

Kinesiotherapist

Kinesiotherapy is the application of scientifically based exercise principles to rehabilitation physical therapy, which is adapted to enhance the strength, endurance, and mobility of individuals with functional limitations or those requiring extended physical conditioning. The kinesiotherapist is academically and clinically prepared to provide rehabilitation exercise and education under the prescription of a licensed physician, physician's assistant, or nurse practitioner in an appropriate setting.

History

Kinesiotherapy (formerly Corrective Therapy) is an allied health profession that has been in existence since 1946, but the root of the profession began during World War II when the increased survival of troops who suffered from illness or injury led to a great demand to return soldiers to active duty. Therefore, corrective physical reconditioning units were established to enhance this process. Physical reconditioning specialists for the Armed Forces were established to employ exercise and mobility programs for the troops. As the demand for these specialists grew, the early leaders in rehabilitation saw the need to organize and accredit these new specialists, and in 1953 the American Corrective Therapy Association was formed. In 1987, the name Corrective Therapy was formally changed to Kinesiotherapy, and the national organization is now known as the American Kinesiotherapy Association (AKTA). In a continuing effort to meet and maintain the highest standards for rehabilitation, the Council on Professional Standards for Kinesiotherapy was formed. In 1995, Kinesiotherapy was formally recognized as an allied health profession by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP). In 1998, the *Standards and Guidelines for Accredited Educational Programs for Kinesiotherapy* was approved.

Career Description

Kinesiotherapists are qualified to implement exercise programs designed to reverse or minimize debilitation, and enhance the functional capacity of medically stable patients in a wellness, sub-acute, or extended care setting. The role of the kinesiotherapist demands intelligence, judgment, honesty, interpersonal skills, and the capacity to react to emergencies in a calm and reasoned manner. Expected attributes include an attitude of respect for self and others, adherence to the concepts of privilege and confidentiality, the ability to communicate with patients, and a commitment to the patient's welfare. At a minimum, a kinesiotherapist is educated in areas of basic exercise science and clinical applications of rehabilitation exercise. Training is received in orthopedic, neurological, psychiatric, pediatric, cardiovascular/pulmonary, and geriatric practice settings.

The kinesiotherapist, in collaboration with the client, determines the appropriate evaluation tools and interventions necessary to establish a goal-specific treatment plan. The intervention process includes developing and implementing a treatment plan, assessing progress toward goals, and modifications necessary to achieve goals and outcomes, as well as client education. The foundation of clinician-client rapport is based on education, instruction, demonstration, and mentoring of therapeutic techniques and behaviors to restore, maintain, and improve overall functional abilities.

The *Scope of Practice for Kinesiotherapy* reflects the evaluation procedures and treatment interventions for medically stable individuals who require extended physical conditioning, and it identifies the job tasks that registered kinesiotherapists are qualified to perform. The individual kinesiotherapist may obtain additional training and credentials in areas beyond the scope of practice. The *Standards of Practice for Registered Kinesiotherapists* serves as a guideline for practicing registered kinesiotherapists and provides a basis for assessment of kinesiotherapy practices.

Employment Characteristics

Registered kinesiotherapists are employed in Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Centers, public and private hospitals, medical fitness facilities, rehabilitation facilities, learning disability centers, schools, colleges and universities, and private practice, as well as exercise consultants.

The types of treatments carried out by kinesiotherapists focus on, but are not limited to:

- Therapeutic exercise
- Ambulation training
- Geriatric rehabilitation
- Aquatic therapy
- Adapted fitness and conditioning
- Prosthetic/orthotic rehabilitation
- Psychiatric rehabilitation
- Driver training
- Adapted exercise for the home setting

Salary

Depending on the particular job setting, the average projected starting salary for Registered Kinesiotherapists is \$36,000 to \$47,000 annually. The overall average is \$55,000; upper-level salaries are in the range of \$70,000. For more information, go to www.ama-assn.org/go/hpsalary.

Educational Programs

Length. The kinesiotherapy program is four to five years. The total minimum requirements are 128 semester hours. Minimum requirements for years one and two are 59 semester hours and for years three and four are 67 semester hours.

Prerequisites. Applicants should have a high school diploma or equivalent and meet institutional entrance

requirements.

Curriculum. The program has a comprehensive academic and clinical curriculum plan that fulfills or exceeds the minimum requirements for kinesiotherapy accreditation.

The curriculum plan includes an organized and sequential series of integrated learning experiences designed to achieve or exceed minimum competencies.

All academic and clinical courses are guided by written measurable behavioral objectives utilizing case-based, patient-centered, problem-solving activities.

The curriculum plan includes academic learning experiences, which lead to the attainment of all academic competencies listed in the *Minimum Core Competencies of Kinesiotherapists*.

Students must complete the following content areas:

- Human anatomy
- Human physiology
- Exercise physiology
- Kinesiology/biomechanics
- Therapeutic exercise/adapted physical education
- Growth and development
- Motor learning/control/performance
- General psychology
- Organization and administration
- Tests and measurements
- Research methods or statistics
- First aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation
- Introduction to Kinesiotherapy
- Pathophysiology
- Clinical neurology
- Rehabilitation procedures
- Patient assessment and management
- Therapeutic activities
- Students are strongly encouraged to complete the following academic courses:
- Abnormal psychology or mental health
- Physiological psychology
- Exercise testing and prescription
- Gerontology
- Medical ethics
- Medical terminology
- Pharmacology
- Health/medical/functional outcomes management
- Health education
- Kinesiotherapy I and II

Inquiries

Careers

American Kinesiotherapy Association
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(800) 296 2582
E-mail: Melissa.ziegler@usm.edu or info@akta.org

Credentialing

Board of Registration for Kinesiotherapy
University of Toledo
2801 West Bancroft
Toledo, OH 43606-2434
(419) 530-2731
E-mail: doris.woods@utoledo.edu

Program Accreditation

Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) in collaboration with:

Committee on Accreditation of Education Programs for Kinesiotherapy

University of Southern Mississippi

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