

Occupational Therapist

Help people do the everyday things illness or injury took away: dressing, driving, working, living at home.

TYPICAL PAY

\$96,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$75k to \$114k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

6 years

after high school

DEMAND

Good

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

Hospitals, home care, schools, rehab clinics

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
Biology, English, a social science. OT (occupational therapy) programs like both science and people skills.
- 2 Bachelor's degree** 4 years
Any degree with the prerequisites, usually anatomy, physiology, psychology and statistics. Kinesiology, psychology and health science are common.
- 3 MScOT (master of science in occupational therapy)** 2 years
Two years including about 1,000 hours of fieldwork in hospitals, community and mental health settings. Around 14 programs in Canada.
- 4 NOTCE (national occupational therapy certification exam)** After graduation
A written national exam run by CAOT (the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists). Required in every province except Quebec.
- 5 Register with your provincial college** A few weeks
For example the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario. Then you can use the title.

Pros and cons

- + Strong demand and a broad range of settings
- + Done in 6 years, no residency
- + Daytime hours, mostly weekdays
- Few people know what OT (occupational therapy) is, so you explain it constantly
- Heavy paperwork, especially in insurance work
- Community work means driving and working alone

Optional boosts

Certified hand therapist (CHT). Driver rehabilitation. Mental health. Ergonomics and return-to-work.

Good to know

Occupation means daily life, not your job

In OT (occupational therapy), an occupation is anything you need or want to do: eat, dress, work, play, drive. The job is making those possible again.

Born from the First World War

Canada's first occupational therapy training started at the University of Toronto in 1918, to help wounded soldiers recover through work and craft.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Occupational therapists, wages (updated Nov 2025)
Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists (runs the national exam)
College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in Canadian dollars, based on Government of Canada Job Bank wage data and published salary grids. They vary by province, employer and experience. Tuition is for domestic students. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/ca/careers/occupational-therapist>



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