



Physical Therapist & Physical Therapist Assistant

Physical therapists focus on restoring, maintaining, and improving a person’s movement and function; this includes treatment to limit disabilities resulting from injury or disease. Physical therapists perform a variety of services:

- evaluate injuries and develop a plan of care
- educate clients about health, wellness, and safety
- provide manual therapies (e.g., massage and joint mobilization)
- use physical agents, such as ultrasound and electrical stimulation
- manage pain and direct therapeutic exercise
- train patients in daily living activities

Physical therapist assistants practice under the supervision of a licensed physical therapist.

Education

Physical Therapist:
Complete a master’s or higher degree in physical therapy. Note: all active [Department-registered](#) PT licensure programs award the Doctor of Physical Therapy degree.

Physical Therapist Assistant:
Complete a two-year college program in a [Department-registered](#) physical therapist assistant licensure program or equivalent.

Examination

Physical Therapist: National Physical Therapy Examination
Physical Therapist Assistant: National Physical Therapist Assistant Examination

Video



Additional Video: [APTA You Can Be Me](#)

Salary and Projected Growth

- Physical Therapist salary range: \$55,000-\$80,000
- Physical Therapist Assistant salary range: \$40,740-\$63,201
- Projected growth: much faster than average

Where Could I Work?

- Hospitals and outpatient clinics
- Rehabilitation centers
- Home health agencies
- Schools
- Private or group practice

Your Interests and Abilities

- Preparation in the sciences, including biology and physics
- Planning and performing health care treatments
- Rehabilitation

Professional Skills

- Concern for others
- Time management
- Problem solving and critical thinking
- Communication and interpersonal skills

What Interests You?

Match your interests and personality to career options! Explore a free career tool at mynextmove.org/explore/ip

Tip: try searching for [mentoring programs](#)—talk to a physical therapist about what they do and how they got started! Or, contact a local clinic to see if it has opportunities for students to observe practice.

- ▶ Visit the [Office of the Professions](#) for a listing of all options and requirements.