There are over 200 physical therapy programs across the United States. Physical therapy programs are offered as a three-year Doctor of Physical Therapy after the completion of an undergraduate degree. Purdue University does not have a physical therapy school. Students interested in pursuing this profession complete their undergraduate degree at Purdue and take the pre-requisite courses needed to meet the entrance requirements. There is no preferred major and students are encouraged to select a major based on their interests and strengths. Students need to make early contact with schools that offer accredited programs and obtain a list of requirements, pre-requisites, and application deadlines and procedures. Your academic advisor, the Internet, and the OT/PT Club on campus can facilitate this research.

**General Pre-Physical Therapy Curriculum**

The following courses are required by most physical therapy programs in the United States. This list is not inclusive as schools have different pre-requisites. Applicants seeking admission to a physical therapy program should contact the institution and utilize online resources that are available. Students may also refer to the American Physical Therapy Association web site for specific requirements for each institution. [http://www.apta.org](http://www.apta.org)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical Therapy School Requirements</th>
<th>Purdue Recommended Courses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>BIOL 1100 &amp; 11100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anatomy &amp; Physiology</td>
<td>BIOL 20300 &amp; 20400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>CHM 11500 &amp; 11600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>PHYS 22000 &amp; 22100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>Depends on school; MA 15300 is the min. req for any HK major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistics</td>
<td>STAT 30100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>PSY 12000, 35000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifespan Development</td>
<td>HDFS 21000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Terminology</td>
<td>HSCI 13100 (2 credits)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Admission Requirements/Considerations**

*Minimum GPA* - Most PT programs have a minimum grade point average required to apply. Each institution sets their requirement. The average GPA of the applicants that are offered admissions is often substantially higher than the minimum GPA required for application. For example, the average GPA of students admitted to IUPUI’s Department of Physical Therapy is 3.7/4.0 and the minimum required to apply is 3.2/4.0.

*Graduate Record Examination (GRE)* - Most schools require students to take the GRE which is a standardized test that gauges a student’s ability to do well in a graduate program. The GRE is given year round and is available as a computer-based or paper-based examination. [http://www.ets.org/gre](http://www.ets.org/gre)

*Volunteer and Clinical Experience* - Most schools will require a certain number of hours volunteering or working under a licensed PT. You should consider getting experience in an inpatient (hospital or nursing home) and outpatient (clinic) setting. The range of required hours is anywhere from 20 to upwards of 200 hours depending on the PT program.

*Research Experience* - Experience working in a lab environment under a professor or other individual for the purposes of research is not required, but can make you more competitive when applying to PT school. Often times this experience can lead to a relationship with a professor who will get to know you on a personal level and be able to write an informed letter of recommendation.
Applying to Physical Therapy School

Most physical therapy schools participate in the Physical Therapy Centralized Application Service (PTCAS) which allows students to apply for multiple programs utilizing a web-based application. In addition, many schools have a supplemental application to be submitted to each individual school. Be prepared to cover the costs of the application process as many students will spend well over $500 between the GRE and application fees. For additional information, visit [http://www.ptcas.org](http://www.ptcas.org).

Employment Outlook and Earnings

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, employment of physical therapists is expected to increase 39 percent from 2010 to 2020, much faster than the average for all occupations. The median annual wage of physical therapists was $76,310 in 2010. The lowest 10 percent earned less than $53,620, and the top 10 percent earned more than $107,920. For additional information, refer to the Bureau of Labor Statistics at [http://www.bls.gov/ooh/Healthcare/Physical-therapists.htm](http://www.bls.gov/ooh/Healthcare/Physical-therapists.htm).

Preparation Time Line

Freshman & Sophomore Years:

- Build strong study habits and establish a high GPA
- Utilize Supplemental Instruction (SI) for math and science courses (MA 15300, BIOL 20300 & 20400, CHM 11500 & 11600)
- Research schools and admission requirements (Min GPA, pre-requisite courses, volunteer hours, etc.)
- Get involved in campus organizations and clubs (OT/PT Club, HK Club, PETE’s PALS, etc.)
- Identify volunteer and clinical experience opportunities and keep detailed records of your hours
- Look at online resources available through the Office of Health Professions Advising: [http://www.purdue.edu/prehealth/index.html](http://www.purdue.edu/prehealth/index.html)

Junior & Senior Years:

- Get involved in research with a professor
- Visit PT schools you are interested in applying to. It is recommended you plan to apply to 8-10 schools
- Have most of your pre-requisite courses completed by the conclusion of your junior year. Many schools have a limit on the number of pre-requisite courses not completed at the time of application
- Prepare to take the GRE during the Spring semester of your junior year or earlier, if possible
- Become familiar with PTCAS and the application process for all the schools you wish to apply to
- Request letters of recommendation by mid-summer after your junior year
- Utilize the Center for Career Opportunities to finalize personal statements and other application materials
- Start PTCAS application summer after your junior year. Application is made available the beginning of July
- Pay close attention to application deadlines and schools that offer early decisions. Most application deadlines range from October 1st through February 1st

Where Can I Get More Information?

American Physical Therapy Association [http://www.apta.org](http://www.apta.org)

Programs in Indiana:

- University of Indianapolis [http://pt.uindy.edu/dpt](http://pt.uindy.edu/dpt)
- IUPUI – Indiana University [http://shrs.iupui.edu/physical_therapy](http://shrs.iupui.edu/physical_therapy)
- University of Evansville [http://pt.evansville.edu](http://pt.evansville.edu)