

# Doctor Physical Therapy (DPT)

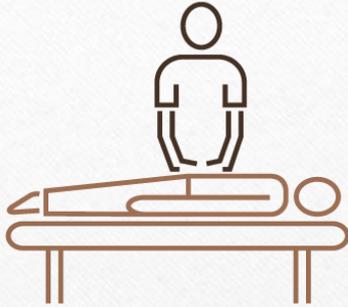
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# What is physical therapy?

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- Physical therapy is a type of treatment you may need when health problems make it hard to move around and do everyday tasks. It helps you move better, improves or restores your physical function and fitness level, and may relieve pain.
- The goal of physical therapy is **to make daily tasks and activities easier**.
  - For example, it may help with walking, going up stairs, or getting in and out of bed.
- **Physical therapy can help with recovery after some surgeries.** A doctor may suggest physical therapy for injuries or long-term health problems such as arthritis or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).
- Physical therapy may be used alone or with other treatments.



## Who are physical therapists?

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- Physical therapists (PTs) are **highly-educated, licensed** health care professionals who can help patients reduce pain and improve or restore mobility - in many cases without expensive surgery and often reducing the need for long-term use of prescription medications and their side effects.
- Physical therapists can teach patients how to prevent or manage their condition so that they will **achieve long-term health benefits**. PTs examine each individual and develop a plan to prevent the loss of mobility before it occurs by developing fitness- and wellness-oriented programs for healthier and more active lifestyles.
- **State licensure is required** in each state in which a physical therapist practices.

# Where do physical therapists practice?

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Although many physical therapists practice in hospitals, more than 80% practice in:

- Outpatient clinics or offices
- Inpatient rehabilitation facilities
- Skilled nursing, extended care, or subacute facilities
- Homes
- Education or research centers
- Schools
- Hospices
- Industrial, workplace, or other occupational environments
- Fitness centers and sports training facilities

# Key Players in DPT History

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James Cyriax, MD

- **Dr. James Cyriax (1904-85):** orthopedic surgeon from England who developed simple objective clinical exams that would effectively diagnose soft tissue lesions. The system that he developed has helped shape the way physical therapists evaluate patients. He passed away in 1985 at the age of 80.



- **Florence Kendall:** a physical therapist since the early 1930's, she wrote the seminal book "Muscles: Testing and Function With Posture and Pain." This book is used in physical therapy education programs as well as in practice throughout the world. She passed away in 2006 at the age of 95.



## Do you have what it takes?

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- Do you have the **excellent communication skills** required for teaching patients, interacting with other health professions, and participating as a collaborative partner on a patient-centered health care team?
- Are you genuinely **caring and compassionate** about making a difference in the lives of others, whether it be in their overall health and wellness or in providing rehabilitation for an injury, genetic disorder, or chronic condition?
- Are you committed to maintaining **lifelong learning** to ensure that your knowledge and skills are contemporary in the interest of providing evidence-based care and best practices to meet the needs of patients/clients?
- Can you be **flexible** to changes at the micro and macro levels with organizations and health care systems?

# Preparing for the Admissions Process

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- Explore PT programs to determine the ones that may best meet your educational needs.
- Complete course prerequisites for your designated programs.
- Obtain physical therapy experience and have your hours verified by a PT, if required by your designated programs. Many programs have a minimum number of hours required.
- Take the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) at least 6 weeks before the application deadline.
- Submit the completed application EARLY and before the program's deadline. Some programs use a rolling admissions process, so if you apply earlier, your chances of acceptance are higher.
- PTCAS applicants should also review the PTCAS checklist.



# Course Prerequisites

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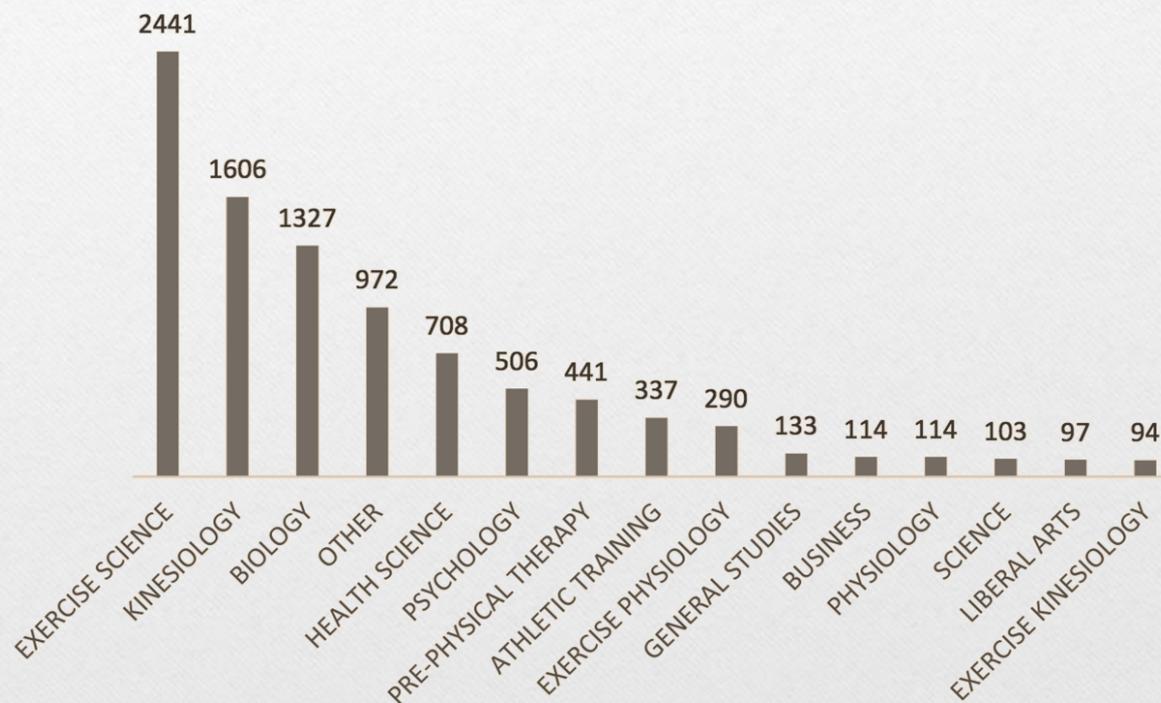
According to the APTA (American Physical Therapy Association): a particular college major is not required and course prerequisites vary significantly across different PT education programs.

The following are the most common:

- Anatomy/A&P 1 with lab
- Biology 1 (not botany or zoology)
- General Chemistry 1 with lab
- General Physics 1 with lab
- Psychology
- Physiology/A&P 2 with lab
- Biology 2 (not botany or zoology)
- General Chemistry 2 with lab
- General Physics 2 with lab
- Statistics

See [PTCAS Course Prerequisite Summary](#) for a list of DPT education programs, and their requirement expectations.

# Most common majors for accepted applicants (2015-2016)



# Physical Therapy Professional Schools

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- If you enter after earning a Bachelor's degree, the program will most likely be three years, year-round.
- You will have some classroom work, a lot of lab time, as well as multiple internships to gain hands-on experience.
- A few programs offer specialized “tracks” but all will also train you to be a generalist who can practice in any setting.
- After you complete the requirements, you will earn a Doctorate in Physical Therapy (DPT).
- Some DPTs opt to complete a voluntary residency after completing the professional school program.
- The median annual salary for a DPT in 2016 was \$85,400.

# Sample Graduate PT Programs

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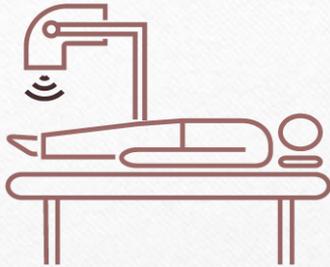
- [University of Delaware](#)
- [University of Pittsburgh](#)
- [University of Southern California](#)
- [Washington University in St. Louis](#)
- [Northwestern University](#)
- [University of Iowa](#)
- [MGH Institute of Health Professions](#)
- [U.S. Army-Baylor University](#)
- [Duke University](#)

Find a program near you in the [CAPTE Program Directory](#)

# Sample Curriculum

*from USC Division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy*

Year 1							
<b>Fall</b>	<u>Evidence for Physical Therapist Practice</u>	<u>Cellular &amp; Systems Physiology</u>	<u>Musculo-skeletal Anatomy</u>	<u>Basics of Patient Management</u>	<u>Mechanics of Human Gait</u>	<u>Clinical Imaging</u>	
<b>Spring</b>	<u>Therapeutic Exercise</u>	<u>Analytical Anatomy</u>	<u>Clinical Biomechanics</u>	<u>Evidence for Physical Therapist Practice</u>	<u>Disorders of the Musculoskeletal System</u>	<u>2-Week Midterm Clinical Practicum</u>	<u>Clinical Management of Musculoskeletal Dysfunction</u>
<b>Summer A</b>	<u>Principles of Disease</u>		<u>Special Topics in Therapeutic Exercise</u>			<u>Therapeutic Application of Physical Agents</u>	
<b>Summer B</b>	<u>6-Week Clinical Affiliation</u>						
Year 2							
<b>Fall</b>	<u>Neuro-anatomy</u>	<u>Pathology of Cardio-Pulmonary &amp; Medical Conditions</u>	<u>Pharmacology</u>	<u>Clinical Exercise Physiology</u>	<u>Clinical Management of Cardio-Pulmonary Dysfunction</u>	<u>2 Week Midterm Clinical Practicum</u>	<u>Evidence for Physical Therapist Practice</u>
<b>Spring</b>	<u>Neuro-pathology</u>	<u>Neuroscience Fundamentals</u>	<u>Clinical Management of Neurologic Dysfunction</u>	<u>Clinical Electro-physiology</u>	<u>Evidence for Physical Therapist Practice</u>	<u>Week Midterm Clinical Practicum</u>	
<b>Summer A</b>	<u>6-Week Clinical Affiliation</u>						
<b>Summer B</b>	<u>Lifespan Motor Control</u>		<u>Evidence for Physical Therapist Practice</u>		<u>Differential Diagnosis in Physical Therapy</u>		
Year 3							
<b>A</b>	<u>Integrated Management of the Upper &amp; Lower Extremity</u>	<u>Integrated Management of the Axial Skeleton System &amp; Related Movement Disorders</u>		<u>Integrated Patient Management Seminar</u>		<u>16-Week Part-Time Advanced Clinical Clerkship with Academic Integration</u>	
<b>B</b>	<u>16-Week Full-Time Advanced Clinical Clerkship</u>						



# Defining Moments

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Inspiring stories of particular moments or incidents that have led people to a career in physical therapy or reinforced why he or she became a physical therapist or physical therapist assistant. Read the columns or download the podcasts.

- [September 2017: Forged on the Battlefield: A New Mission](#) A veteran's career path began in Afghanistan.
- [July 2017: Amputation and Ambulation](#) A youth's fear becomes a PT's passion.
- [June 2017: Modern Science, Ancient Practice](#) Physical therapy and yoga, working together for patients.

# For Additional Information

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- APTA video detailing the diversity of PT practice settings: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r35FQT3u0J4>
- American Physical Therapy Association: [APTA.org](http://APTA.org)
- Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education: [CAPTEOnline.org](http://CAPTEOnline.org)
- Move Forward: [MoveForwardPT.com](http://MoveForwardPT.com)
- Physical Therapist Centralized Application Service: [PTCAS.org](http://PTCAS.org)

