**Description**

Occupational therapist assistants work under the direction of occupational therapists to provide rehabilitative services to persons with mental, physical, emotional, or developmental impairments. These services help the clients compensate for limitations that would otherwise affect their employment, daily living, or leisure activities. The ultimate goal is to improve the client’s quality of life and ability to perform daily activities.

Occupational therapist assistants help clients with rehabilitative activities and exercises outlined in a treatment plan developed in collaboration with an occupational therapist. Activities range from teaching the proper method of moving from a bed into a wheelchair to the best way to stretch and limber the muscles of the hand.

Occupational therapist assistants monitor an individual’s activities to make sure that they are performed correctly and to provide encouragement. They also record their client’s progress for the occupational therapist. If the treatment is not having the intended effect, or the client is not improving as expected, the therapist may alter the treatment program in hopes of obtaining better results. In addition, occupational therapist assistants document the billing of the client’s health insurance provider.

**Work Conditions**

Occupational therapist assistants work in general hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, rehabilitation centers, mental health facilities, therapy clinics, private residences, school systems, and private practices. Those working in a hospital or clinic usually work in a room that is sanitary, well-lit, and air-conditioned. Those in private practice may go to the client’s home, where the physical conditions may vary.
Growth Projection:
Estimated annual job openings in Fresno County: 10

Pre-Employment Screening
Drug Testing	No
Physical Exam	No
DMV Printout	No
Background Check	No
Based on local employer survey results.

Important Notice On Sources Of Information
The information contained in this publication is based primarily on data collected from the State of California Employment Development Department, the Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics, and the Fresno County Workforce Investment Board’s research of other sources. Differences in information exist because of the use of a variety of sources, i.e., data about wages, training providers, and programs will sometimes change. Understanding these constraints, a substantial effort was made to ensure the accuracy of the information.

Requirements

Education:
Completion of an associate’s degree or certificate from a two-year college or technical school accredited by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education is required.

Training:
On-the-job training through an educational program is recommended.

Experience:
No experience required.

License or Certification:
Must pass examination offered by the National Board of Occupational Therapists to receive certification from the California Board of Occupational Therapy.

Physical Demand:
Occupational therapist assistants need to have a moderate degree of strength, due to the physical exertion required in assisting patients with their treatment. For example, assistants may need to lift patients. Constant kneeling, stooping, and standing for long periods also are part of the job. They should also be in good physical condition, since their duties include regular contact with ill or injured people.

Top Five Skills Needed:

Active Listening
Giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.

Social Perceptiveness
Being aware of others’ reactions and understanding why they react as they do.

Service Orientation
Actively looking for ways to help people.

Instructing
Teaching others how to do something.

Speaking
Talking to others to convey information effectively.

Other Requirements:
- Must be at least 19 years old
- Must not have alcohol or controlled substance addictions
- Able to effectively communicate with others verbally and in writing and to follow instructions
- Able to listen to or observe the reactions of others and respond appropriately
- Fingerprint clearance is required

WorkKeys® Scores

Applied Mathematics: 3
Locating Information: 4
Reading for Information: 4

Applied Mathematics:
The WorkKeys® Applied Mathematics assessment measures the skill people use when they apply mathematical reasoning, critical thinking, and problem-solving techniques to work-related problems.

Locating Information:
The WorkKeys® Locating Information assessment measures the skill people use when they locate, synthesize, and use information from workplace graphics such as charts, graphs, tables, forms, flowcharts, diagrams, floor plans, maps, and instrument gauges.

Reading for Information:
The WorkKeys® Reading for Information assessment measures the skill people use when they read and use written texts, such as memos, letters, directions, signs, notices, bulletins, policies, and regulations, in order to do a job.