

Occupational Therapists

SOC: 29-1122 • Career Profile Report

■ Key Facts

\$98,340

Median Salary

160,000

Employment

+14.0%

Growth Rate

■ Requirements & Salary Range

Education: Master's degree

■ Automation Risk Assessment

Low Risk - 8.0% probability of being automated in the next 10-20 years.

This job is relatively safe from automation due to its creative, social, or complex problem-solving requirements.

■■ Work-Life Balance

9.6/10 - Excellent work-life balance

■ Personality Fit (RIASEC)

Higher scores indicate better personality fit for this career type.

Realistic	5.4/10	Investigative	8.6/10
Artistic	4.8/10	Social	9.0/10
Enterprising	5.4/10	Conventional	6.2/10

■ Top Skills Required

Adaptability, Communication skills, Compassion, Interpersonal skills, Patience

✓ Strengths

- High Demand
- Flexible Work
- Continuous Learning

■ Challenges

- Burnout Risk
- Rapid Technological Change

■ What They Do

Occupational Therapists help individuals **develop, recover, or maintain daily living and work skills** that are affected by illness, injury, or disability. They design personalized therapy plans, guide exercises, and use adaptive techniques to improve functional independence. Their work is critical in rehabilitation, healthcare, and patient quality of life.

This career is well suited for individuals who enjoy healthcare, problem-solving, and working closely with patients to achieve practical outcomes.

What Do Occupational Therapists Do?

These professionals evaluate patient needs, develop therapy programs, and provide interventions to enhance daily function and participation.

Common responsibilities include:

- Assessing patients' physical, cognitive, and emotional abilities
- Developing individualized treatment plans and therapy goals
- Guiding patients through therapeutic exercises and activities
- Recommending and training patients on adaptive equipment or modifications
- Monitoring progress and adjusting therapy plans as needed
- Educating patients and caregivers on strategies for daily living
- Collaborating with healthcare teams and documenting patient outcomes

Key Areas of Occupational Therapy

Occupational therapists may focus on specific populations, settings, or therapy approaches:

- Pediatric Therapy: Assisting children with developmental or physical challenges
- Geriatric Therapy: Supporting older adults in maintaining independence and function
- Physical Rehabilitation: Helping patients recover from injuries or surgeries
- Mental Health and Cognitive Therapy: Supporting patients with mental or cognitive disorders
- Adaptive Equipment and Environmental Modifications: Recommending tools and home adjustments for improved function

Skills and Abilities Needed

Occupational therapists combine clinical knowledge, problem-solving, and interpersonal skills.

Core Professional Skills

Personal Qualities That Matter

Education and Career Pathway

This role typically requires advanced education and clinical training:

- Master's or Doctoral Degree (minimum): Occupational therapy
- Clinical Internship or Practicum: Hands-on experience in rehabilitation or healthcare settings
- Licensure: Required to practice as an occupational therapist
- Continuing Education: Maintaining licensure and staying current on therapy techniques and research
- Specialty Certifications (optional): Areas such as pediatrics, geriatrics, or hand therapy

Where Do Occupational Therapists Work?

They are employed in organizations that provide rehabilitation and healthcare services:

- Hospitals and Rehabilitation Centers
- Outpatient Clinics and Therapy Centers
- Schools and Pediatric Programs

- Long-Term Care and Assisted Living Facilities

- Home Healthcare Services

Work environments include patient rooms, therapy gyms, clinics, schools, and homes.

Is This Career Difficult?

This career requires clinical knowledge, problem-solving, and interpersonal skills. Occupational therapists must design effective therapy plans, motivate patients, and adapt strategies to individual needs.

Who Should Consider This Career?

This career may be a strong fit if you:

- Enjoy helping patients improve daily living skills
- Are compassionate, patient, and motivating
- Have strong communication and analytical skills
- Can develop creative solutions for therapy challenges
- Want a career enhancing functional independence and quality of life

How to Prepare Early

- Take courses in biology, anatomy, psychology, and health sciences
- Volunteer or intern in rehabilitation, hospitals, or therapy clinics
- Develop communication, observation, and problem-solving skills
- Explore accredited occupational therapy programs and licensure requirements
- Gain experience with adaptive equipment and patient care techniques

Occupational therapists support patients in developing and maintaining daily living and work skills, enhancing independence, function, and overall quality of life.

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Source: <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/occupational-therapists.htm>