

Pre Physical Therapy 1

Physical therapists provide services that help restore function, improve mobility, relieve pain, and prevent or limit permanent physical disabilities of patients suffering from injuries or disease. They restore, maintain and promote overall fitness and health. Their patients include accident victims, and individuals with disabling conditions such as low back pain, arthritis, heart disease, fractures, head injuries, and cerebral palsy.

Physical therapists practice in hospitals, clinics and private offices that have specially equipped facilities, or they treat patients in hospital rooms, homes, or schools.

All States require physical therapists to pass a licensure exam before they can practice, after graduating from an accredited physical therapist educational program.

Physical therapist programs start with basic science courses such as biology, chemistry, and physics and then introduce specialized courses, including biomechanics, neuroanatomy, human growth and development, manifestations of disease, examination techniques, and therapeutic procedures. Besides getting classroom and laboratory instruction, students receive supervised clinical experience. Among the courses that are useful when one applies to a physical therapist educational program are anatomy, biology, chemistry, social science, mathematics and physics. Before granting admission, many professional education programs require experience as a volunteer in physical therapy department of a hospital or clinic. For high school students, volunteering with the school athletic trainer is a good way to gain experience.

Job Outlook

Employment of physical therapists is expected to grow by 30 percent from 2008 to 2018, much faster than the average for all occupations.

Earnings

The median annual wage for physical therapists was \$84,020 in May 2015. The median wage is the wage at which half the workers in an occupation earned more than that amount and half earned less. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$57,060, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$119,790.

The U.S. Department of Labor provided information about careers in physical therapy. More information can be found at their <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/physical-therapists.htm#tab-5>

Additional career information and a list of accredited education programs in physical therapy can be obtained from the American Physical Therapy Association, 1111 North Fairfax Street, Alexandria, VA 22314-1488. <http://www.apta.org>

Educational Programs

There are two types of PT programs in the United States, a Master's Degree in Physical Therapy and a Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT). As you can see from the table below there is not a great deal of difference in the length of time required to complete both programs.

Physical Therapy Program (selected statistics*)	Masters Program	Doctor of Physical Therapy
Length of Programs (from start to finish)	2 to 2.5 years	3 years

The trend among schools in the United States is moving toward offering only DPT programs. Costs of attending private schools versus public schools are listed below. The average GPA of student enrolled in programs is 3.3. After graduating from an accredited physical therapist educational program, the student must pass a licensure exam before they can practice.

Physical Therapy Program (selected statistics*)	Public School (in State)	Private School
*Annual Tuition Fees for 2013	\$14,427.00	\$31,716.00

* Data provided by the American Physical Therapy Association

About 212 schools nationwide offer programs in physical therapy, and six are located in Georgia

Georgia State University	Armstrong State University
Augusta State	Mercer University
Emory University	University of North Georgia

Each requires that students have a bachelor's degree with a complement of biology and physics courses in order to apply for admission to their program. More complete information on these schools can be found at VSU Department of Biology website www.valdosta.edu/biology Click on the advising button.

