regular work” to round out her self-employment income, she took to the Internet and began researching work-at-home jobs. Medical transcription seemed a perfect match for her love of language and interest in all things medical. Her first step was to look for an introductory how-to book, but there wasn’t one. She determined on the spot that she would write it; first, though, on to becoming a medical transcriptionist!

In 2006, after about a year of intense studying at home, Anne graduated from the M-TEC online medical transcription program. Soon thereafter, she was employed full time (despite her original intention to work part time) and garnering the benefits of health insurance she didn’t have to pay for entirely herself, a steady income, and actual paid vacation days! She later switched to a part-time independent contractor position to gain a more flexible schedule and take advantage of additional opportunities.

During her time as an MT, Anne transcribed many, many medical reports for hospitals and physician groups, including history and physical exams, discharge summaries, operative reports, consultations, office notes, and an amazing variety of diagnostic procedures.

She’s currently wrapped up in writing projects and managing her successful website, GoCertify ([www.gocertify.com](http://www.gocertify.com)), so she’s put her MT career on hold. However, it stands ready in the wings, waiting for her return should the need arise.

## Dedication



To all the hockey players I've ever played with or against, especially the teams I've been honored to be part of: May your skates always be sharp, the ice hard, and the Zamboni working.

P.S. May your medical records contain only routine office notes.

## **Author's Acknowledgments**

A book is rarely the fruit of a single author, and this one is no different. Many people participated in shaping it and packing it with the most relevant and accessible information possible. My first shout-out goes to Patty Urban, my go-to resource for everything MT since practically day one of my MT career and the natural pick to serve as technical editor of *Medical Transcription For Dummies*.

To Ann Morgan and the other MTs who hang out at the Medical Transcription Networking Corner on Facebook, thank you for sharing your experiences and opinions on all things MT. Carol Butler, Cindy Leach, and Debi Shope made time to contribute thoughtful MT wisdom and advice despite intensely busy schedules.

Others who were instrumental to the creation of this book include Lindsay Lefevere, who gave me the chance to write the book I've been thinking about since I signed up for my first MT course, and Matt Wagner, without whom I never would have met Lindsay. Elizabeth Kuball, project editor extraordinaire, dedicated her time and expertise to make sure this book became the best it could be. Many thanks also to Steve Elliot, who once again pointed me in the right direction when I told him there was a book I wanted to write. Extra kudos to Sara Devine, for relentlessly tracking down permissions and helping

keep the rest of my work life running while I focused on this book.

Special thanks to Dan McGovern for his support, encouragement, and friendship that helped carry this book and its author through an onslaught of deadlines, and to my teenage children, Evan and Rebecca, who basically surrendered me to this process and largely took care of themselves for the duration.

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# Introduction

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You've probably heard that medical transcription is a flexible career that you can do from home. Perhaps you're attracted to the idea of being part of the drama and intimate details of medical care, and medical transcription sounds like it would be very interesting work. Maybe you just want something, anything, you can do from home to earn a buck, and you're wondering if medical transcription could be it.

Despite what some advertisements might lead you to believe, it's not true that anyone willing to take a course can become a medical transcriptionist (MT) and earn big bucks working from home. It *is* true that it's interesting, challenging, and often flexible work. Many MTs do work from home. You can prepare for and launch an MT career without ever stepping out your front door, if you want to. For some people, it's a great career option, but it's not the right choice for everyone.

## About This Book

This isn't a textbook about how to become an MT. You don't need to read it cover to cover or even in order. Dip into the part you need, when you need it. Come back later and dip into a different section when you need that. Consider this a quick study guide, reusable reference, and career companion.

There's a lot of information, and even more misinformation, available about working as a medical transcriptionist. This book is here to help you sort fact from fiction, so you can decide if you want to become an MT, and if so, how to go about it. It's also designed to stand beside you and answer the questions that most commonly pop up after you get on the job.

# Conventions Used in This Book

I don't use many conventions in this book, but I do use a few:

- ✓ When I define a new term, I *italicize* it. You can find the definition nearby (often in parentheses).
- ✓ I use monofont for web and e-mail addresses. **Note:** When this book was printed, some web addresses may have needed to break across two lines of text. If that happened, rest assured that we haven't added extra characters (such as hyphens) to indicate the break. So, when using one of these web addresses, just type in exactly what you see in this book, pretending as though the line break doesn't exist.

## What You're Not to Read

The shaded boxes that appear here and there are sidebars. They include extra information that's interesting or fun. The material in them isn't essential to understanding the topic at hand, and you can bypass them without missing out on key concepts.

The Technical Stuff icon identifies extras included for people who like to know the details behind things. If you're not one of them, it's okay to zip right past.

## Foolish Assumptions

I figure you've probably picked up this book for one of the following reasons:

- ✔ You're thinking about becoming an MT and you want to know what the job entails and how to get started.
- ✔ You're already an MT student and you picked up this book to help you get off to a flying start.
- ✔ You're a working MT who's as obsessed with learning and growing as you've always been.

I also assume that you want to get straight to business and not waste time lollygagging around.

## How This Book Is Organized

This book is broken into parts that parallel the journey to an MT career. It starts at the beginning with career exploration and moves on to identifying and mastering practical skills and then to landing and managing an MT job. The final part provides reference materials you can use to help you on the job.

Every chapter in *Medical Transcription For Dummies* is designed to be entirely self-contained. You can go through them in order or jump straight to whatever you need at the moment. This is one time when you can have something both ways.

## Part I: So, You Want to Be a Medical Transcriptionist

Before diving into a career in medical transcription, you'll want to know exactly what's involved and what to expect. This part will give you the basis to decide if medical transcription is a realistic career option for you, and if so, how to get off to a running start. It starts with an inside look at what MTs do on a