

Respiratory Therapists evaluate, treat, and care for patients with breathing disorders. To evaluate patients, therapists test the capacity of the lungs and analyze oxygen and carbon dioxide concentration. They also measure the patient's potential of hydrogen (pH), which indicates the acidity or alkalinity level of the blood. To measure lung capacity, therapists have patients breathe into an instrument that measures the volume and flow of oxygen during inhalation and exhalation. Therapists also connect patients who cannot breathe on their own to ventilators that deliver pressurized oxygen into the lungs. They insert a tube into a patient's trachea, or windpipe; connect the tube to the ventilator; and set the rate, volume, and oxygen concentration of the oxygen mixture entering the patient's lungs.

Occupational Therapists (OTs) help people improve their ability to perform tasks in their daily living and working environments. They work with individuals who have conditions that are mentally, physically, developmentally, or emotionally disabling. They also help them to develop, recover, or maintain daily living and work skills. Occupational therapists assist clients in performing activities of all types, ranging from using a computer, to caring for daily needs such as dressing, cooking, and eating. Physical exercises may be used to increase strength and dexterity, while paper and pencil exercises may be chosen to improve visual acuity and the ability to discern patterns.

Physical Therapists (PTs) 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.

Recreational Therapists also referred to as **Therapeutic Recreation Specialists**, provide treatment services and recreation activities to individuals with disabilities, illnesses, or other disabling conditions. Therapists treat and maintain the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of clients using a variety of techniques, including the use of arts and crafts, animals, sports, games, dance and movement, drama, music, and community outings. Therapists help individuals reduce depression, stress, and anxiety. They also help individuals recover basic motor functioning and reasoning abilities, build confidence, and socialize effectively to enable greater independence, as well as to reduce or eliminate the effects of illness or disability.

Transfer Information:

- A Bachelor's degree is entry-level into some of these professions and a Master's or Doctoral degree is required for many.

Additional Information:

- The Occupational Therapy Assoc. <http://www.aota.org/>
- American Physical Therapy Assoc. <http://www.apta.org//AM/Template.cfm?Section=Home>

