

So You Want to be a...

WHAT DOES A PHYSICAL THERAPIST DO?

Physical therapists are key to recovery for patients who are recuperating from injuries, illnesses and surgery. They work with patients to help them regain movement and manage pain either in a hospital or clinical setting

Physical Therapist

Salary: Median Annual Wage (2016) \$85,400

WHAT IS THE JOB OUTLOOK FOR A PHYSICAL THERAPIST?

Employment of physical therapists is projected to grow 34 percent from 2014 to 2024, much faster than the average for all occupations. Demand for physical therapy services will come from the aging baby boomers, who are staying active later in life. In addition, physical therapists will be needed to treat people with mobility issues stemming from chronic conditions, such as diabetes or obesity.

WHAT DEGREE DO I NEED TO BECOME A PHYSICAL THERAPIST?

A graduate degree is required for a career as a Physical Therapist. The current entry level degree is a **Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT)**, which takes approximately 3 years to complete. *Master degree and bachelor degree programs are no longer offered.* Most programs require applicants to: have a 3.0 GPA minimum, take the general GRE, obtain 2 or more reference letters (usually from a PT and a professor) and all require a certain number of clinical experience hours. Graduate programs all have specific prerequisite courses that must be completed with a C or better grade before applying. Most programs prefer prerequisite coursework (especially classes with lab components) be completed at a 4 year institution.

DO I NEED ANY CERTIFICATIONS OR LICENSURE?

The Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) degree prepares students for licensure as physical therapists. The program requires three academic years and three summers to complete. Full-time enrollment is necessary, including the summers. All students must maintain a GPA of 3.0 or higher throughout the program. To be eligible for licensure, both the didactic and clinical components of the DPT degree must be successfully completed. The Doctor of Physical Therapy program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

Your first step should be to familiarize yourself with the profession of Physical Therapy and the application process Physical Therapy Centralized Application Service (PTCAS). Visit the following websites.

American Physical Therapy Association (APTA): <http://www.apta.org/AboutUs/>

California Physical Therapy Association (CPTA): <http://www.ccapta.org/>

PTCAS: Be aware of the Calendar, apply EARLY <http://www.ptcas.org/Calendar/>

GRE Exam Information: http://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/about/