

- Physical Therapists help patients restore function, improve mobility, relieve pain, and prevent physical disabilities. They also:
 - Work closely with patients to restore, maintain, and promote fitness and health.
 - Assist patients who have been in accidents and those with disabling conditions such as stroke, arthritis, and head injuries.
 - Measure strength, range of motion, balance, coordination, muscle performance, and motor function.
 - Help determine if the person can function independently.
 - Develop a treatment plan that will help the patient improve function, prevent further injury, and reach their personal goals.
- PTs work in a variety of settings including schools, hospitals, extended care facilities, clinics, and private offices. Some also treat people in their homes.
- PTs often consult with physicians, dentists, nurses, social workers, occupational therapists, speech-language pathologists, and audiologists to coordinate patient care.
- Some PTs treat a wide range of ailments while others specialize in areas such as pediatrics, geriatrics, sports medicine, neurology, and cardiopulmonary physical therapy.
- Employers also seek PTs to evaluate worksites, develop exercise programs, and teach safe work habits.
- Physical therapy can be a physically demanding job that requires stooping, kneeling, lifting, and standing for long periods.

Education & Licensure

- A bachelor's degree with a major in any field, prerequisite courses (below), and often an aptitude test (the Graduate Record Exam) are required.
- Physical therapy education programs in the U.S. offer the Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) degree.
- All physical therapists must pass a licensure exam before they can practice.

Preparation

- Shadow a physical therapist to make sure this is the right field, and you truly understand the variety of what a PT does.
- Many schools will require at least 40 hours of observation with a professional in the field and that this time be spent in several settings (for example, in-patient and out-patient settings).
- Although PT programs do not have an absolute standard set of requirements, many similarities in their requirements do exist, see listing below.
- Many programs require a grade of C or higher in prerequisite courses.
- Initial courses are similar to other professional health care fields such as MD and OT programs.

Common Prerequisite Courses (required courses determined by each PT program but similar to this list)

Requirements	Purdue Equivalents (specific courses may vary by major)
Anatomy & Physiology	BIOL 20300-20400 (BIOL 30100-30200); some schools also require General Biology (BIOL 11000-11100 or 13100 & BIOL 23100 & 23200 (lab))
General Chemistry	CHM 11500-11600 (CHM 11100-11200 <i>cannot</i> replace CHM 11500 for Indiana schools), or CHM 12901 & CHM 115 (the 115 credit exam not accepted at all programs) or CHM 12500-12600 or CHM 13600 (check with schools if this will be accepted since CHM 11500 credit is granted but not taken as course)
Physics	PHYS 22000-22100 or PHYS 23300-23400 or PHYS 17200-27200 or PHYS 17200 & 24100 & 25200 (lab) or ENGR 16100-16200*
Statistics	STAT 30100 or STAT 50300 or PSY 20100* or SOC 38200*
Psych/Life Span	PSY 12000 & HDFS 21000
Other required &/or recommended courses	English Composition, Exercise Science, College Algebra, Medical Terminology, and/or Social Science & Humanities
Pre-Med Planning Seminar (optional)	BIOL 39600-0 credit 10 week class covering how to apply to medical school and other health professions programs

*Ask individual PT programs if they will accept these courses toward their requirements. ~~Courses~~ no longer offered.

Student Organization: Pre-OT/PT/AT Club

Program Information Resource

- [PTCAS Program Directory](https://ptcasdirectory.apta.org/) <https://ptcasdirectory.apta.org/>
- Observation hours, prerequisite, application deadlines and other comparison searches can be found along the side of this page.

Applying

- Take an aptitude test. The Graduate Record Exam (GRE) is typically required.
- If English is not your first language, a TOEFL score may be required.
- Application to most schools is through an online system called PTCAS.
- Competitive applications will have:
 - Strong academic performance including a grade point average of 3.4-3.8 and scores above national average on the GRE
 - Leadership, teamwork, and communication skills
 - Undergraduate research experience is a plus
 - Volunteer and shadowing/observation experiences
 - Strong positive letters of recommendation (mostly from faculty and physical therapists)
- Early application is essential. PTCAS generally opens in late June/early July. Submission by mid-August is ideal.

Employment Outlook

- The [Bureau of Labor Statistics](https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/physical-therapists.htm) (BLS) projects a 17% increase in demand through 2031. <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/physical-therapists.htm>
- To contain costs, PTs are increasingly supervising physical therapy assistants and aides.
- In 2021, the median annual earnings of Physical Therapists was \$95,620 according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Diversity Matters

The physical therapy profession needs therapists who look just like you, and who share your life experiences. Race or ethnicity, LGBTQ+ identity, disability, age, geographic region, socioeconomic status, social and cultural identity, and nationality add to a richer experience for all students in the PT program classroom, contribute to the PT profession, and ultimately lead to better outcomes for patients/clients.

Fee Assistance

- [PTCAS Fee Assistance Program](https://help.liaisonedu.com/PTCAS_Applicant_Help_Center/Starting_Your_PTCAS_Application/Getting_Started_with_Your_PTCAS_Application/03_Application_Fees) https://help.liaisonedu.com/PTCAS_Applicant_Help_Center/Starting_Your_PTCAS_Application/Getting_Started_with_Your_PTCAS_Application/03_Application_Fees
- [GRE Fee Reduction Program](https://www.ets.org/gre/test-takers/general-test/register.html) <https://www.ets.org/gre/test-takers/general-test/register.html>

Programs in Indiana

- [University of Indianapolis](https://www.uindy.edu/health-sciences/pt/?_ga=1.10411061.1236973250.1476290363) Indianapolis, IN https://www.uindy.edu/health-sciences/pt/?_ga=1.10411061.1236973250.1476290363
- [Indiana University](https://shhs.iupui.edu/graduate-professional/physical-therapy/index.html) Indianapolis, IN <https://shhs.iupui.edu/graduate-professional/physical-therapy/index.html>
- [University of Evansville](https://www.evansville.edu/majors/physicaltherapy/) Evansville, IN <https://www.evansville.edu/majors/physicaltherapy/>
- [Trine University](https://trine.edu/academics/majors-degrees/graduate/doctor-physical-therapy/index.aspx) Angola, IN <https://trine.edu/academics/majors-degrees/graduate/doctor-physical-therapy/index.aspx>
- [Indiana State University](https://www.indstate.edu/health/program/dpt) Terre Haute, IN <https://www.indstate.edu/health/program/dpt>
- [Indiana Wesleyan University](https://www.indwes.edu/adult-graduate/programs/doctor-of-physical-therapy/) (candidate for accreditation) Marion, IN <https://www.indwes.edu/adult-graduate/programs/doctor-of-physical-therapy/>
- [Hanover College](https://dptprogram.hanover.edu/) Hanover, IN <https://dptprogram.hanover.edu/>

More Information

- [American Physical Therapy Association](https://www.apta.org/) (APTA) <https://www.apta.org/>
- [PTCAS](https://ptcas.liaisoncas.com/applicant-ux/#/login) (application system) <https://ptcas.liaisoncas.com/applicant-ux/#/login>

Other Careers to Consider—Occupational Therapy · Physical Therapy Assistant · Orthotics & Prosthetics · Podiatry

Preparing for your Giant Leap

purdue.edu/preprofessional