



CareerOneStop Occupation Profile

Occupational Therapy Assistants

Description: what do they do?

Assist occupational therapists in providing occupational therapy treatments and procedures. May, in accordance with State laws, assist in development of treatment plans, carry out routine functions, direct activity programs, and document the progress of treatments. Generally requires formal training.

Also known as:

Occupational Therapist Assistant, Acute Care Occupational Therapy Assistant, Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA), Certified Occupational Therapist Assistant (COTA), Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (COTA), School Based Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant, Licensed Occupational Therapy Assistant, Certified Occupational Therapist Assistant/Licensed (COTA/L), Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant-Licensed (COTA-L), Staff Certified Occupational Therapist Assistant/Licensed (Staff COTA/L)

Career video

<https://cdn.careeronestop.org/OccVids/OccupationVideos/31-2011.00.mp4>

Transcript: People who struggle to feed themselves, get dressed, learn and work... depend on occupational therapy assistants and aides-to help them reach their goals. These professionals help patients gain skills and learn new ways to perform activities of daily living, whether at home, school, or work. Occupational therapy-or OT-assistants carry out treatment plans made by occupational therapists, treating patients from young children to older adults. They guide patients in the use of special equipment, and teach new ways to approach tasks such as moving from bed to a wheelchair. They document each step of patients' progress, and consult frequently with the OT. Occupational therapy aides keep treatment areas clean, equipped, and ready for the next patient. They assist patients in moving to and from treatment areas, schedule appointments, and help patients fill out billing and insurance forms. Most assistants and aides work in occupational therapists' offices, hospitals, and nursing care facilities. Both spend many hours a day on their feet, setting up equipment, bending, and lifting patients when necessary. Evening and weekend hours may be required. Occupational therapy assistants need an associate's degree from an accredited program, and, in most states, a license. Aides typically have a high school diploma or equivalent, and are trained on the job. Helping restore meaningful activity to the lives of their patients... provides a sense of purpose to OT aides and assistants.

Outlook: will there be jobs?



New job opportunities are **very likely** in the future.

[Find job openings](#)

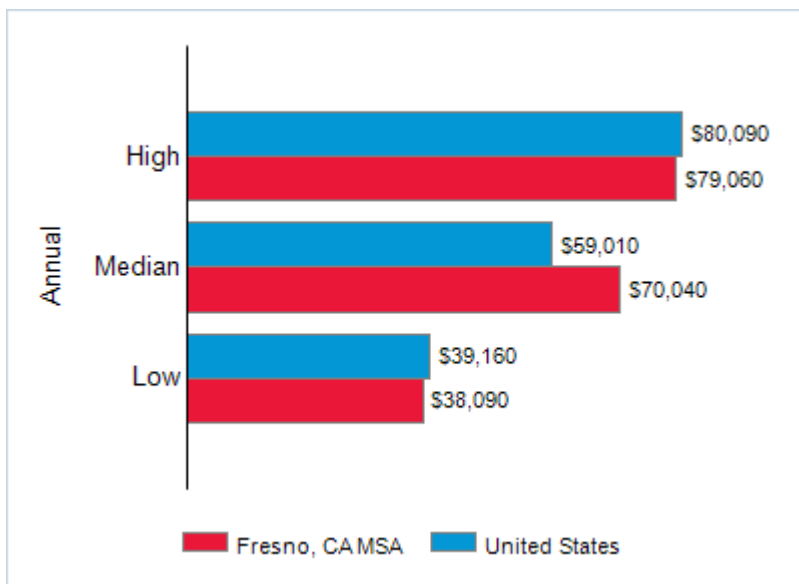
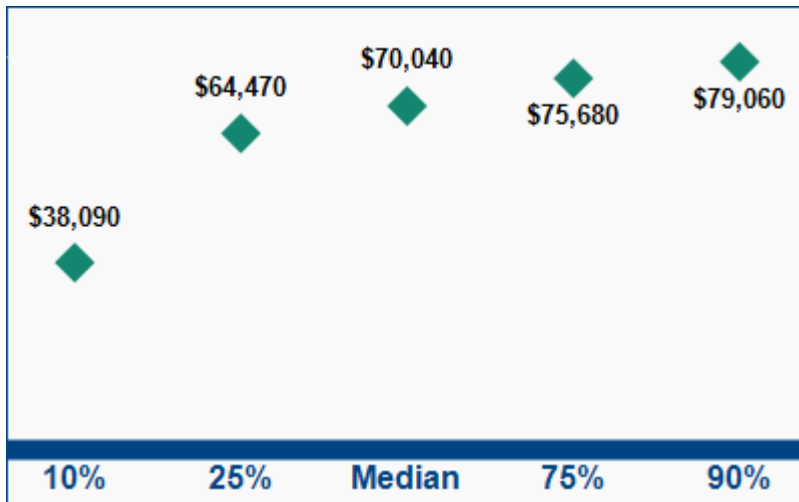
Projected employment

| California | United States |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1,900 2014 Employment | 33,000 2014 Employment |
| 2,500 2024 Employment | 47,100 2024 Employment |
| 32% Percent change | 43% Percent change |
| 120 Annual projected job openings | 2,360 Annual projected job openings |

[Compare projected employment](#)

Typical wages

Annual wages for Occupational Therapy Assistants in Fresno, CA MSA



| Location | Fresno, CA MSA | United States |
|----------|----------------|---------------|
| 10% | \$38,090 | \$39,160 |
| 25% | \$64,470 | \$48,790 |
| Median | \$70,040 | \$59,010 |
| 75% | \$75,680 | \$70,550 |
| 90% | \$79,060 | \$80,090 |

[See more wages](#)

Education and experience: to get started

People starting in this career usually have:

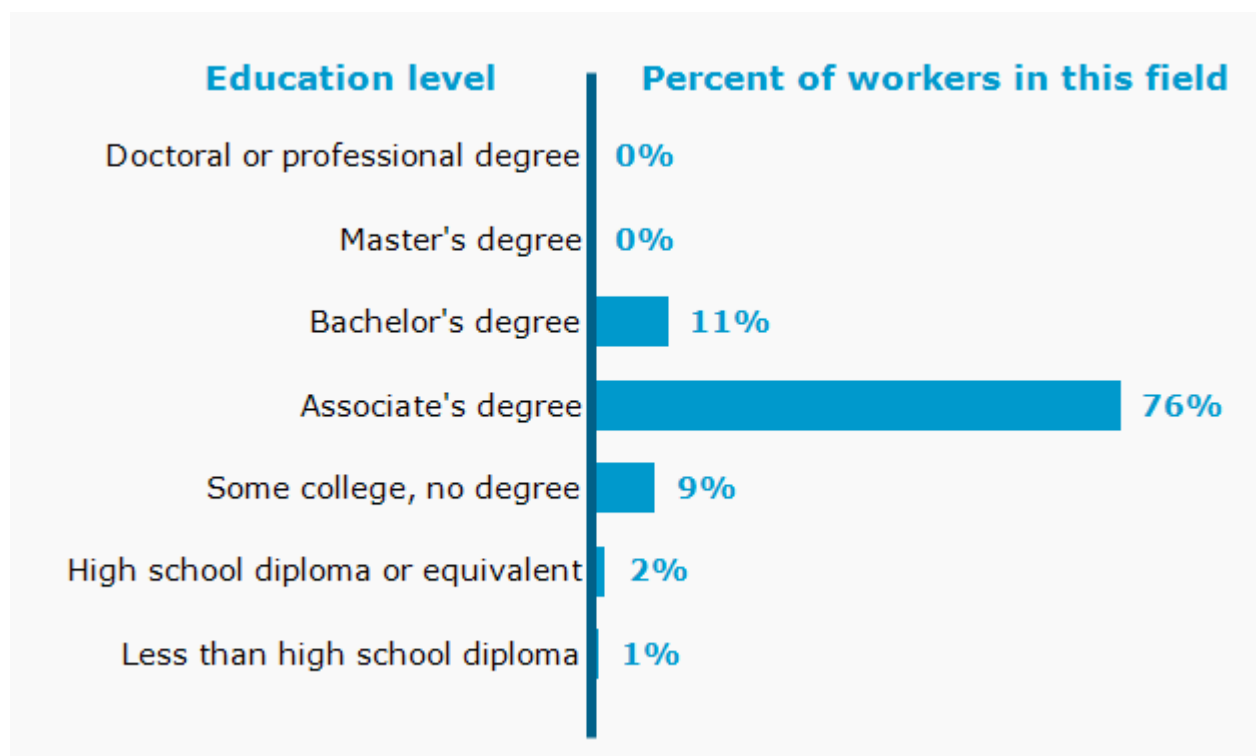
- Associate's degree
- No work experience
- No on-the-job training

Programs that can prepare you:

- [Occupational Therapist Assistant](#)
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Typical education

How much education do most people in this career have?



[Find local training](#)

Certifications: show your skills

Let employers know you have the skills to do well at this job. Earning a **certification** can help you:

- Get a job
- Get a promotion

[Find certifications](#)

Licenses: do you need one?

Some states require an **occupational license** to work in this career.

[Find license details for your state](#)

Apprenticeships: learn on the job

Apprenticeships combine paid on-the-job-training with classroom lessons.

[Find apprenticeship sponsors](#)

Activities: what you might do in a day

- Develop patient therapy programs.
- Encourage patients during therapeutic activities.
- Monitor patient progress or responses to treatments.
- Teach basic living or other adaptive skills to patients or caregivers.
- Record vital statistics or other health information.
- Teach medical procedures or medical equipment use to patients.
- Maintain medical records.
- Assist patients with daily activities.
- Implement therapeutic programs to improve patient functioning.
- Confer with other professionals to plan patient care.
- Administer screening tests to determine abilities or treatment needs.
- Attend educational events to update medical knowledge.
- Communicate patient status to other health practitioners.
- Prepare medical reports or documents.
- Teach medical procedures to healthcare personnel.
- Perform clerical work in medical settings.
- Schedule patient procedures or appointments.
- Process medical billing information.

- Clean medical equipment.
 - Maintain medical equipment or instruments.
 - Prepare medical instruments or equipment for use.
 - Inventory medical supplies or equipment.
 - Move patients to or from treatment areas.
 - Make patient-assistive devices or device models.
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Knowledge

People in this career often know a lot about:

- **Customer and Personal Service** - Knowledge of principles and processes for providing customer and personal services. This includes customer needs assessment, meeting quality standards for services, and evaluation of customer satisfaction.
 - **Psychology** - Knowledge of human behavior and performance; individual differences in ability, personality, and interests; learning and motivation; psychological research methods; and the assessment and treatment of behavioral and affective disorders.
 - **English Language** - Knowledge of the structure and content of the English language including the meaning and spelling of words, rules of composition, and grammar.
 - **Education and Training** - Knowledge of principles and methods for curriculum and training design, teaching and instruction for individuals and groups, and the measurement of training effects.
 - **Therapy and Counseling** - Knowledge of principles, methods, and procedures for diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation of physical and mental dysfunctions, and for career counseling and guidance.
 - **Medicine and Dentistry** - Knowledge of the information and techniques needed to diagnose and treat human injuries, diseases, and deformities. This includes symptoms, treatment alternatives, drug properties and interactions, and preventive health-care measures.
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Skills

People in this career often have these skills:

- **Active Listening** - Listening to others, not interrupting, and asking good questions.
- **Speaking** - Talking to others.
- **Time Management** - Managing your time and the time of other people.
- **Reading Comprehension** - Reading work-related information.
- **Social Perceptiveness** - Understanding people's reactions.

- **Writing** - Writing things for co-workers or customers.
 - **Service Orientation** - Looking for ways to help people.
 - **Judgment and Decision Making** - Thinking about the pros and cons of different options and picking the best one.
 - **Monitoring** - Keeping track of how well people and/or groups are doing in order to make improvements.
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Abilities

People in this career often have talent in:

- **Oral Expression** - Communicating by speaking.
 - **Oral Comprehension** - Listening and understanding what people say.
 - **Problem Sensitivity** - Noticing when problems happen.
 - **Written Comprehension** - Reading and understanding what is written.
 - **Written Expression** - Communicating by writing.
 - **Near Vision** - Seeing details up close.
 - **Speech Recognition** - Recognizing spoken words.
 - **Information Ordering** - Ordering or arranging things.
 - **Speech Clarity** - Speaking clearly.
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Related occupations

- [Physical Therapist Assistants](#)
 - [Psychiatric Technicians](#)
 - [Social and Human Service Assistants](#)
 - [Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education](#)
 - [Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses](#)
 - [Medical Assistants](#)
 - [Speech-Language Pathology Assistants](#)
 - [Residential Advisors](#)
 - [Registered Nurses](#)
 - [Vocational Education Teachers, Postsecondary](#)
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Wage information comes from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics Program. (<https://www.bls.gov/oes/home.htm>)

Education information comes from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Office of Occupational Statistics and Employment Projections. (<https://www.bls.gov/emp/>)

Information on Occupational Description, Interests and Tasks comes from the Occupation Information Network. (<https://www.onetonline.org/>)