

Physiotherapy assistants/support workers

Physiotherapy assistants help patients to follow exercise and treatment programmes set out by registered [physiotherapists](#) ^[1]

This page has information on the role of the physiotherapy support worker, including entry requirements and skills needed.

Working life

Working under the direction of a physiotherapist, your work as a physiotherapy assistant could involve:

- setting up equipment
- showing patients how to use mobility aids
- helping patients prepare for treatment (including helping with dressing and undressing)
- working on exercises with patients
- writing reports and updating patients' records



You may work with individuals or groups of all ages and situations with a range of conditions, including

- neurological ([stroke](#) [2], multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's)
- neuromusculoskeletal (back pain, whiplash associated disorder, sports injuries, arthritis)
- [cardiovascular](#) [3] (chronic heart disease, rehabilitation after heart attack)
- [respiratory](#) [4] (asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, cystic fibrosis)

You could be working in

- outpatients' departments
- women's health
- elderly care
- [stroke](#) [2] services
- orthopaedics
- mental health and learning disability services
- occupational health
- paediatrics

Some physiotherapy assistants work in the local community. They could be based in health centres. Some treat patients in their own homes, nursing homes, day centres or schools. Others work in private clinics and voluntary organisations or charities.



As well as working with [physiotherapists](#) [1], physiotherapy assistants work with other healthcare professionals including [occupational therapists](#) [5], [orthopaedic surgeons](#) [6], [prosthetists](#) [7], [orthotists](#) [7] and [nurses](#) [8]. They spend a lot of time with patients.

'We guide groups of people through exercises and relaxation techniques to help them manage chronic pain. We also teach patients how to use new walking aids, specify the fittings they may need to get around safely at home and run injection clinics for pain relief'.

Tahira Jabeen Razaq, physiotherapy assistant in Birmingham

[Read Tahira's story](#) [9]

Entry requirements

There are no set entry requirements for physiotherapy assistants. Employers expect good numeracy and literacy and some experience or qualifications in health or social care. Employers may ask for GCSEs in English and maths. They may ask for a BTEC or equivalent vocational qualification in health and social care.

Employers often ask for relevant work experience. Even where this is not specified, it would be an advantage if you have worked in health or social care, either in paid employment or voluntary work. [Apprenticeships](#) [10] in healthcare can provide you with experience to apply for physiotherapy assistant and other clinical support roles.

Personal characteristics and skills needed

Physiotherapy assistants need to be

- happy to be hands-on with patients
- willing to demonstrate exercises
- able to use gym equipment
- good listeners
- calm and understanding
- happy to talk to and work with groups
- able to follow procedures
- able to motivate people
- willing to work alone or in a team

- physically fit

You'll also need

- organisational skills
- good communication skills
- ability to explain treatment to patients

Training and development

You will be given the training you need to do the job, including an introduction to the department and its procedures and how to set up and use the equipment.

You may be offered the chance to study for qualifications such as

- the CACHE level 2 Certificate in Healthcare Support Services
- the CACHE level 2 or 3 Diploma in Clinical Healthcare Support

Physiotherapy assistants can become associate members of the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy [11]. The Society runs courses, conferences and seminars where physiotherapy assistants can update their skills and network with others doing similar work.

- Pay and conditions

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Clinical support staff working in the NHS are paid on the [12]Agenda for Change (AfC) [13] pay system. As a physiotherapy assistant you will typically start on AfC [14] band 2 or 3. With further training and experience, you could apply for more senior positions at band 4 - eg as an assistant practitioner [15]. Physiotherapy assistants in the NHS work standard hours, which are likely to be around 37.5 a week. This may include evenings and weekends.

Terms and conditions will usually be different for clinical support staff working outside of the NHS.

- Where the role can lead

Expand / collapse

With experience, you could become a team leader supervising the work of other physiotherapy assistants.

You could apply to train as an assistant practitioner [15] or, with the qualifications needed for entry into university, as a physiotherapist [16], [17]

- Job market and vacancies

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Most NHS trusts advertise their vacancies on [NHS Jobs](#) [18]. Some advertise on their own websites. You can find a list of NHS organisations on [NHS Choices](#) [19]. Opportunities outside the NHS may be found in sources including [Universal Jobmatch](#) [20]

If you're applying for a role either directly in the NHS or in an organisation that provides NHS services, you'll be asked to show how you think the NHS values apply in your everyday work.

[Find out more about NHS values](#) [21].

- Further information

Expand / collapse

- [Chartered Society of Physiotherapy](#) [22]

Other roles that may interest you

- [Occupational therapist](#) [23]
- [Occupational therapy support worker](#) [24]
- [Physiotherapist](#) [25]
- [Radiography assistants and imaging support workers](#) [26]

Source URL: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team/roles-wider-healthcare-team/clinical-support-staff/physiotherapy-assistantssupport-workers>

Links

- [1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals/physiotherapist>
- [2] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Stroke>
- [3] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Cardiovascular>
- [4] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Respiratory>
- [5] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals/occupational-therapist>
- [6] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/surgery/trauma-and-orthopaedic-surgery>
- [7] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals/prosthetistorthotist>
- [8] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/nursing>
- [9] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/clinical-support-staff/physiotherapy-assistantssupport-workers/real-life-story-tahir-0>
- [10] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/i-am/secondary-school-or-fe-college/apprenticeships-traineeships-and-cadet-schemes>
- [11] <http://www.csp.org.uk/>
- [12] <https://www.healthcareers.lampuat64-3.rroom.net/about-us/careers-nhs/pay-and-benefits/agenda-change-pay-rates>
- [13] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/about/careers-nhs/nhs-pay-and-benefits/agenda-change-pay-rates>
- [14] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#AfC>
- [15] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/clinical-support-staff/assistant-practitioner>
- [16] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals/physiotherapist-0>
- [17] <https://www.healthcareers.lampuat64-3.rroom.net/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals/physiotherapist-0>
- [18] <http://www.jobs.nhs.uk/>

- [19] <http://www.nhs.uk/aboutnhs/howthenhsworks/authoritiesandtrusts/Pages/Authoritiesandtrusts.aspx>
- [20] <https://www.gov.uk/jobsearch>
- [21] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/about/working-health/nhs-constitution>
- [22] <http://www.csp.org.uk>
- [23] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals/roles-allied-health-professions/occupational-therapist>
- [24] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/Explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team/roles-wider-healthcare-team/clinical-support-staff/occupational-therapy-support-worker>
- [25] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals/roles-allied-health-professions/physiotherapist>
- [26] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/Explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team/roles-wider-healthcare-team/clinical-support-staff/radiography-assistants-and-imaging-support-workers>