

# Occupational Therapist



## What do they do?

Occupational Therapists work with patients who are developmentally disabled, injured or elderly. They help these patients to develop, recover or improve daily living and working skills. The specific work they do can vary greatly depending on which patient group they work with. Patient and family education is a large part of work as an Occupational Therapist.

## Where do they work?

Most Occupational Therapists work in hospitals or in offices dedicated to physical, occupational or speech therapy. They may provide care in a patient's home, nursing homes or schools.

## Pay:

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average yearly income for Occupational Therapists is \$75,400.



## Education:

A master's degree is required to become an Occupational Therapist. A bachelor's degree is required for entry into masters level programs.

## OT training in Madison:

UW-Madison: [www.kinesiology.education.wisc.edu/ot](http://www.kinesiology.education.wisc.edu/ot)

UW-Madison also offers a pre-professional program for Occupational Therapy: [www.prehealth.wisc.edu](http://www.prehealth.wisc.edu)

High School students interested in becoming an Occupational Therapist should take classes in biology, anatomy & physiology

## Accreditation:

Education programs for Occupational Therapy are accredited by the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA):

[www.aota.org](http://www.aota.org)



## Professional Associations:

Occupational Therapists can join the following national and state professional associations:

The American Occupational Therapy Foundation:

[www.aotf.org](http://www.aotf.org)



Wisconsin Occupational Therapy Association:

[www.wota.net](http://www.wota.net)



## Certification/License:

After completing their education, Occupational Therapists must pass an exam to become certified. Passing this exam is also a requirement for gaining a state-level license to practice.

The certification exam is administered by the National Board for Certification of Occupational Therapists (NBCOT):

[www.nbcot.org](http://www.nbcot.org)

At the state level, Occupational Therapists must also become licensed through the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services.

[www.dsps.wi.gov](http://www.dsps.wi.gov)



## Potential for Advancement:

Occupational Therapists with a master's degree may choose to continue their education and get a doctorate (OTD) level degree.

Occupational Therapists with experience can advance into management or supervisory roles in their department.

Those who have an advanced degree might teach Occupational Therapy, start their own practice or go into research related to their field.

## Job Outlook:

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment for Occupational Therapists is expected to grow 29 percent between 2012-2020, which is much faster than the average across all occupations.

Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2012-13 Edition*, Occupational Therapists:  
<http://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/occupational-therapists.htm>



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