

Rehabilitation Assistant

Do the hands-on half of therapy: the exercises, the practice, the daily work of getting someone moving again. Two years of college.

TYPICAL PAY

\$72,300

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$51k to \$90k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

2 to 3 years

after high school

DEMAND

Very high

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

Hospitals, rehab clinics, schools, nursing homes, home visits

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
 Biology, health science and psychology. Volunteer at a nursing home, a rehab gym or a summer camp for disabled children, because programs want to see you have done it.
- 2 Get into an accredited program** Apply a year ahead
 The program must be accredited by ACOTE (the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education), or you cannot sit the exam at the end. Most are at community colleges and most have a waiting list.
- 3 Classroom and lab** About 16 months
 Anatomy, conditions, adaptive equipment, splinting, and a great deal of practice on each other.
- 4 Fieldwork** About 16 weeks
 Two full-time placements, generally 8 weeks each, in real settings: a hospital, a school, a nursing home or a mental health unit. Unpaid, and treated like a job.
- 5 Certify and get licensed** 2 to 4 months
 Pass the national board exam, then apply to the licensing board in your state. Most states license this job and will not let you work without it.

Pros and cons

- + Licensed and earning a good wage two years after high school
- + Very little debt compared to what the job pays
- + Daytime hours, few nights and weekends
- The pay flattens out unless you go back for the therapist degree
- The fieldwork months are unpaid and full-time
- Physically demanding: lifting, transferring and supporting adults

Good to know

The accreditor decides whether you can ever sit the exam
 ACOTE (the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education) approves every program in the country, at associate and bachelor's level. Graduating from a program it has not approved leav...

The federal profile flags it as fast growing

The government occupation profile gives this job a Bright Outlook, meaning new openings are very likely and the field is expected to grow rapidly. An aging population needing help to stay independent i...

Optional boosts

Pediatrics. Hand therapy. Older adults and dementia care. Driving rehabilitation.

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Occupational Therapy Assistants, wages and tasks
 NBCOT, the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy
 ACOTE, the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education
 Sinclair Community College

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in United States dollars, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics wage data and published pay scales. They vary by state, employer and experience. Tuition is for in-state students at public schools unless the card says otherwise. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/us/careers/rehabilitation-assistant>



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