

Is a career in physical therapy for you?

Deciding on a future career is a big decision: one that should be made after careful consideration of many factors. It might be helpful to ask yourself the following questions.

- Do you have a general idea of what physical therapy involves?
- Do you enjoy science related classes?
- Do you enjoy working closely with people?
- Do you have the social skills and patience to work closely with people?
- Do you handle responsibility well?
- Can you take directions and carry out the task accurately and efficiently?
- Do you have the time, finances and motivation to complete the program?
- Is this compatible with your other needs and responsibilities? (family, etc.)

What is a PTA and what do they do?

The PTA works under the direction and supervision of the physical therapist. They assist in managing conditions such as; back and neck injuries, sprains and strains, fractures, arthritis, burns, amputations, stroke, multiple sclerosis, birth defects, injuries related to work and sports, and others.

What is the job outlook for PTAs:

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics and Occupational Outlook Handbook, employment of PTAs is expected to grow by 32% over the 2006-2016 decade. The long term demand for PTAs will continue to rise secondary to the increasing elderly population who are particularly vulnerable to chronic and debilitating conditions that require therapeutic services. These patients often need additional assistance in their treatment, making the roles of assistants extremely vital. The large baby-boom generation is entering the prime age for heart attacks and strokes, further increasing the demand for cardiac and physical rehabilitation. In addition, future medical developments should permit an increased percentage of trauma victims to survive, creating added demand for therapy services.

Physical therapists are expected to increasingly utilize assistants to reduce the cost of physical therapy services. Once a patient is evaluated and a treatment plan is designed by the physical therapist, the physical therapist assistant can provide many aspects of treatment, as prescribed by the therapist.

How can I prepare myself for the program?

It is highly recommended that prospective students job shadow (spend time with a local PTA on the job site) to help them identify with the role of the PTA in the health care field. The PTA Program at Rhodes State College requires all students to complete 40 hours of observation to fulfill qualification requirements for the program.

Is the PTA program a stepping stone to a PT program?

In general no, but the PTA program at Rhodes State College is fortunate to be geographically located to one of only two "bridge" programs in the United States. The "bridge" programs, one in California and one in Ohio, allow PTAs to work while going to school on weekends. These programs award a Doctorate degree in Physical Therapy.