

# Physiotherapists

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



## Contents

1. Working as a Physiotherapist .....	2
2. Skills, Education and Experience .....	6
3. Finding Jobs.....	8
4. Applying for a Job.....	10
5. Getting Help from Industry Sources .....	11

## 1. Working as a Physiotherapist [NOC 2021: 31202/ NOC 2016: 3142]

### ***Job Description***

Physiotherapists are health care professionals who assess and treat patients who have problems with movement due to illness, injury, or physical disabilities.

As a physiotherapist you do the following:

- Assess patients' physical abilities through detailed history analysis and hands-on tests
- Design treatment programs (exercise, electrotherapy, education, etc.) based on individual needs and abilities
- Monitor and document patients' progress
- Communicate with referring physician and other healthcare professionals regarding patients' problems, needs, and progress
- May provide consulting or education services to community or educational organizations

Sources :

- *Work BC Career Profile for Physiotherapists*  
<https://www.workbc.ca/plan-career/explore-careers>
- *Career Cruising (profile for Physiotherapists)*  
Available from the VPL Digital Library  
<https://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising>

## ***Industry Overview***

There is high demand for physiotherapists in British Columbia. Currently there are more job openings than number of new graduates. Employers are looking to hire qualified physiotherapists from other countries to meet their needs.

Industry sources anticipate demand will increase due to greater health awareness and interest in preventative measures among British Columbians. Job openings will also arise from the need to replace retiring workers or to fill in for those on maternity leave.

While there are shortages throughout the province, you may find more job vacancies in Metro Vancouver, the northern regions, and some areas of Vancouver Island. For employers in areas that have a harder time attracting people in this job, the B.C. provincial government has offered student loan forgiveness programs to physiotherapist graduates who choose to work in these regions. More information:

- **BC Student Loan Forgiveness Program**

- <https://studentaidbc.ca/repay/repayment-help/bc-loan-forgiveness-program>

The range of techniques and services provided by physiotherapists is constantly changing due to new information, technology, and service demands. You will be expected to participate in continual learning through professional development courses throughout your career.

## Job Outlook in BC

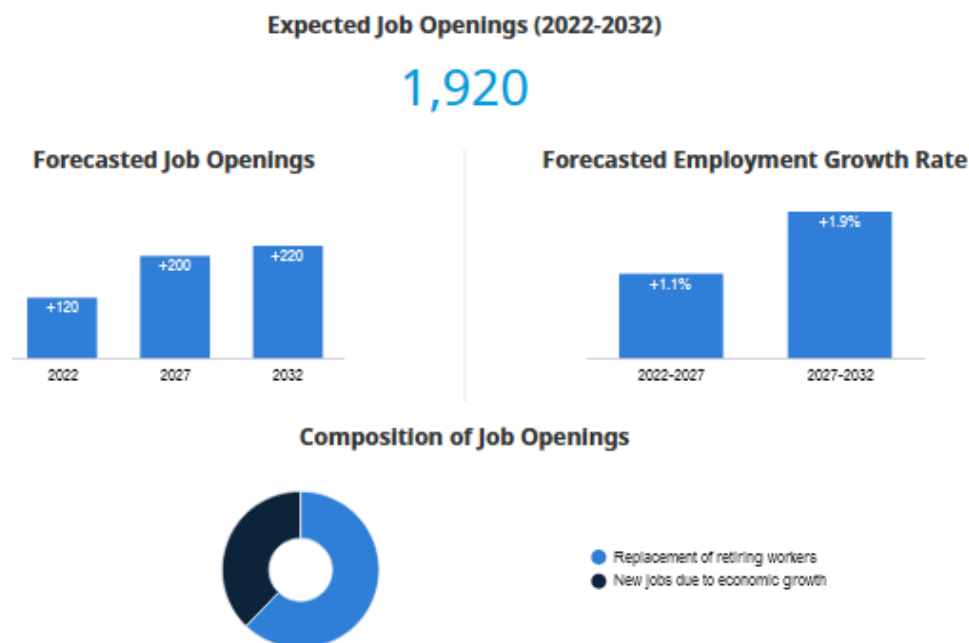


Chart from WorkBC

WorkBC provides job openings in BC regions from 2022-2032

Region	Employment in 2022	Average Annual Employment Growth	Estimated Number of Job Openings
Vancouver Island / Coast	570	1.9%	280
Lower Mainland / Southwest	2,870	1.7%	1,300
Thompson-Okanagan	620	1.1%	250
Kootenay	180	0.0%	60
Cariboo	120	0.0%	0
North Coast & Nechako	40	0.0%	0
Northeast	30	-4.0%	-10

You can learn more about working as a physiotherapist from:

- **Work BC Career Profile**  
<https://www.workbc.ca/plan-career/explore-careers>
- **Career Cruising (profile for Physiotherapists)**  
 Available from the VPL Digital Library  
<https://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising>

## **Types of Employers**

Physiotherapists work in many settings including:

- hospitals
- private clinics
- home care
- child-development centres
- extended-care facilities
- health-planning agencies

You may work as part of a health-care team. You also perform many independent duties.

## **Salary**

The median annual salary for physiotherapists in BC is \$86,323. Your salary depends on experience, location, level of responsibility and employer.

In addition to a salary, most full-time physiotherapists receive health and dental benefits, paid sick days, and paid vacations.

Some physiotherapists belong to unions, which means your salary rates and benefits are negotiated on your behalf by union representatives.

Across BC, physiotherapists can expect to make:

Community/Area	Low (\$/hour)	Median (\$/hour)	High (\$/hour)
<a href="#">British Columbia</a>	40.00	43.00	56.04
<a href="#">Lower Mainland–Southwest Region</a>	40.00	43.00	56.04
<a href="#">Thompson–Okanagan Region</a>	40.00	43.00	56.04
<a href="#">Vancouver Island and Coast Region</a>	24.04	42.00	43.80

Source: Job Bank Wage Report <https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/trend-analysis/search-wages>

## **Working Hours**

Full-time professionals in the public setting (such as hospitals) generally work a 36-hour week. Evening and weekend work may be required. Those in private practice generally work 36–50 hours per week.

Some jobs, especially in rural regions and in home care, may require you to travel.

Source: WorkBC Career Profile

## **2. Skills, Education and Experience**

### **Skills**

- good interpersonal skills
- a thorough understanding of anatomy and pathology
- highly observant and skilled in critical thinking in order to make safe and effective clinical decisions
- leadership and teamwork skills to coordinate with other health professionals
- strong communication skills
- enjoy helping people
- patience
- work well with your hands

### **Education and Experience**

To work as a physiotherapist in British Columbia you require:

- a Master of Physical Therapy degree as a minimum level of education
- completion of the Physiotherapy Competency Exam, administered by the Canadian Alliance of Physiotherapy Regulators
- registration with the College of Physical Therapists of BC

The University of British Columbia (UBC) is the only institution in BC that currently offers the Master of Physical Therapy degree. UBC also offers a PhD program for individuals who would like to undertake further research in rehabilitation sciences.

It is recommended that you also complete advanced training in areas of interest after graduation. There are over 30 different areas of specialization in physiotherapy career. There are courses offered by the Canadian Physiotherapy Association as well as by recognized leaders in the field.

Source: WorkBC Career Profile

## **Qualifications**

***This occupation is regulated in British Columbia.***

You must be registered with the *College of Physical Therapists of British Columbia* (CPTBC) to practise as a physiotherapist in BC. Registration is a multi-step process.

For more information see:

- **College of Physical Therapists of British Columbia**  
<https://cptbc.org/physical-therapists/registration/>

## ***Internationally Trained and Accredited Physiotherapists***

If you are an internationally trained physiotherapist you must complete a multi-step process to work in BC. This includes an assessment of your education and professional credentials by the Canadian Alliance of Physiotherapy Regulators.

For more information see:

- **Physiotherapy Association of BC (PABC). Internationally Educated Physiotherapists**  
<https://bcphysio.org/public/about-physiotherapists-and-profession/internationally-educated-physiotherapists>

- **Canadian Alliance of Physiotherapy Regulators**  
<https://alliancept.org/internationally-trained/credentialing-overview/>
- **Physio Refresh. University of British Columbia**  
<https://physiorefresh.med.ubc.ca/>

This program assists internationally-trained physiotherapists prepare for the Physiotherapy Competency Exam and enter into clinical physiotherapy practice in Canada.

### 3. Finding Jobs

You'll find job advertisements in local newspapers, trade journals, and electronic sources, as well as through professional association publications.

#### ***Local Newspapers***

You can look at the *Vancouver Sun* & *The Province* at Vancouver Public Library for free. Check the job postings daily and the careers section in the *Vancouver Sun* on Wednesdays and Saturdays and in *The Province* on Sundays.

#### ***Online Job Postings***

- **B.C. Health Authorities**
  - Vancouver Coastal Health <https://careers.vch.ca/>
  - Fraser Health <https://careers.fraserhealth.ca/>
  - Vancouver Island Health <https://www.islandhealth.ca/careers>
  - Interior Health <https://www.interiorhealth.ca/careers>
  - Northern Health <https://careers.northernhealth.ca/>
  - Provincial Health Services Authority <http://www.phsa.ca/careers>
  - First Nations Health Authority <https://www.fnha.ca/about/work-with-us>
- **Providence Health Care** [Catholic health care agency operating over ten health care facilities including St. Paul's Hospital, Mount St. Joseph and Holy Family Hospitals]  
<https://careers.providencehealthcare.org/>



- **BC Health Careers**  
<https://www.bchealthcareers.ca/>
- **Indeed.com**  
[https://ca.indeed.com/advanced\\_search](https://ca.indeed.com/advanced_search)

### ***Professional Associations' Career Resources***

- **Physiotherapy Association of BC (PABC)**  
<https://bcphysio.org/postings/job-postings>
- **Canadian Physiotherapy Association**  
<https://physiotherapy.ca/career-centre/>

### ***Identifying the Right Position***

When you browse job advertisements, you'll find a range of different job titles that are relevant.

When searching, look for these related job titles:

- physical therapist
- registered physiotherapist
- research physiotherapist

### ***Creating a List of Potential Employers***

You can use directories to produce lists of potential employers. Contact them directly to find out if they're hiring.

- **Healthlink BC Directory**  
<https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/health-services/search-services-your-area>  
Search by keyword 'physiotherapy'
- **Find a Physio. Physiotherapy Association of British Columbia**  
<https://bcphysio.org/find-a-physio>

- **Reference Canada**

Available from the VPL Digital Library

<https://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/reference-canada>

Click on "Start Search" beside Canadian Businesses, then select the "Advanced Search" button. Select both "Keyword/SIC/NAICS" under Business Type and "City" under Geography. In the top search box enter "physiotherapist" and click SEARCH. Select the appropriate headings. Lower down, select the Province, choose the cities, and click the "View Results" button.

**NOTE:** You can access this database from a Library computer. If you are using a computer from outside the Library, you will need a Vancouver Public Library card to login to this database. After clicking on the database name, you will be asked to enter your library card number and PIN (usually last four digits of your telephone number).

## 4. Applying for a Job

In Canada, employers usually expect to receive a resume or curriculum vitae and a cover letter that identifies the position you are applying for and summarizes your relevant experience.

Use the library catalogue, <https://vpl.bibliocommons.com/> to find books on writing resumes and cover letters specific to your industry.

To learn about applying for jobs in Canada, use the following guides which are available in print at the Central Library or online at <https://www.vpl.ca/siic/>.

- **Writing Resumes and Cover Letters**

<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/job-search-resources/writing-resumes-and-cover-letters>

- **Getting Canadian Work Experience**

<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/job-search-resources/getting-canadian-work-experience>

- **Networking for Employment**

<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/job-search-resources/networking-for-employment>

- **Learn More About Working in BC and Canada**

<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/job-search-resources/learn-more-about-working-in-bc-and-canada>

## 5. Getting Help from Industry Sources

### ***Industry Associations***

Associations for physiotherapists in BC and Canada can provide information and assistance. Registration and fees are usually required for membership.

- **Physiotherapy Association of British Columbia (PABC)**  
<https://bcphysio.org/>
- **Canadian Physiotherapy Association (CPA)**  
<https://physiotherapy.ca/>
- **College of Physical Therapists of British Columbia (CPTBC)**  
<https://cptbc.org/>
- **Canadian Alliance of Physiotherapy Regulators**  
<https://alliancept.org/>
- **Allied Health Jobs BC**  
<https://alliedhealthjobsbc.ca/>

### ***Industry Journals***

Search the Vancouver Public Library catalogue for journals related to your profession. An Example at the Central Library:

- **Directions** / Physiotherapy Association of BC  
Available at the Central Library, 615.8205 D59

***Questions? Please ask the Information Staff in the Central Branch, Vancouver Public Library or telephone 604-331-3603.***

*Please note that the information in this guide is also available online through the Skilled Immigrant InfoCentre website at <https://www.vpl.ca/siic/>*