

# ENABLING ABILITY

## Where to Find an Occupational Therapist

The scope of occupational therapy practice is large, with occupational therapists working in a variety of settings. These settings can include:

- Community agencies
- Hospitals
- Long-term care facilities
- Rehabilitation centres
- Clinics
- Schools
- Social agencies
- Businesses
- Insurance companies
- Construction or architectural firms
- Independent practice

Some occupational therapists may specialize in working with a specific age group such as newborn babies, school-aged children or the elderly. Others specialize in a specific health condition or disability, such as spinal cord injuries, mental illness or rheumatoid arthritis. They may work with individuals, groups of individuals and/or communities. Many also work as part of a larger, multidisciplinary health care team, collaborating with other professionals to develop comprehensive care plans.

Whether they are providing consultation or delivering hands-on direct care, occupational therapists are hard at work every day in Manitoba, enabling ability and assisting to improve the overall health and well-being of people's lives.

## Do YOU Need an Occupational Therapist?

If you are facing a challenge that is preventing you from doing a task or participating in an activity, and want to develop new life skills that will allow you to participate more fully in life, an occupational therapist can help.

Occupational therapy is covered by Manitoba Health when it is provided through the hospital system or through other government-funded health agencies. You may also have occupational therapy coverage through your health insurance at work. If you are not covered by any health insurance, you can still hire an occupational therapist on a fee-for-service basis.

**To find out more about occupational therapy and how it might benefit you, contact the Manitoba Society of Occupational Therapists by calling (204) 957-1214, emailing [msot@mts.net](mailto:msot@mts.net) or visiting [www.msot.mb.ca](http://www.msot.mb.ca).**



# UNDERSTANDING OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

**msot**  
Manitoba Society of  
Occupational Therapists

ENABLING ABILITY

# Enabling ability...

# by building the Occupational Therapy community



## Understanding Occupational Therapy

Occupational therapy is a profession that promotes health and well-being through occupation, which means:

**All the tasks and activities people do during the course of their everyday lives, including self-care (looking after themselves), leisure activities (enjoying life), and work/productivity (a job, school, or volunteering).**

Sometimes, a person faces challenges that are the result of a condition, illness or injury. Those challenges can impact physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being of people and their communities.

Yet everyone has personal strengths and resources available to them.

Occupational therapy is about helping people identify and use their strengths and resources to overcome any obstacles that prevent them from doing the tasks and activities that give purpose to their lives.



## The Role of the Occupational Therapist

Given how different each person is, how different every individual's lifestyle is and the endless types of activities and tasks each person performs from one day to the next, the exact role that an occupational therapist plays will vary from situation to situation.

In the broadest of terms, an occupational therapist:

- Uses meaningful occupations to help a person regain, improve or maintain abilities or skills
- Helps people and their families learn new ways of doing things and build on their strengths and abilities
- Adapts the environment to make it possible for people to engage in activities and reduce the risk of injury

Occupational therapists partner with a person—sometimes with the family and community as well—and use a process of assessment, intervention and evaluation to:

- Identify and prioritize issues that negatively impact how a person engages in meaningful occupation
- Identify personal factors and environmental conditions impacting the person
- Identify personal strengths and resources available to assist the person
- Select an approach to guide interventions and track progress
- Develop and implement a personalized action plan based on specific goals
- Evaluate and analyze results



## Providing a Professional Perspective

Occupational therapists are university-educated professionals who bring a unique perspective to addressing a person's health care needs. This is because an occupational therapist looks at the **whole** person, including the physical, mental, emotional, cultural, social and spiritual aspects.

Occupational therapy students have foundational knowledge in psychology, sociology, anatomy, physiology and statistics. They learn social, biological, behavioural, community and health sciences, as well as theories on person-environment-occupation interactions. They also conduct research and are continually upgrading their knowledge.

To become an occupational therapist, a person must:

- Graduate from an accredited university program with either a baccalaureate degree or master's degree in occupational therapy
- Complete 1000 hours of fieldwork education
- Pass the national certification exam and meet provincial qualifications
- Maintain competency to practise occupational therapy, according to the requirements of the province's regulatory association, the College of Occupational Therapists of Manitoba