

Physical Therapy Assistant



What do they do?

Physical Therapy Assistants work closely with Physical Therapists. They provide direct care to help patients regain movement and manage pain after injury, illness or after surgery.

Physical Therapy Assistants will also perform tasks that are not direct patient care, like moving patients, cleaning and setting up the treatment area or clerical tasks.

Where do they work?

Most Physical Therapy Assistants work in private offices and clinics, in hospitals or in nursing homes.

Pay:

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average yearly income for Physical Therapy Assistants is \$39,430.



Education:

A two-year associate's degree is required to become a Physical Therapy Assistant.

PT Assistant training in Madison:

Madison Area Technical College:

www.madisoncollege.edu

High School students interested in becoming a Physical Therapy Assistant should take classes in biology, chemistry, physics, algebra, health and social sciences. It's also helpful to become a Certified Nursing Assistant and get experience working in a nursing home.

Accreditation:

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

www.capteonline.org



Professional Associations:

A Physical Therapy Assistant could choose to join either of the following professional associations.

American Physical Therapy Association:

www.apta.org



Wisconsin Physical Therapy Association:

www.wpta.org



Registry/License:

Graduates of an accredited Physical Therapy Assistant program must pass two exams before they can work as a Physical Therapy Assistant.

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



At the state level, Physical Therapy Assistants 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



Potential for Advancement:

A Physical Therapy Assistant can advance by specializing in a clinical area with specific types of patients, like children or the elderly, or by treating a certain type of ailment, like developmental delay or sports injury.

Many Physical Therapy Assistants choose to continue their education and go into management or administration. They may decide to teach at an accredited Physical Therapy Assistant program or further continue their education to become a Physical Therapist.

Job Outlook:

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment for Physical Therapy Assistants is expected to grow 41 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 Therapy Assistants and Aides:
<http://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/physical-therapist-assistants-and-aides.htm>

