

My team of emergency medical responders was the first to arrive at the horrific scene. A young man attempting to cross Route 7 had been struck by a sports-utility-vehicle traveling 30 miles per hour and was now lying in the street writhing in pain. A focused physical examination confirmed our initial clinical suspicions: he had a compound fracture of the left tibia with obvious gross deformity. We rapidly immobilized the patient and transported him to the nearest trauma center. Three months later, we received an unexpected visitor at our EMS headquarters. It was the very same man, except now he was walking, unassisted. Naturally, we were all curious about the details of his miraculous recovery. We listened intently as he explained how his fractured tibia had been surgically repaired with an intramedullary nail. The young man graciously thanked us for our efforts, but we all knew that his ability to ambulate would not have been preserved without the work of the orthopaedic surgeons that had operated on him.

It was that experience during the summer before I began medical school that initially sparked my interest in orthopaedic surgery. From that encounter, I came to the realization that orthopaedists truly are miracle workers: they have the ability to bring about tremendous improvements in the quality of their patients' lives using revolutionary medical and surgical knowledge, state-of-the-art instruments and technology, as well as their bare hands. The opportunity to make such a profound difference continues to be my inspiration to become an orthopaedic surgeon.

During medical school, I have gained more insight into orthopaedics through observation of surgeries, attendance at lectures and grand rounds, engagement in basic science and clinical research, and participation in sub-internships. From this exploration, it has become evident that orthopaedic surgery is my ideal specialty for a variety of reasons. First of all, it is the only field that demands extensive knowledge of musculoskeletal anatomy, physiology, and pathology - the disciplines that I find most fascinating. Furthermore, given my inquisitive personality and my enthusiasm for research, entering a field that has ample opportunities for ongoing investigation is especially important to me. Orthopaedics is indeed such a field as it relies heavily on pioneering studies and evidence-based medicine. Orthopaedic surgeons also have the pleasure of working with their hands on a daily basis. As a person who enjoys carpentry and auto-repair in my free time, I take great pride in using my hands and the necessary tools to create new objects and to repair broken ones. For this reason, I am instinctively drawn to the hands-on nature of orthopaedic surgery. In my leisure time, I also enjoy watching and participating in athletics, particularly tennis, basketball, and soccer. Hence, I am particularly excited about the intricate relationship that orthopaedists have with athletes. Given all these factors, it comes to no surprise that I have found my orthopaedics rotations the most satisfying and that I have ultimately chosen to specialize in orthopaedic surgery.

As I move on to the next stage in my career, I would like to join a residency program that provides a balance of clinical, operative, and research experience. I also desire sufficient exposure to all the orthopaedic subspecialties so that I will have a firm grasp of the entire field of orthopaedics as well as the specific knowledge and skills to pursue a specialized career. My professional aspiration is to become a proficient and trusted orthopedic surgeon with the ability to assist patients in my community and to contribute to my field's wealth of academic knowledge. I am confident that I have the dedication and work ethic necessary to achieve this goal.