

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.

*Generated by StartRight • Data from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics & O*NET*

Source: <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/physical-therapist-assistants-and-aides.htm>