

# Physical Therapist



## What do they do?

Physical Therapists treat patients who have suffered injury or illness by improving movement and managing pain. A Physical Therapist works with a team to identify areas that need improvement and make a plan for treatment.

The daily work of a Physical Therapist can vary greatly depending on their patients. They can work with children, the elderly, sports injuries, rehabilitation post-surgery or other areas.

## Where do they work?

Most Physical Therapists work in private offices and clinics, in hospitals or in nursing homes. Most of their work is on their feet.

## Pay:

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average yearly income for Physical Therapists is \$79,860.



## Education:

A doctorate degree is required to be a Physical Therapist. An applicant must have a bachelor's degree and complete an additional 3 years to become a Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT). This can be followed by a residency program which can take 9 months to 3 years.

## DPT training in Madison:

UW-Madison: [www.ortho.wisc.edu](http://www.ortho.wisc.edu)

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

High School students interested in becoming a Physical Therapist should take classes in biology, anatomy & physiology, math, statistics, physics, psychology, health and social sciences.

## Accreditation:

Education programs for Physical Therapy are accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education:

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



## Professional Associations:

Physical Therapists can choose to join any of the following professional associations.

American Physical Therapy Association:

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



Wisconsin Physical Therapy Association:

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



## Registry/License:

Graduates of an accredited physical therapy program must pass two exams before they can work as a Physical Therapist.

The National Physical Therapy Exam (NPTE) measures the candidate's knowledge of physical therapy. This exam is administered by The Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy (FSBPT).

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

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

This includes an open book exam on Wisconsin Statutes and Administrative Code. Information on license and the exam can be found here:

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



## Specializations:

A Physical Therapist could choose to specialize in any of the following areas:

Orthopedic (OCS)

Neurologic (NCS)

Pediatric (PCS)

Sports (SCS)

Geriatric (GCS)

Cardiovascular and Pulmonary (CCS)

Clinical Electrophysiologic (ECS)

## Job Outlook:

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment for Physical Therapists is expected to grow 36 percent between 2012-2022, which is much faster than the average across all occupations.

Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2014-15 Edition*, Physical Therapists:

<http://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/physical-therapists.htm>

