

What to Expect as an Occupational Therapist

Summary: *Work as an occupational therapist is much like other medical professions. You get to help people each day regain a level of independence.*



An occupational therapist (OT) can expect a wide range of daily duties, especially when working at a smaller facility. An OT at a larger hospital can expect to have more specific roles. The general definition for an occupational therapist is someone who, through the use of assessment and treatment, can help a person develop, recover, or maintain daily living and work skills. Here is an example of what your job would be like for a local health care system at a smaller hospital.

[Click here to find a job as an occupational therapist on Hound.com.](#)

Daily Expectations

Inpatient rehabilitation generally entails working with patients that are recovering from a stroke, back surgery, hip fractures, etc. Acute care patients may be admitted for the same conditions but are still receiving other care. Orthopedic patients are those that just had surgeries like shoulder, knee, or hip. Outpatients need help with things like hand therapy for carpal tunnel syndrome, lateral



epicondylitis aka tennis elbow, and fractures of the upper extremities.

With so many responsibilities and conditions to treat, an OC must be studying and reviewing information all the time to make sure they are giving their patients the best care possible. With inpatients, an OC mostly works on retraining patients to be able to complete their ADL's or activities of daily living. This includes helping them relearn how to take showers or baths, get dressed, use the bathroom, and prepare food. With outpatients, the OC focuses on relieving pain, sensitivity, and increasing a person's range of motion through things like strengthening exercises, using ultrasounds or deep tissue massage to assist in the process.

The difference between an OC and a physical therapist is that PT's focus on deficits in strength, flexibility and balance. An OC is more concerned with helping the patient overcome these challenges so they can perform basic functions.

Photo: sleepcenterlcmc.com