



Why a Travel Physical Therapy Profession is the Next Big Thing

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Are you looking for a rewarding career that allows you to do what you're passionate about both on *and* off the job? Let's find out how a travel physical therapy profession might be the right choice for you!

Physical Therapy Professions Are in High Demand

In 2014, the Bureau of Labor Statistics predicted that **71,800 new Physical Therapist (PT) jobs would be created by 2024.**

That's an increase of 34 percent, which is much faster than the average profession.

There are a number of reasons for this increase.

More and more Americans are suffering from chronic diseases such as diabetes, coronary disease, asthma, bronchitis, and arthritis. At the same time, there are more people who are living longer, which means they need health care to help them manage age-related diseases and musculoskeletal problems.

To become a physical therapist, you need a doctoral or professional degree in physical therapy, as well as a license from the state where you want to practice.

In addition, you can continue your training in order to become specialized in a specific type of physical therapy such as pediatrics, sports, or geriatrics.

The average pay for a PT is \$39.61 per hour, but that can be higher or lower depending on your experience, specialty, and location.

Even More Opportunity for Travelers

While the outlook for regular, full time physical therapists is good, it's even better for traveling physical therapists! Ever since the [Affordable Care Act](#) went into effect, there's been an uptick in the number of people seeking medical help.

Many hospitals, clinics, and other healthcare facilities were forced to lay off a lot of personnel during the recession. These organizations now find themselves short-staffed, particularly during busy seasons.

The logical and most affordable solution is to hire medical staff on a temporary basis.

And that's where a traveling physical therapy profession comes in. Healthcare organizations hire traveling PTs to ramp up their workforces when necessary.

For example, many seniors travel to [Florida](#), [Arizona](#), or New Mexico during the winter months. These are typically times when there's an increased demand for physical therapy—and organizations hire travel PTs to meet that demand.

Since the engagements are temporary, the organizations don't have the same obligations towards travel PTs as they would to full time employees. They can let them go when they are no longer needed, without having to deal with severance pay and other employment issues.

The travel physical therapist, for his or her part, simply circles back to the agency and moves on to the next assignment.

How You'll Enrich Your Career and Your Life with a Physical Therapy Profession

There are a number of aspects to the travel physical therapy profession that make it very attractive to certain professionals.

First, though, it's important to emphasize that *it's not for everybody*.

Some people prefer to stay in familiar surroundings, close to friends and family.

Some find a full time job that matches their aspirations and offers attractive advancement opportunities.

Some people simply don't enjoy traveling and continuously having to adapt to new situations.

Of course, there's nothing wrong with any of that!

However, you're best advised to be honest with yourself about what you want before choosing a profession as a traveling physical therapist.

If you think you'll enjoy being a traveling PT, it's good to have some insights as to how this profession can enrich your career and your life.

Here's a closer look:

1. You can explore new places.

Vacations are never long enough to really get to know a place, plus, you have to save up for them.

You're not earning money or gaining experience.

With a travel physical therapy profession, you can choose where you want to go and you'll be earning money while you're there. You can enjoy each location as a visitor and see the sights.

Alternatively, if you're looking for a new home to hang your hat, you can gain a good impression of what it's like to live in a specific place before committing to it.

2. It helps you find direction in your career.

During your studies, it's impossible to try out a wide variety of specializations and healthcare settings.

Yet there's a big difference between working in inpatient care at a public hospital or giving physical therapy to outpatients at a private pediatric clinic, for example.

As a traveling PT, you have the opportunity to explore different settings and various kinds of physical therapy in-depth before you select one focus area and one employer.

3. You can stay up-to-date on the latest developments in your field.

As a full time PT, you can learn about new technologies and methods in your field—but whether your employer acquires the necessary equipment or knowledge (by means of training) depends on its budget.

As a traveling PT, you'll work for multiple employers that all have their own budgets. That means the likelihood of you being exposed to new developments and technologies is much higher.

4. Your pay is higher and reflects the actual hours you work.

We all know that a 37-hour workweek in healthcare *is usually more like a 47-hour one*.

And when you enjoy your job and you're being paid well, you're usually willing to go the extra mile. However, that takes its toll in terms of stress and fatigue.

As a traveling PT, you'll earn an hourly wage that's higher than you would in most full time positions. Plus, you'll get paid for the actual number of hours you work.

This means you're in a better position to pay off your student loans, get a mortgage, or simply save your money!

5. You enjoy non-taxable perks.

The costs of travel, accommodation, food, and anything else you need because you're away from your actual residence are all non-taxable.

In most cases, your agency either provides you with housing or offers you a stipend so you can arrange it yourself.

Note that it's important to keep track of what part of your income is your actual taxable salary and which portion consists of non-taxable reimbursements.

SEE ALSO: [Traveler Tax Deductions: What You Need to Know Now](#)

6. You enjoy the support of your agency 24/7.

In the best-case scenario, your career is a breeze from your first day as an intern to your last day as a retiree.

However, in real life, you're bound to encounter some challenges along the way.

When you're a traveling PT, your agency is always available to help you resolve any issues, from paperwork glitches to housing problems.

Your agency will also help you when you need to acquire a new state license. In addition, many agencies provide support when it comes to continued education and earning additional certifications.

By now, it should be clear that a travel physical therapy profession offers opportunities you don't get as a full time employee. If you're interested in becoming a traveling PT, we encourage you to contact a travel PT agency near you to learn more about your options.

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