



Physical Therapist

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Job Description:

Physical therapists treat patients to relieve their pain and increase their strength and mobility.

Gross Monthly Income:

\$4,000

Wages:

Average median yearly pay is about \$48,000 a year in Utah.

Schedule: Generally have a set schedule every week. May work full or part time. May work some evenings or weekends.



Advancement:

Physical therapists may advance to positions as supervisors or directors. Administrative duties are usually given to those with experience and strong management skills. Some physical therapists gain experience and then open their own practice or join a group practice.

Education & Experience:

- ◆ Completed High School
- ◆ Bachelor's degree in nursing
- ◆ Have a Master's degree or higher in physical therapy
- ◆ Complete an Internship
- ◆ Have a license

High

School Courses:

- ◆ Anatomy & Physiology
- ◆ Computer Applications
- ◆ Health Education
- ◆ Introduction to Health Care
- ◆ Nursing

Work Conditions:

- ◆ High level of social and physical contact with others
- ◆ May on occasion deal with people who are unpleasant or angry due to illness or injury
- ◆ Are exposed to diseases and infections on a daily basis
- ◆ Sometimes repeat the same physical activities, such as lifting patients or helping them move.
- ◆ Make decisions on a daily basis that substantially impact patients and their families.

Travel: None

Job Outlook:



Medium

Hours a Week:

40

Leisure Time:

Medium

Knowledge:

- ◆ Medicine & Dentistry
- ◆ Therapy & Counseling
- ◆ Customer & Personal Services
- ◆ Education & Training
- ◆ English Language
- ◆ Psychology
- ◆ Biology
- ◆ Law, Government, & Jurisprudence

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Overview

It is becoming more common for people to undergo hip replacement surgery. As people live longer, joints and bones simply wear out. During a hip replacement, surgeons remove the worn out joint and "install" a new one. The parts are made of metal and plastic. In order to put in the new joint, muscles and ligaments are separated during the surgery. This leaves this area of the hip somewhat weak. However, if patients engage in physical therapy afterwards, they can become fully mobile again. They increase their strength and range of motion. Often, patients can perform activities, such as biking or even running, that they haven't done in years!

Physical therapists care for patients with disabilities, injuries, or pain. Doctors refer patients for conditions such as lower back pain, arthritis, and broken bones. They also refer patients recovering from accidents, strokes, and heart disease. Physical therapists help patients decrease pain and improve strength. They also try to prevent permanent disabilities or stop conditions from worsening.

Physical therapists begin by reviewing the doctor's referral and examining the patient's medical history. Then they test the patient's posture, balance, strength, muscle function, and range of motion. When their evaluation is complete, therapists write a treatment plan. The plan includes the types of treatment to be used, the purpose, and the intended outcome. Assistants and aides sometimes help to carry out the treatment plan. They are supervised by the physical therapist in charge.

Physical therapists use a wide range of treatments. They make sure patients understand how the treatments work and answer questions. They exercise patients to improve flexibility and strength. They administer physical agents, such as hot and cold packs, to reduce pain. They use ultrasound and electrical stimulation to reduce pain and improve function. Sometimes therapists give deep tissue massage to their patients. Sometimes they put patients in traction devices. They may refer patients for prosthetic devices, which are artificial replacements for legs or arms. In addition, therapists teach patients to do exercises at home, and to use canes and crutches. They also teach families to help patients with exercises and other procedures at home.

Physical therapists check patients' progress and modify plans when necessary. They consult with other medical staff about patients' responses to treatment. In addition, therapists record everything they do in patients' charts. In some offices, they enter patient information into a computer. They may lead group activities and teach physical therapy students. Some physical therapists also perform research and educate the community on injury prevention and treatment.

Pathway:

Health Science