

# Physical Therapist Assistants and Aides

SOC: 31-2020 • Career Profile Report

## ■ Key Facts

\$60,050

Median Salary

157,100

Employment

+16.0%

Growth Rate

## ■ Requirements & Salary Range

Education: See Requirements (BLS)

## ■ Automation Risk Assessment

**Medium Risk** - 48.0% probability of being automated in the next 10-20 years.

This job has some routine elements but still requires human judgment and interaction.

## ■ Work-Life Balance

**6.0/10** - Good work-life balance

## ■ Personality Fit (RIASEC)

Higher scores indicate better personality fit for this career type.

Realistic	5.8/10	Investigative	6.0/10
Artistic	4.4/10	Social	8.4/10
Enterprising	4.6/10	Conventional	7.4/10

## ■ Top Skills Required

Compassion, Detail oriented, Dexterity, Interpersonal skills, Physical stamina

### ✓ Strengths

- High Demand
- Flexible Work
- Continuous Learning

### ■ Challenges

- Burnout Risk
- Rapid Technological Change

## ■ What They Do

Physical Therapist Assistants and Aides help patients **recover mobility, manage pain, and improve physical function under the supervision of physical therapists**. They assist with exercises, therapeutic activities, and patient care routines. Their work is critical in rehabilitation, healthcare, and long-term care settings.

This career is well suited for individuals who enjoy healthcare, helping others, and hands-on patient support.

## What Do Physical Therapist Assistants and Aides Do?

These professionals implement treatment plans, support patient exercises, and monitor progress.

Common responsibilities include:

- Assisting patients with therapeutic exercises and mobility activities
- Operating and maintaining rehabilitation equipment
- Observing and recording patient responses and progress
- Helping patients with daily activities as needed
- Educating patients and caregivers on exercises and safety
- Communicating with supervising physical therapists regarding patient care
- Maintaining clean and safe therapy areas

## Key Areas of Physical Therapy Support

Assistants and aides may focus on specific treatment or patient care tasks:

- Therapeutic Exercise Assistance: Guiding patients through prescribed exercises
- Patient Mobility Support: Assisting with walking, transfers, or positioning
- Rehabilitation Equipment Management: Using and maintaining therapy devices
- Patient Observation and Reporting: Monitoring progress and documenting outcomes
- Safety and Hygiene: Ensuring clean, safe, and supportive therapy environments

## Skills and Abilities Needed

Physical therapist assistants and aides combine clinical support skills with empathy and physical capability.

### ***Core Professional Skills***

### ***Personal Qualities That Matter***

## Education and Career Pathway

This role typically requires formal education or certification:

- Associate's Degree (for Assistants): Accredited physical therapist assistant program
- High School Diploma or GED (for Aides): Basic healthcare knowledge and on-the-job training
- Clinical Practicum or Internship: Supervised practical experience
- Licensure or Certification (varies by state): Required for assistants
- Continuous Learning: Staying updated on therapy techniques, safety, and patient care standards

## Where Do Physical Therapist Assistants and Aides Work?

They are employed in settings that provide rehabilitation and therapy services:

- Hospitals and Rehabilitation Centers
- Outpatient Clinics
- Nursing Homes and Long-Term Care Facilities
- Home Health Care Services

- Sports and Wellness Centers

Work environments may include patient therapy rooms, gyms, hospitals, or home settings.

## Is This Career Difficult?

This career requires physical stamina, attention to detail, and interpersonal skills. Assistants and aides must follow precise therapy plans and support patients safely and effectively.

## Who Should Consider This Career?

This career may be a strong fit if you:

- Enjoy helping people recover and improve physical function
- Are compassionate, patient, and physically capable
- Can follow detailed instructions and work under supervision
- Are interested in healthcare, rehabilitation, or therapy
- Want a career supporting patient wellness and recovery

## How to Prepare Early

- Take courses in biology, anatomy, and health sciences
- Volunteer or intern in hospitals, clinics, or rehabilitation centers
- Develop physical stamina, coordination, and patient interaction skills
- Explore accredited physical therapist assistant programs
- Learn about patient care, safety, and therapeutic techniques

**Physical therapist assistants and aides support patients in regaining mobility and improving quality of life, providing essential hands-on care under the guidance of licensed physical therapists.**