

## Quick Guides to the Health Professions

# Physical Therapists

### *What is a physical therapist?*

Physical therapy (or physiotherapy) is a primary care, self-regulated, client-focused health profession dedicated to:

- Improving and maintaining functional independence and physical performance
- Preventing and managing pain, physical impairments, disabilities, and limits to participation
- Promoting fitness, health, and wellness

### *What do physical therapists do?*

Physiotherapists provide assessment, treatment, and education for a wide range of health problems to ensure clients make the most of their lifestyles. They recommend the best way to treat problems with muscles, bones and joints, and circulatory, respiratory, or nervous systems. Physiotherapists also advise clients on ways to prevent potential health problems from occurring before they arise.

### *Where do physical therapists work?*

Physiotherapists work in a variety of settings including rehabilitation centres, acute care hospitals, outpatient clinics, home care, long term care facilities, and schools.

### *Education and preparation*

Physical therapy students currently require a 4-year BSc degree prior to registration in a 2-year Masters program. The program includes academic coursework and clinical experience.

Upon completion of the MScPT program, applicants must successfully complete both the written and practical components of the Canadian Physical Therapy National Examination to be licensed to practice.

### *Licensure*

In Alberta, practicing Physical Therapists must be registered with the Physiotherapy Alberta College + Association, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to regulating the practice of physical therapists in the public interest.

### *Professional associations*

Canadian Physiotherapy Association  
<https://physiotherapy.ca>

Physiotherapy Alberta College + Association  
<https://www.physiotherapyalberta.ca>

### *Contributors to this guide*

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<https://www.uwo.ca/fhs/education/ipe/index.html>



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