

Physical Therapists (PT) provide services that help restore function, improve mobility, relieve pain, and prevent or limit permanent physical disabilities of patients suffering from injuries or disease. They restore, maintain, and promote overall fitness and health. The main goal of a PT is to return the patient to their full functioning independence.

### Educational Requirements

Students complete a bachelor's degree and all prerequisite courses at an accredited college or university and then apply for admission to a professional school to complete Master's or Doctoral professional coursework, which includes classroom, laboratory, and clinical education.

The requirements of the [University of Maryland, Baltimore's School of Physical Therapy](#) are typical of most PT programs. UMB requires completion of the [Graduate Record Examination \(GRE\)](#), Educational Testing Service (ETS) as well as recommendations from a licensed physical therapist, a community service experience, and an academic source.

UMB also requires the following:

- Physical Therapy Experience - All applicants must complete a minimum of 100 hours observing the practice of physical therapy. The admissions committee strongly recommends that you complete as many hours as possible prior to submitting the application for admission. Applicants are encouraged to observe the practice of physical therapy in different clinical settings (acute care, rehab and out-patient).
- Community Service - Acceptable service includes participation in cultural and faith-based groups, college and university clubs or national, regional, state, or local organizations.
- CPR and Basic First Aid Certification - The CPR certification must include infant, child and adult resuscitation. Both CPR and First Aid must be complete prior to enrolling in the DPT program.

Admission to professional schools is very competitive. Contact professional programs for most current requirements. Nearby schools offering PT listed are below. **NOTE: Most schools do not have a "Pre-Physical Therapy" major. Students usually select a major that will allow them to take recommended courses below.** Exercise Science or Kinesiology majors most closely align with PT prerequisites.

**Sample prerequisite courses** typically required by Physical Therapy programs:

- General Biology BIOL 150 & 151
- Human Anatomy and Physiology BIOL 212 & 213
- Inorganic & Organic Chemistry CHEM 131 & 132
- General Physics I and II PHYS 203 & 204
- Introduction to Psychology PSYC 102
- English Composition ENGL 101 & 102
- Statistics MATH 117
- Also often required, a College Algebra with Applications - closest matches at Montgomery College: MATH 150 Elementary Applied Calculus or MATH 165 Precalculus

### Sample Professional School Programs for Doctoral Programs in Physical Therapy

Check each school for a list of courses required for admission:

- [University of Maryland, Baltimore \(UMB\)](#)
- [University of Maryland Eastern Shore \(UMES\)](#)
- [Howard University](#) DC
- [University of Delaware](#)
- [Shenandoah University, Winchester VA](#)

Find other programs, as well as admissions requirements, on the [Physical Therapy Application Service](#) site.

[American Physical Therapy Association \(APTA\)](#): This association provides a description of the profession and links to physical therapy resources on the Internet, and [Physical Therapist Frequently Asked Questions](#).

### **What can students do to enhance their chances of admission to a PT program?**

Candidates should have a high overall grade point average (GPA) and a high GPA in prerequisite course work. Admission officers also look favorably on an applicant's volunteer experience as a physical therapy aide, letters of recommendation from physical therapists or science teachers, and excellent writing and interpersonal skills. The physical therapist education program is a full-time commitment.

### **What's the difference between a physical therapist (PT) and a physical therapist assistant (PTA)?**

Montgomery College's program for students who wish to become a Physical Therapist Assistant is a career track designed to prepare students for immediate employment. It is not a transfer track for students who wish to go on and become a Physical Therapist. For many students, however, the career of PTA is in demand, rewarding and offers a faster path to employment in the field of physical therapy. PTA Career Information: [www.apta.org/PTACareers/](http://www.apta.org/PTACareers/)

### **Is Montgomery College's Physical Therapy Assistant program (PTA) a stepping-stone to a physical therapist program?**

No. The physical therapist assistant curriculum differs from that of the physical therapist, and it does not provide the needed prerequisites required for physical therapist education. There is only one [PTA to PT "Bridge Program" offered currently in the US, through The University of Findlay, Ohio](#) . Students who finish [MC's Physical Therapy Assistant Program](#) do have strong employment options (search [Indeed.com](http://indeed.com) for Physical Therapy Assistant job openings); however, if your goal is to become a Physical Therapist, completing a bachelor's degree and then enrolling in a doctoral PT program should be your focus.

### **Resources to help you learn about careers in physical therapy:**

- [Occupation Handbook](#)
- [US News - Best Jobs](#)
- [American Physical Therapy Association](#)
- [Physical Therapy Careers](#)
- [The National Physical Therapy Exam](#)
- [Accredited Physical Therapy Schools](#)
- [List of Physical Therapy Schools](#)

Meet with an adviser regularly to work on your academic plan.

1-9-2020