

## Occupational Therapists: Empowering People with Skills for the Job of Living

People experience life to the fullest through meaningful occupations - the day to day skills, activities, interactions and experiences that engage us with our environment, our community and the people around us. Our ability to participate in occupations that are important to us promotes health and well-being. The goal of occupational therapy is to positively influence people's health by enabling occupation.

### What is an Occupational Therapist?

Occupational Therapists are health professionals that help people or groups of people of all ages assume or reassume the skills they need for the job of living. OTs work with their clients to help them identify barriers to meaningful occupations (self care, work and leisure). While enabling clients to change these barriers, occupational therapists fulfill the roles of therapist, educator, counselor, case manager, resource developer, policy analyst and advocate.

### Occupational Therapists Help With Situations Such As:

- ! difficulties affecting one's ability to care for oneself or others
- ! returning to work after prolonged illness or injury
- ! learning difficulties in the classroom
- ! mobility/seating problems that impair function in the home/workplace/community
- ! difficulties socializing or enjoying leisure time because of functional changes
- ! home or workplace modifications when accessibility is an issue
- ! managing pain due to injury, burns, arthritis, etc.

### Where do Occupational Therapists Work?

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|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ! hospitals                        | ! rehabilitation centres           |
| ! schools                          | ! private practice                 |
| ! mental health hospitals/services | ! industries                       |
| ! children's treatment centres     | ! long-term care facilities        |
| ! client homes or workplaces       | ! universities/research facilities |

### What do Occupational Therapists Earn?

Salaries can vary depending on work experience, role, work environment and geographic location, however Ontario occupational therapists can expect an annual salary of from \$40,000 to over \$70,000, commensurate with experience. Occupational therapists are employed in the both the public and private sectors where benefit packages enhance total compensation. Most therapists in the public sector earn between \$21 - \$36 per hour. An increasing number of OTs work as private practitioners and independent contractors.

### How do I become an Occupational Therapist?

To work as an occupational therapist in Ontario you must complete a university degree, pass a certification exam and be registered with the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario. Programs in Ontario include; McMaster University, Queen's University, The University of Ottawa, The University of Toronto, The University of Western Ontario. More information about these programs can be found at [www.cou.on.ca/Health/committees/OCUPRS/OCUPRS.htm](http://www.cou.on.ca/Health/committees/OCUPRS/OCUPRS.htm). To request an application package, visit [www.ouac.on.ca/orpas/](http://www.ouac.on.ca/orpas/).

For more information about the profession of occupational therapy, visit: [www.otworks.com](http://www.otworks.com), [www.osot.on.ca](http://www.osot.on.ca), or [www.caot.ca](http://www.caot.ca).