



OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS

Occupational Therapists in California

Occupational therapists help individuals maximize independence, prevent or minimize disability, and maintain health. They work with people who have conditions that are mentally, physically, developmentally, or emotionally disabling. Clients include those with work-related injuries, limitations following a stroke or heart attack, and serious chronic conditions (e.g. arthritis, multiple sclerosis).

Occupational therapists provide evaluations, goals, and treatment plans to help clients perform daily activities, essential for independent and satisfying lives. Services typically include comprehensive home and job site evaluations with adaptation recommendations.

- California Board of Occupational Therapy, Occupational Therapy Practice Act (<http://www.bot.ca.gov/lawsregs.htm>)
- U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Outlook Handbook (www.bls.gov/oco/ocos078.htm)
- The American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc. (www.aota.org/featured/area6/index.asp)

Education

Currently, occupational therapists have graduated from an accredited occupational therapy educational program with a bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree. Starting in 2007, a master's degree or higher will be the new minimum educational requirement.

Credentialing: License, Certification

To practice occupational therapy in California, one must be licensed by the [California Board of Occupational Therapy](#) (BOT). The title "Occupational Therapist Registered (OTR)" after a practitioner's name indicates that he or she is a licensed occupational therapist and has met the BOT's education and examination requirements.

To ensure an occupational therapist is licensed and in good standing, you can check the [BOT's License Verification](#) or contact the Board. Although not required, occupational therapists may also seek advanced practice certification through BOT in hand therapy, the use of physical agent modalities, and/or swallowing assessment, evaluation and intervention.

Referrals and Reimbursement

In California, occupational therapy can begin for individuals following a physician's or other licensed diagnostician's (e.g. nurse practitioner) diagnosis of disease or disorder [or who are receiving occupational therapy services under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)]. *

Also, it is in your best interests to contact your health plan to find out what the requirements and the scope of coverage are for occupational therapy services.

** IDEA provides for early intervention, special education, and related services for children and youth with disabilities.*

To make sure an occupational therapist is: 1) licensed and in good standing, or 2) to file a complaint, contact:

California Board of Occupational Therapy
444 North 3rd Street, Suite 410, Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone: (916) 322-3394

Online Complaint Form:

<https://app1.dca.ca.gov/bot/complaint.htm>

Website: <http://www.bot.ca.gov>

How Can I Find One?

Physicians and other health care professionals will often provide a recommendation or referral, although you are free to choose your own within your health plan guidelines. Check with BOT to ensure an occupational therapist is licensed and in good standing.

Additional Online Resources**

The American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc. (AOTA)	www.aota.org Find an OT
Occupational Therapy Association of California (OTAC)	www.otaconline.org

**** NOTE:** Association databases of members may not include all licensed practitioners.

You might also be interested in reading our "[Consumer's Guide to Physical Therapists in California](#)."