

Physical Therapist and Rehabilitation

Is it in YOUR DNA?



What do Physical Therapists do?

Physical Therapists are members of a health care team that work to restore a patient's physical activity following an accident or illness. Physical Therapists use exercise and show patients how to properly use their bodies to gain strength and mobility. They get patients moving again and back to their lives. They:

- Develop treatment plans
- Perform hands-on patient care
- Work with accident victims, people with back problems, sprains and strains, arthritis sufferers, stroke victims and people who have had fractures or head injuries
- Supervise Physical Therapist Assistants
- Communicate with other health care practitioners

The perks

- Fulfilling—You get to make a difference every day
- Work with other health care practitioners
- Intellectually stimulating—you are never bored!
- You can have a flexible schedule

You'd be a good candidate if you are...

- Great with people
- Intelligent; a critical thinker
- Not afraid to take initiative
- Able to think on your feet
- Interested in fitness
- Empathetic
- Assertive
- A great team player
- Flexible and adaptable



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The opportunities

Physical Therapy is diverse. Almost every city has hospitals or clinics that employ Physical Therapists or you can own your own clinic. Here are just a few examples of where you can practice:

- Hospital
- Outpatient clinic
- Rehabilitation center
- Skilled nursing facility
- Home health care company
- Adult daycare center
- Colleges and universities as a faculty member
- Industry

The benefits

- Health care benefits
- Retirement benefits—including a pension!
- Paid-time off
- Employee discounts
- Tuition reimbursement
- Flexible schedules

The demand

- There are approximately 137,000 Physical Therapists in the U.S.
- Jobs for Physical Therapists will grow faster than average through 2012
- An aging population and lifesaving technology will create even more demand

The pay

Physical Therapist

- Hourly pay \$41 to \$55
- Annual pay \$85,500 to \$115,800

Physical Therapist Assistant

- Hourly pay \$28 to \$37
- Annual pay \$60,200 to \$78,300

Occupational Therapist and Speech Therapist

- Hourly pay \$40 to \$54
- Annual pay \$83,700 to \$113,000

Education

You need to receive a bachelor's degree - it can actually be in any course of study as long as you have taken the prerequisite courses for the Physical Therapy Graduate Program/school you want to attend. Prerequisites vary slightly but would all include anatomy, physiology, exercise physiology, statistics, abnormal psychology, biology, chemistry and physics. Next, you need to attend an accredited school of Physical Therapy, all which provide coursework and clinical internships in hospitals and clinics so you can learn all you need about the field. All accredited Physical Therapy programs grant master's or professional doctorate degrees (MS PT or DPT). Prospective Physical Therapists need to pass the national exam as part of the process to get licensed in the state they wish to work.

Check out these local schools that have approved Physical Therapy programs:

- Samuel Merritt University
- University of the Pacific
- UC, San Francisco
- CSU, Sacramento

Physical Therapist Assistant

- Treat patients under the supervision of a Physical Therapist
- Perform many of the same treatments as a Physical Therapist once plan of care established
- 2-year associate's degree and pass licensing exam

What about Occupational Therapy (OT)?

Occupational Therapists help patients achieve independent living by improving activities of daily living, cognitive and psycho-social skills, adapting living environments and teaching family members about patient needs. OTs can work in schools, hospitals and outpatient clinics. To work in health care, OTs start with a master's degree and can earn degrees up to the doctorate level. OT assistants work under the supervision of an Occupational Therapist and a 2 year associate's degree is required.

For more information, go to www.aota.org.

What about Speech Therapy (ST)?

Speech Therapists evaluate and treat speech, hearing and swallowing disorders. STs work with all age groups in hospital, clinic and school settings. STs need a four-year degree and a master's degree.

For more information, go to www.asha.org.

Check out a few other rehabilitation careers:

Art Therapy

www.arttherapy.org

Recreational Therapy

www.atra-tr.com

Music Therapy

www.musictherapy.org

Want to learn more?

John Muir Health

www.johnmuirhealth.com

American Physical Therapy Association

www.apta.org

California Physical Therapy Board

www.ptb.ca.gov

Physicaltherapist.com

www.physicaltherapist.com