Physical Therapist Assistant

Overview

Physical Therapist Assistants (PTAs) perform components of physical therapy procedures and related tasks, as directed by a supervising physical therapist (PT). PTAs help patients who have movement difficulties due to injury or disease, by assisting the PT with therapies designed to improve mobility, relieve pain, and prevent or limit permanent physical disability. Patients may include accident victims and individuals with short- and long-term disabling conditions, such as low back pain, fractures, head injuries, arthritis, heart disease, and cerebral palsy.

Working Conditions

Most PTAs work Monday through Friday, although work hours may vary, depending on the facility and your employment status. For example, many outpatient physical therapy offices and clinics have evening and weekend hours, to accommodate patients' schedules.

This job can be physically demanding, because PTAs often have to stoop, kneel, crouch, lift, and stand for long periods of time. In addition, Physical Therapist Assistants may be required to move heavy equipment and lift patients or help them to turn, stand, or walk.

Academic Requirements

Physical Therapist Assistant education is provided at the associate degree level (two-year program) by colleges and universities that are accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (http://www.apta.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=CAPTE1&Template=/TaggedPage/TaggedPageDisplay.cfm&TPLID=65&ContentID=20194). Most states require PTAs to be licensed, registered, or certified to work with patients. Each state has specific licensure requirements.

For more information about becoming a PTA, see the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) (http://www.apta.org/AM/Template.cfm?section=PT_Programs&template=/aptaapps/accreditedschools/acc_schools_map.cfm&process=3&type=PTA) Website.

Professional Associations

APTA Student Assembly (http://www.apta.org)

Funding Opportunities

Search for funding opportunities in this field (http://www.explorehealthcareers.org)

Enrichment Programs

Search for enrichment programs in this field (http://www.explorehealthcareers.org)

Source

www.apta.org

Learn more about this field:


Average Salary: $37,000
Years in school: 2 *
Job outlook: Excellent