

PHYSICS CAREERS

Radiologist

A radiologist's job is to interpret many different kinds of medical images, including those from X rays, CT scans, fluoroscopy, and angiography. To learn more about radiology as a career, read the interview with Katherine Maturen, who works in a large, university-based hospital in Michigan.

What schooling did you receive in order to become a radiologist?

I attended four years of college, four years of medical school, and five years of specialty training in radiology.

What influenced your decision to become a radiologist?

During college, I studied a lot of different things and did not decide to go to medical school until my senior year. In medical school, I considered several different specialties before deciding on radiology. The fact that many radiologists seem to really enjoy their work was certainly influential.

What about radiology makes it interesting to you?

Radiology is primarily concerned with diagnosis, which can be like a fun puzzle in really challenging cases. I like the problem-solving aspect. I love anatomy, and I find the many different kinds of radiological images aesthetically pleasing. Another attraction of radiology is to see and understand disease processes.

What kinds of skills are important for a radiologist?

Good observation skills, attention to detail, and a strong knowledge of normal anatomy are essential for a radiologist. The best radiologists also have a thorough understanding of disease processes and the physics of imaging. Finally, the ability to develop rapport both with patients and medical colleagues is very important.



Katherine Maturen reviews a CT scan of the abdomen on a digital workstation.

What is your favorite thing about your job?

My favorite thing is reading studies and making diagnoses. The only thing I don't like is long hours and working all night, for obvious reasons!

What advice do you have for students who are interested in radiology?

You should pursue what interests you, regardless of other people's expectations of you or what you have done in the past. Try new things and follow your intellectual curiosity. Remember, you want a job that is actually interesting to you, not just a way to pay the bills.

If you think medical school sounds like too much school, consider radiological technologist programs, where you will be the one working with patients and actually taking most of the pictures. If you decide to go to medical school, don't spend all of your time in college taking science classes. Broaden your horizons and learn about things outside of medicine. And in medical school, pay attention in anatomy lab!

