

## Physiotherapist

Physiotherapists help and treat patients with physical problems caused by illness, injury, age or disability. They use movement, exercise and technology to help maximise patients' movements, and improve their health or independence.

### The Work

You could be:

- talking to patients to find out about their difficulties and to reassure them
- discussing treatments with colleagues and patients
- using exercise, hydrotherapy (using water), electrotherapy, massage and manipulation to treat patients
- giving patients an exercise programme to follow at home
- encouraging patients to try movements which may be difficult for them
- using equipment to help with treatment
- writing reports and recording work done and progress made by patients
- working as part of a team with other health professionals
- giving advice on how to prevent damage to the body, or reduce its effects.

### Pay

Pay rates can vary depending on whether you are working with the NHS, with a private practice, or are self-employed.

Within the NHS Agenda for Change scales physiotherapists' salaries are on Band 5, £34,494 to £42,977 a year. Specialist physiotherapists are on Band 6, £43,169 to £52,603 a year. Advanced physiotherapy practitioners are paid on Band 7, £52,769 to £61,377 a year. The current pay scales are from April 2025.

Salaries outwith the NHS can range from £25,000 a year for an assistant physiotherapist, rising to around £47,000 with experience.

### Conditions

- You would usually work in treatment units or wards in hospitals.
- You might also work in health centres, professional sports clubs, visit patients at home or work at your own premises if self-employed.
- You may be office based if providing consultations, assessments and advice by phone to clients.
- Hours are usually regular, but you may sometimes do weekend or evening work.
- You would usually wear a uniform.
- It is physically tiring work.

### Getting In

Entry to physiotherapy is competitive.

- You need a degree (SCQF Level 10) in physiotherapy accredited by the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP) and the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). Entry requirements are usually 4-5 good Highers, including English and 2 science subjects from Biology, Chemistry, Maths or Physics.
- In Scotland three universities offer the degree course in Physiotherapy: Glasgow Caledonian University, Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh, and Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen.
- You are advised to have Hepatitis B and BCG vaccinations before starting the course.
- You can take an Honours degree in a science subject followed by a postgraduate MSc Physiotherapy (Pre-Registration). This is usually 2 years full time. This course is offered by Edinburgh Napier University, Glasgow Caledonian University, Queen Margaret University, Robert Gordon University and University of Stirling.
- You will require a satisfactory criminal record check from Disclosure Scotland to show that you are suitable for this type of work. Contact [Disclosure Scotland](#) for details on the type you would need.
- It helps if you have some relevant experience – you should visit a physiotherapy department before applying for a course.
- When you complete your course, you register with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), which you must have to work in the National Health Service (NHS).
- It also helps if you can swim and have an active interest in sport.
- You should be fit – there is a medical examination.

Most physiotherapists work in the NHS. There are also jobs in industry, in sports, in private practice and in the armed services.

## What Does It Take

You should be:

- interested in anatomy and physiology
- able to get on with people from all backgrounds and of all ages
- a good communicator
- cheerful and optimistic
- patient, understanding and tactful
- firm, but encouraging and able to motivate
- willing to take responsibility
- able to work well in a team
- confident about making decisions.

## Training

- Once you have gained state registration, training is on the job.
- In Scotland newly qualified physiotherapists can benefit from the [Flying Start Programme](#). This involves them receiving extra support and training and the chance to be mentored by another physiotherapist.
- With specialist training, physiotherapists working in an advanced practitioner role, are able to prescribe medication for symptoms such as pain and inflammation.
- You need to keep your skills and knowledge up to date by taking short courses as part of your continuous

professional development (CPD) programme. The [Chartered Society of Physiotherapists](#) offer many courses for CPD.

## Getting On

- You might specialise in a particular area, such as sports injuries, critical care, care of the elderly, or working with children or cancer patients.
- You could move into a senior post or into management.
- You could go into research or teaching.
- You may be able to work abroad.
- You might need further qualifications for some jobs.

## More Information

Visit this great resource [NHS Education Scotland Virtual Tour](#) to learn more about this job.

## Contacts

### Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP)

Tel: 020 7306 6666

Website: [www.csp.org.uk](http://www.csp.org.uk)

X: @thecsp

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/charteredphysios](http://www.facebook.com/charteredphysios)

### Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC)

Tel: 0300 500 6184

Email: [education@hcpc-uk.org](mailto:education@hcpc-uk.org)

Website: [www.hcpc-uk.org](http://www.hcpc-uk.org)

X: @The\_HCPC

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/hcpcuk](http://www.facebook.com/hcpcuk)

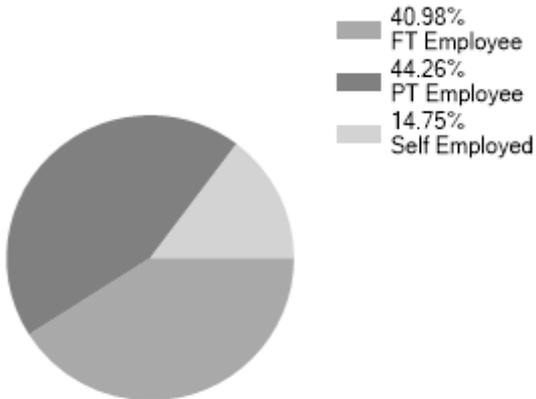
### NHS Scotland Careers

Website: [www.careers.nhs.scot](http://www.careers.nhs.scot)

Website (2): [jobs.scot.nhs.uk](http://jobs.scot.nhs.uk)

## Statistics

Employment Status UK %



## Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

LMI data powered by [LMI for All](#)

Predicted Employment Statistics : Not available this career.