

# Quick Guides to the Health Professions

## Physiotherapists

### *What is a physiotherapist?*

Physiotherapy (physical therapy) 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 physiotherapists 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 physiotherapists work?*

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

### *Education and preparation*

In Alberta, prospective physiotherapy students need to have completed a 4-year baccalaureate degree and pre-requisite courses prior to gaining entrance to a Physical Therapy Masters program. The MScPT program is an applied program and students are

expected to be prepared for self-directed learning, multiple learning and assessment formats, academic coursework and clinical placements throughout the program.

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 Physiotherapists must be registered with Physiotherapy Alberta College + Association, a not-for-profit professional organization dedicated to regulating the practice of physiotherapists in the public interest.

### *Professional organizations*

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

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

### *Contributors to this guide*

Office of Interprofessional Education and Practice, Western University Canada  
<https://www.uwo.ca/fhs/education/ipe/index.html>

Physiotherapy Alberta College + Association  
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