



Occupational Therapy Association of Colorado

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Occupational Therapists work with people with different types of disabilities enabling them to maximize their skills and abilities. Occupational Therapy is a medical profession, which provides the "skills for the job of living" that are necessary for living meaningful, productive, and satisfying lives.

Occupational Therapists and Occupational Therapy Assistants work with a variety of individuals who have difficulty accessing or performing meaningful occupations. These individuals have been adversely affected by an injury or illness, a birth disorder or a disability sustained later in life, which impacts their ability to function in everyday life tasks (e.g.; self feeding, paying attention in school, organizing and sequencing through work tasks, or cooking a meal from a wheelchair position).

Individuals benefiting from occupational therapy services, including infants, children, adolescents, adults, and elderly people with:

- work-related injuries including upper extremity injuries, brain or spinal injuries, complex regional pain syndrome formerly known as reflex sympathetic dystrophy, or repetitive strain injuries
- physical, cognitive, perceptual, or psychological limitations following a stroke, brain injury, or heart attack
- developmental disabilities such as Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Developmental Delays, and Sensory Integration and Learning Disabilities
- mental health diagnoses such as Bipolar, Schizophrenia, ADHD, Obsessive Compulsive Disorders (OCD), Depression, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- age-related conditions such as osteoporosis, (Alzheimer's) dementia
- arthritis – rheumatoid, osteoarthritis, and juvenile rheumatoid arthritis
- neurodegenerative movement disorders such as Multiple Sclerosis (MS), Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS; Lou Gehrig's Disease), and Parkinson's Disease (PD)
- substance abuse, eating disorders, and borderline personality disorders
- burns, spinal cord injuries, amputations, and cardiac diagnoses
- hip fractures or other injuries from falls and motor vehicle accidents
- low vision, perceptual, or cognitive impairments

The practice of Occupational Therapy includes interventions that promote or enhance safety and performance in these activities of daily living, such as training in self care, modification of the living environment to accommodate a wheelchair, and the use of compensatory organizational skills.

Occupational Therapists work in a vast array of settings such as:

Outpatient Clinics
Prisons

Schools
Homes

Nursing Facilities
Assisted Living Facilities
Mental Health Facilities,
Hospitals
Hand Therapy Clinics
Forensic Units

Cardiac and Pulmonary Rehabilitation Burn
Centers
Industrial Therapy Centers
Community Settings: Homeless Shelters,
Residential Facilities, Elder Day Care

Occupational Therapy Educational Requirements

Many Occupational Therapists working in clinical practice earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Occupational Therapy. Since 2007, however, all Occupational Therapists will enter the field with a Masters (M.S. or M.O.T.) or Doctoral Degree (O.T.D.) in Occupational Therapy. Six months of fieldwork are required, along with passing the initial certification exam.

Legislative Update 2009

Last year, SB08-152 was adopted requiring an Occupational Therapy practicing in Colorado to register with the Department of Regulatory Agencies (DORA). There are only three states (Colorado, Michigan and Hawaii) not licensing Occupational Therapists.

Including registration, SB08-152 also:

Defines the Scope of Practice of Occupational Therapy,
Sets initial practice standards for Occupational Therapists:

Academic Requirements

Fieldwork Obligations

National Examination Standards,

Sets standards for the supervision of Occupational Therapist Assistants,

Defines grounds for discipline of an Occupational Therapist,

Sets up rule making under DORA & Sunsets on January 1, 2013.