



# HEALTH CAREER OPTIONS GUIDE

for internationally educated health professionals

## Physiotherapist Assistant (PTA)

This profession is also known as:

- physiotherapy assistant
- physiotherapy support personnel
- physiotherapy support worker
- physiotherapist aide
- rehabilitation assistant
- therapist assistant
- rehabilitation therapy assistant

Note: Since 2012, the Canadian Physiotherapy Association (CPA) and the Canadian Alliance of Physiotherapy Regulators (CAPR) use the term Physiotherapist assistant (PTA) to describe the support role in the practice of Physiotherapy.



### What is a physiotherapist assistant?

Physiotherapist assistants work under the supervision of a registered/licensed physiotherapist. They provide professional services to patients of all ages from infancy to seniors' care. Services are usually offered to individual clients, but may be offered to client groups such as community groups. When delivering services, PTAs must consider many associated factors such as culture, occupational demands, and socio-economic factors.

### What are the main duties of a physiotherapist assistant?

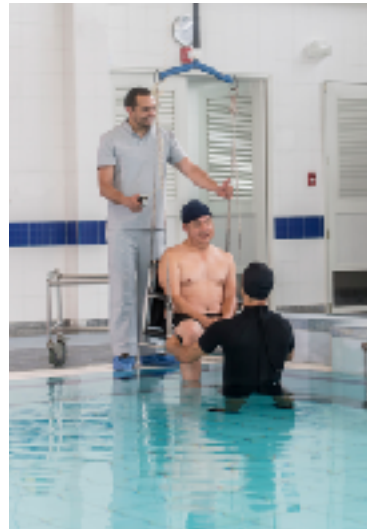
Physiotherapist assistants:

- provide clinical care for assigned patients
- provide patient/family education and support to address physical, emotional and self-care needs as assigned
- provide timely and astute information to relevant team members about the patient's performance
- participate in program planning
- implement the components of the treatment plan as directed by the physiotherapist
- assist with walking, transfers and safe mobility, etc.
- assist the patient with his/her individual cognitive, perceptual and physical programs
- assist in or conducting group activities / exercise programs
- monitor and report changes in health status to the supervisor
- order prescribed assistive or adaptive equipment
- maintain equipment inventories

## What personal characteristics or desired traits do I need for this work?

You must demonstrate:

- Excellent oral and written communication skills
- Empathy for clients and accommodation for their limitations
- Cultural sensitivity
- Client confidentiality
- Physical stamina
- Good time management skills and ability to prioritize tasks
- Collaborative work relationships
- Interest in promoting physiotherapist assistant profession
- Understanding of the provincial/territorial policies and procedures of the physiotherapy practice model



## Where do physiotherapist assistants work?

PTAs work in a wide variety of practice settings. These include:

- Community-based: client residences, child development centres, community health centres, sporting events, schools, group homes, senior centres, adult day care centres, home care, primary health care, community access centres, sport teams
- Facility based: hospitals, rehabilitation centres, nursing homes, residences/assisted living for older adults, extended care facilities, hospices
- Office/clinic based: private practice, sports medicine clinics, ambulatory care clinics
- Business/industry: work sites, medical equipment suppliers
- Educational institutions: colleges

## What typical work conditions should I expect?

- Busy practices can be expected in both public and private settings.
- Many PTAs work in a facility which follows a seven-day work week with a 2-day rest period. The rest period may not be on a weekend.
- Evening hours are common.

## What qualifications do I need?

Physiotherapist assistants complete:

- a two- to three-year college program in physical rehabilitation therapy or
- a two-year physical therapy assistant (PTA) program and supervised practical training

\*Note that many accredited educational programs offer a combined PTA /OTA curriculum.

## What communication skills do I need?

- Strong oral, listening, and written language skills are required.
- Electronic scheduling and reporting methods are often used in these practice settings.

### What wage may I be paid for this work?

Typical Canadian hourly wage **Low 12.00 Median 17.50 High 26.06**

[http://www.jobbank.gc.ca/LMI\\_report\\_bynoc.do?noc=3414&reportOption=wage](http://www.jobbank.gc.ca/LMI_report_bynoc.do?noc=3414&reportOption=wage)

### Career Outlook

[http://www.jobbank.gc.ca/LMI\\_report\\_bynoc.do?noc=3414&reportOption=outlook](http://www.jobbank.gc.ca/LMI_report_bynoc.do?noc=3414&reportOption=outlook)

### Are there opportunities for advancement?

Some advancement is possible with experience.

### Learn more about physiotherapist assistants by viewing these sites.

- National Occupation Code 3237 (Job Bank 3414)  
The government of Canada has given a code to each occupation/profession. Use this code to learn more about physiotherapist assistants.  
<http://www5.hrsdc.gc.ca/NOC/English/NOC/2011/ProfileQuickSearch.aspx?val=3&val1=3237&val65=physiotherapy+assistant>
- Self Assessment Readiness Tool™ for PTA  
This tool allows you to compare your knowledge and skills to those required in Canada. View the tool to learn more about this career option  
<http://assesshealthcareers.ca>
- Canadian Physiotherapy Association  
<https://physiotherapy.ca/becoming-pt-or-pta>
- OTA/PTA Education Accreditation Program  
<http://otapta.ca/pdfs/PTA-Essential-Competency-Profile-2012.pdf>

### References

- Outline from CSMLS webpage, accessed 3/25/2016  
<http://altcareers.csmls.org/careers/assayer/>
- Government of Canada (NOC 3414)  
<http://www5.hrsdc.gc.ca/NOC/English/NOC/2011/Welcome.aspx>
- Government of Canada, Job Bank  
<http://www.jobbank.gc.ca/home-eng.do?lang=eng>
- Ontario Network for Internationally-trained Professionals, Physiotherapy Assistant  
<http://www.onip.ca/physiotherapist-assistant/>