

Physiotherapist

Join the team and
make a difference

Movement and physical activity are key factors in people's health.

Physiotherapists treat people of all ages who have physical problems caused by illness, injury or ageing. They particularly concentrate on the limbs, neck and back, as well as problems associated with poor circulation and breathing difficulties.

What will you do?

You will be working with individuals or small groups of people, to find ways of improving activity levels and relieving pain. There is a huge span of possible cases, from premature babies to the very old, with people of all ages in between. In each case you will use your skills and knowledge to develop appropriate treatment, using exercises, manipulation, heat, electrotherapy and hydrotherapy. You could be teaching a child how to cope better with asthma, helping a young woman to prepare for childbirth, or encouraging someone to regain mobility, balance and physical confidence after a stroke.



You will be part of a team with other health professionals, working in hospital wards such as intensive care, in outpatient clinics or in the community. Patients may be referred by doctors or will come to you directly. It's often a fairly intense, hands-on role so you'll need a good level of physical fitness. Because you'll be working in collaboration with patients during their treatment, it's important that you can gain their respect and confidence.

Where will you work?	What skills and qualities will you need?
<p>You will be working in one or more of the following settings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hospitals – outpatient departments, intensive care units, surgical and medical wards • health centres – in clinics dealing with problems such as back pain and recovery from fractures • the community – in people's homes, schools and other care environments 	• good listening and communication skills
	• a caring, compassionate attitude
	• initiative and confidence in your own judgement
	• willingness to learn and continue learning
	• a good level of fitness
	• the ability to relate to a wide range of people
	• a responsible, professional approach

As a physiotherapist you will work within the pattern of a normal working week, with some exceptions if you are attached to a hospital team.

What entry routes are available?

To practise as a physiotherapist in the NHS you will need either a BSc Honours degree, or postgraduate qualification in physiotherapy recognised by the Health Professions Council (HPC).

Degree programmes last three or four years, full time, combining study with clinical placements. If you're a graduate with a relevant degree, you can take a two-year accelerated course leading to qualification. Part-time courses are also available.

Once you have your degree, you will need to register with the HPC to practise as a physiotherapist.

There are also opportunities for physiotherapy assistants to work in support of physiotherapists in delivering treatment to patients. This can include preparing patients, helping to guide them through exercises, and assisting generally in clinics. There are no formal educational requirements for this role. Assistants will be encouraged to gain qualifications in this area of work, and may be supported on foundation degree courses, which could lead to a full degree and professional qualification. For further information, see the *Clinical support worker* factsheet.

For more information on the range of opportunities available in the allied health professions, please visit www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/qualifications. This gives more specific details about what qualifications are necessary for each role. You can search for current vacancies and download job descriptions at www.jobs.nhs.uk

How can you develop your career?

You will probably start your career by doing rotations through different specialties. As your clinical experience grows you can move into more senior posts and start to specialise. There is a wide range of options: community practice, sports medicine, orthopaedics, paediatrics or working with older people. Opportunities exist in research and teaching to develop the profession further.

As well as moving to more senior and specialised roles within this area, you will also have the chance to take on additional responsibilities and progress within the organisation, as part of the Career Framework. Consultant physiotherapists, for example, can become the clinical lead for large teams of therapists within a hospital. For more information about this initiative, please see the *Careers in the allied health professions* in the NHS booklet.

Pay

The national pay system in the NHS is called Agenda for Change (AfC). This applies to all staff in the allied health professions except the most senior managers. These are examples of roles and the AfC bands at which they may be paid: physiotherapist (Band 5); physiotherapist specialist (Band 6); physiotherapist advanced (Band 7). To find out more about pay bands, and to see the most up-to-date salary information, visit www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/payandbenefits

To find out more about careers in the allied health professions, please visit www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/working

For more information on the professional bodies relevant to the allied health professions, visit www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/contacts