



# The Physical Therapy Profession

Month DD, YYYY

Name or Location [Arial 20pt, White]

# PTMovesMe

Provided by  **APTA**

# Introduction to Physical Therapy



**Physical therapy** is treatment provided by a physical therapist or physical therapist assistant that helps people improve their movement and physical function, manage pain and other chronic conditions, and recover from and prevent injury and chronic disease.



# Physical Therapists Are Movement Experts



- **Licensed doctors** who **examine, diagnose, and treat** movement dysfunction.
- Help people impacted by disease, injury, and disability.
- Prevent movement loss and promote wellness.
- Use therapeutic exercise, modalities, assistive devices, patient education, and evidence-based research to treat patients.

# Physical Therapist Assistants Collaborate With PTs

- Educated and **licensed or certified clinicians**.
- Provide physical therapy services **under the direction and supervision of a licensed physical therapist**.
- Implement components of patient care, obtain data related to the treatments provided, and collaborate with physical therapists to modify care, as necessary.
- Physical therapist assistants are not the same as physical therapy aides.



More than 21 million U.S. adults have a disability.

Physical therapists can develop a physical activity plan for people with physical disabilities based on their individual goals, needs, and challenges.



# 8 Things You Didn't Know About Physical Therapy



# 1. Only Licensed PTs and PTAs Can Provide Physical Therapist Services

## Physical Therapists are not:

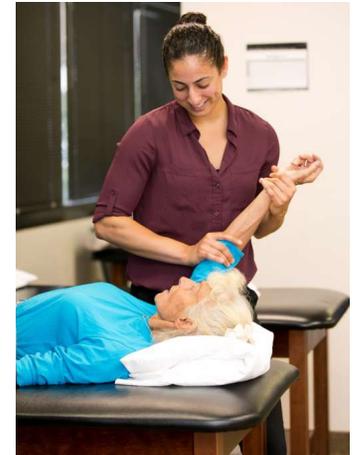
- Personal trainers.
- Massage therapists.
- Athletic trainers.
- Chiropractors.

## Physical Therapists are:

- Movement and body mechanics experts.
- Licensed clinical doctors.
- Evidence-based practitioners.
- Trained to diagnose, examine, and treat all populations.

## 2. PTs and PTAs Care for People of All Ages and Abilities

They treat patients across the lifespan (birth to end of life)



### 3. PTs and PTAs Work Throughout the Health Care System

|                                     |                  |                    |                               |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| Hospitals and Acute Care Facilities | Private Practice | Outpatient Clinics | Nursing Homes                 |
| Assisted-Living Facilities          | Home Health      | Schools            | Sports and Fitness Facilities |
| Corporate Offices                   | Military         | Public Health      | More...                       |

## 4. PTs and PTAs Can Focus on Specific Areas of Care

### PT Specialties

Cardiovascular & Pulmonary  
Clinical Electrophysiology  
Geriatrics  
Neurology  
Oncology  
Orthopaedics  
Pediatrics  
Sports  
Women's Health  
Wound Management

### PTA Proficiencies

Acute Care  
Cardiovascular & Pulmonary  
Geriatrics  
Oncology  
Orthopaedics  
Pediatrics  
Wound Management

## 5. PTs and PTAs Treat Multiple Body Systems

They also manage and decrease symptoms associated with diseases and disorders.



For example:

- **Cardiovascular:** Coronary artery disease
- **Respiratory:** Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
- **Integumentary:** Skin burns
- **Muscular/Skeletal:** Back pain, dislocations/fractures
- **Nervous:** Stroke, traumatic brain injury, vertigo
- **Urinary/Renal:** Incontinence
- **Reproductive:** Pelvic pain
- **Immune/Lymphatic:** Lymphedema
- **Digestive:** SIBO, GERD, IBS

## 6. You Do Not Have To Be a Science Major\* To Pursue a Career in Physical Therapy



### Popular Majors

- Exercise/health science
- Spanish
- Business administration
- Psychology
- Liberal arts

\*You will have to take science courses, but you do not have to be a science major.

## 7. There Are Two Physical Therapy Career Pathways

### Pathway to DPT



\* Some DPT programs offer freshman entry

### Pathway to PTA



## 8. As a Physical Therapist You Can Be a ....

- Clinical practitioner.
- Board-certified specialist.
- PT resident.
- PT fellow.
- Professor/program director.
- Researcher.
- Professional advocate.
- APTA staff/CEO/Board member.
- Travel PT.
- Entrepreneur.
- Influencer.
- More ...

# Physical Therapy Education



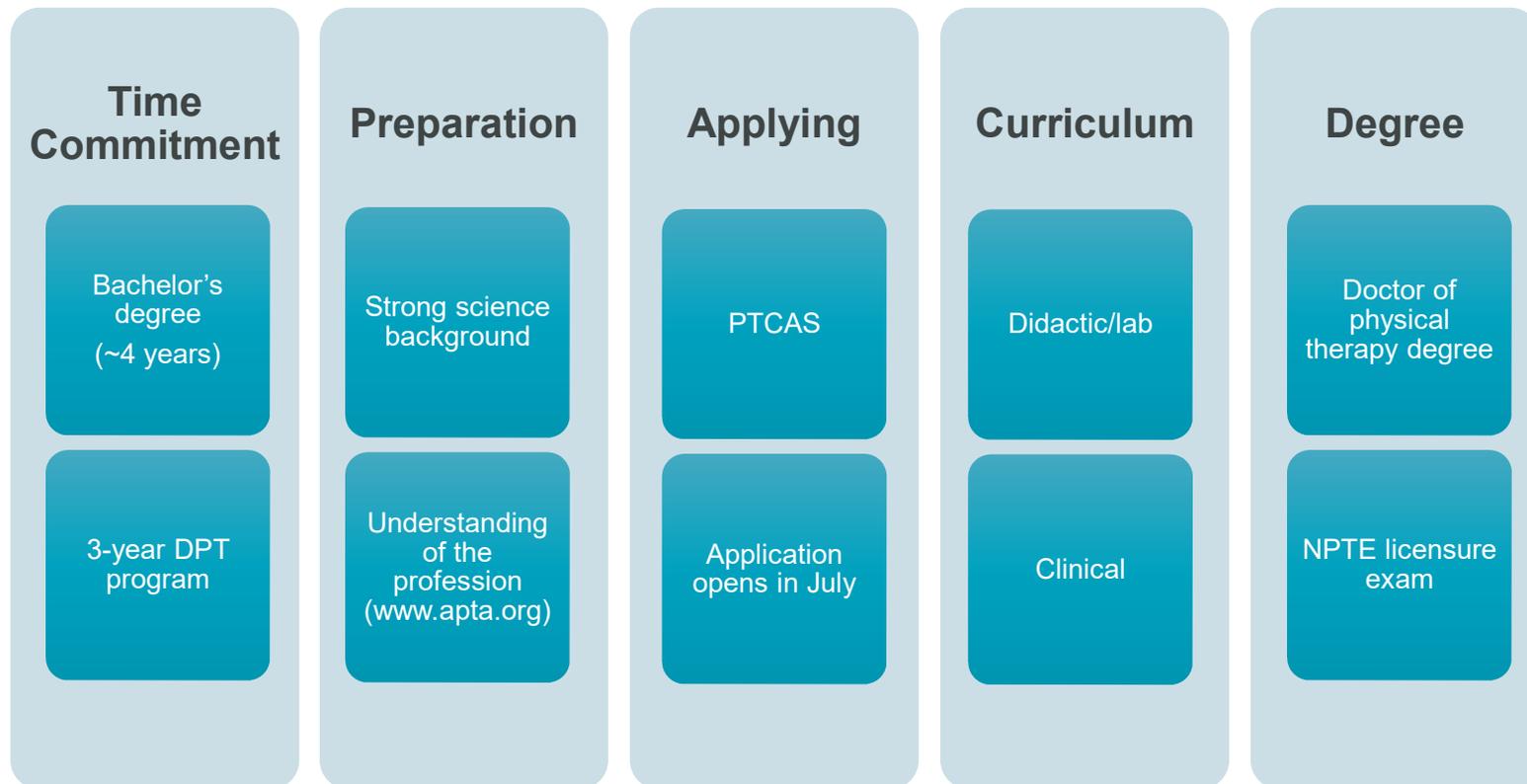
# Pathway to DPT



\* Some DPT programs offer freshman entry



# DPT Application and Education



# Pathway to PTA

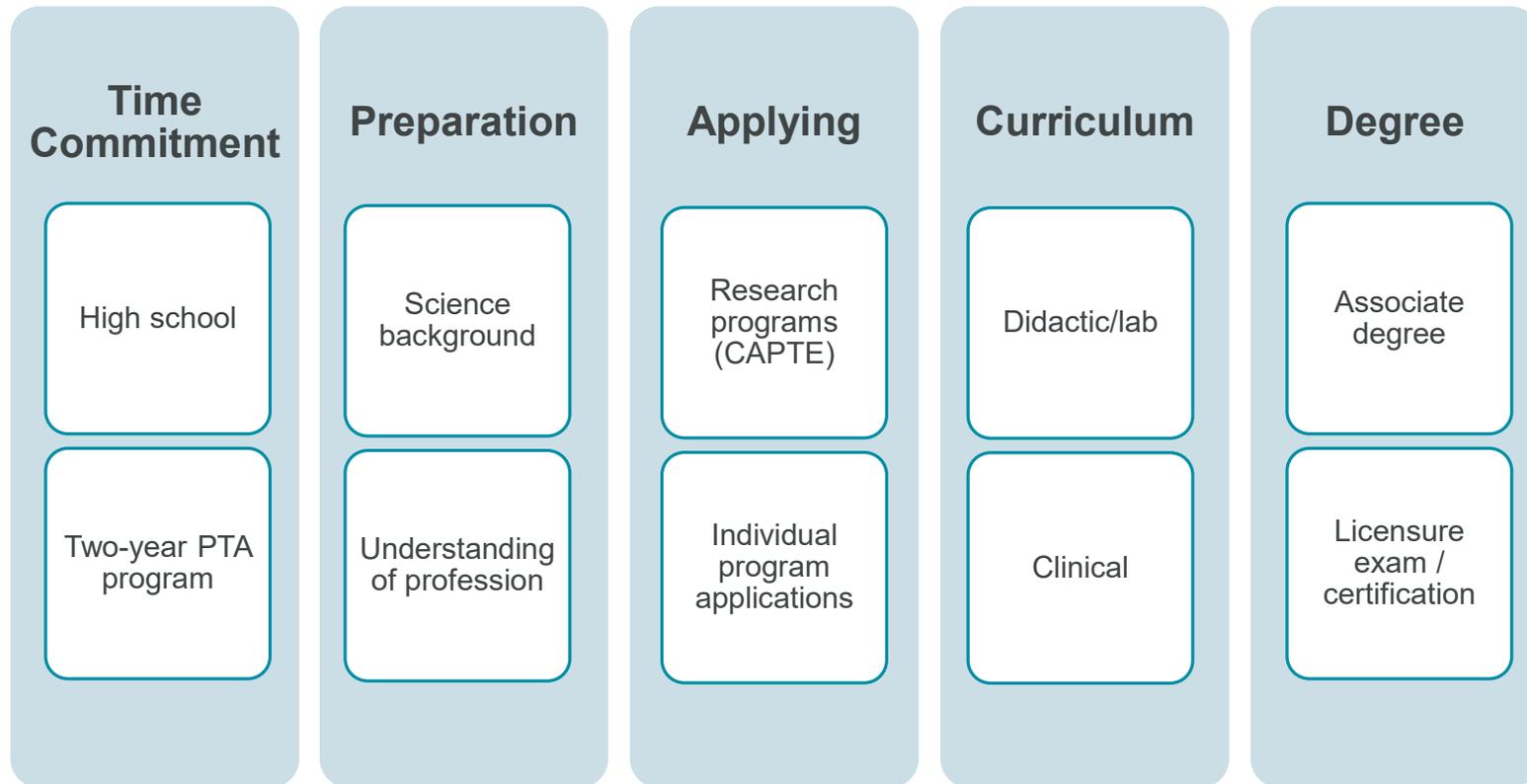
High school  
diploma or  
GED

Two-year  
associate  
degree

PTA licensure  
exam



# PTA Application and Education



# Why Choose Physical Therapy?



## Movement Is Essential to Life

PTs and PTAs optimize quality of life by focusing on movement loss prevention and optimal movement performance.



Boston Marathon bombing survivor Adrienne Haslet thought her quality of life would be a zero. Her physical therapist and the rest of her health care team helped Adrienne to move and to believe again.



# Physical Therapy Is a Personally, Professionally, and Financially Rewarding Career!

- Top-ranked health care profession
- Growing profession; 14% increase (PT) in 2022-2023
- 2023 Median salaries: \$99,710 (PT) and \$58,740 (PTA)
- Fosters relationships with patients
- Allows you to see the direct impact and benefit of your work



# How To Prepare



**Start**

**Preparing**

**Now!**

Do your research

Observe a PT or PTA

Diversify your experience

Find a mentor

Review anatomy and physiology

Build a strong science foundation

# Resources



# APTA Helpful Resources

American Physical Therapy Association  
[apta.org](http://apta.org)

Physical Therapist Centralized Application Service  
[ptcas.org](http://ptcas.org)

Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education  
[capteonline.org](http://capteonline.org)

APTA Free Financial Literacy Resource  
[moneysmart.ptmovesme.org/](http://moneysmart.ptmovesme.org/)

Questions about PT Careers or Pathway to PT/PTA  
[studentrecruitment@apta.org](mailto:studentrecruitment@apta.org)



# Stay Connected



**@APTAPics**



**@APTATweets**



**@ChoosePTVideos**



**@AmericanPhysicalTherapyAssociation**

# Questions & Answers



## APTA Financial Resources

- <https://moneysmart.ptmovesme.org/>
- Create a free account and learn important financial skills
- National scholarship portal

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# Thank You



Building a community that  
advances the profession of  
physical therapy to improve  
the health of society.

