Definitions of Occupational Therapy - WFOT and Member Organisations

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World Federation of Occupational Therapists

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Introduction

This document includes the World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT) Definition of Occupational Therapy (2025) and the definitions of occupational therapy from WFOT Member Organisations.
WFOT requests updates from Member Organisations once every two years. The definitions included in this document were extracted on 6 October 2026.

WFOT Definition of Occupational Therapy

Occupational therapy promotes health and wellbeing by supporting participation in meaningful occupations that people want, need, or are expected to do.

(WFOT, 2025)

French: L'ergothérapie promeut la santé et le bien-être en soutenant la participation à des occupations signifiantes que les personnes accompagnées veulent accomplir, ont besoin d'accomplir ou sont censées accomplir.

German: Ergotherapie fördert Gesundheit und Wohlbefinden, indem sie die Teilhabe an bedeutungsvollen Betätigungen unterstützt, die Menschen ausüben möchten, müssen oder von denen erwartet wird, dass sie sie ausüben.

Spanish: La Terapia ocupacional promueve la salud y el bienestar al apoyar la participación en ocupaciones significativas que las personas desean, necesitan o se espera que realicen.

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Algeria

Algerian National Association of Occupational Therapists

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Algerian National Association of Occupational Therapists has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in French

En Algérie, l'ergothérapie est une discipline paramédicale qui vise à accompagner les personnes ayant des limitations physiques, mentales ou sociales afin de leur permettre de retrouver, maintenir ou améliorer leur autonomie dans les activités de la vie quotidienne, scolaire, professionnelle ou sociale.

L'ergothérapie est l'art et la science d'aider une personne à accomplir les activités qui lui sont significatives malgré un handicap, une maladie ou un trouble du développement.

Le métier est encadré par le ministère de la Santé.

Les ergothérapeutes sont souvent formés dans les instituts paramédicaux agréés.

Il existe des services d'ergothérapie dans les hôpitaux, les centres de rééducation fonctionnelle.

Date of definition:

24 June 2025

Argentina

Asociacion Argentina de Terapistas Ocupacionales

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Asociacion Argentina de Terapistas Ocupacionales has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in Spanish

La Terapia Ocupacional es una profesión que brinda respuesta a personas, grupos y/o comunidades que presentan dificultades permanentes o transitorias para desarrollar las ocupaciones inherentes a su proyecto de vida.

Definition in English

Occupational Therapy is a profession that provides response to individuals, groups and/or communities that present permanent or temporary difficulties to develop the occupations inherent to their life project.

Date of definition:

5 February 2025

Armenian Ergotherapists Association (ARM_ETA)

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Armenian Ergotherapists Association (ARM_ETA) does not have an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Australia

Occupational Therapy Australia

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Occupational Therapy Australia has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Definition in English

Occupational therapy is a person-centred approach to help individuals participate in activities they find meaningful. This could be taking care of yourself or others, working, volunteering, and participating in hobbies, interests and social events that bring personal or professional fulfilment.

Date of definition:

1 May 2026

Austria

Ergotherapie Austria

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Ergotherapie Austria has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in German

Die Ergotherapie – abgeleitet vom Griechischen „ergein" (handeln, tätig sein) – geht davon aus, dass „tätig sein" ein menschliches Grundbedürfnis ist und dass gezielt eingesetzte Tätigkeit gesundheitsfördernde und therapeutische Wirkung hat. Deshalb unterstützt und begleitet Ergotherapie Menschen jeden Alters, die in Ihrer Handlungsfähigkeit eingeschränkt oder von Einschränkung bedroht sind und/oder ihre Handlungsfähigkeit erweitern möchten.

Ziel der Ergotherapie ist es, die Teilhabe an bedeutungsvollen Betätigungen zu ermöglichen und damit Gesundheit und Wohlbefinden zu fördern.

Ergotherapeut*innen unterstützen Menschen aller Altersgruppen dabei, ihren gewünschten und notwendigen Betätigungen des täglichen Lebens nachzugehen, damit sie das tun können, was sie tun wollen, tun müssen oder was von ihnen erwartet wird..

In der Ergotherapie werden spezifische Aktivitäten, Umweltanpassungen und Beratung gezielt und ressourcenorientiert eingesetzt. Dies erlaubt dem Klienten, seine Handlungsfähigkeit im Alltag, seine gesellschaftliche Teilhabe (Partizipation) und seine Lebensqualität und- zufriedenheit zu verbessern.

Definition in English

The German term for occupational therapy "Ergotherapie" is derived from the Greek "ergein" (to act, to be active). Occupational therapy is based on the assumption that "being active" is a basic human need and that purposeful activity has a health-promoting and therapeutic effect. Occupational therapy therefore supports and assists people of all ages who have, or are at risk of having, a reduced ability to participate in activities of daily living (ADL).

The aim of occupational therapy is to enable people to engage in meaningful activities, thereby promoting health and well-being. Occupational therapists support people of all ages with their desired and necessary activities of daily living so that they can do what they want, need and/or are expected to do. Occupational therapy uses specific activities, environmental adaptations and advice in a goal- and resource-oriented way. This enables clients to improve their ability to engage in activities of daily living, their social participation and their quality of life.

Date of definition:

1 June 2023

Bangladesh Occupational Therapy Association

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Bangladesh Occupational Therapy Association has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in Bengali

Occupational Therapy is a health care profession that provides services to people whose ability to function in daily life has been disrupted. Purposeful activity, therapeutic exercise, special equipment, skills training and environmental modifications are used to maximise the person's ability to attain independence in everyday living.

Date of definition:

1 May 2005

Ergotherapie Belgium

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Ergotherapie Belgium does not have an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Bermuda Occupational Therapy Association

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Bermuda Occupational Therapy Association has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in English

Occupational therapy is a client-centred health profession concerned with promoting health and well-being through occupation. The primary goal of occupational therapy is to enable people to participate in the activities of everyday life. Occupational therapists achieve this outcome by working with people and communities to enhance their ability to engage in the occupations they want to, need to, or are expected to do, or by modifying the occupation or the environment to better support their occupational engagement.

An occupational therapist is a person skilled in the assessment and treatment of individuals who are limited by physical injury or illness, psychosocially function, developmental or learning disabilities, or the aging process, through the use of purposeful activity and adaptive equipment and technology in order to maximize independence, prevent disability and maintain health.

Date of definition:

29 August 2024

Bhutan Association of Occupational Therapists

Definition of Occupational Therapy

✕ Bhutan Association of Occupational Therapists does not have an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Association of Occupational Therapists in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Association of Occupational Therapists in Bosnia and Herzegovina does not have an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Botswana Occupational Therapy Association

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Botswana Occupational Therapy Association does not have an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Brazil

Associação Brasileira dos Terapeutas Ocupacionais (ABRATO)

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Associação Brasileira dos Terapeutas Ocupacionais (ABRATO) has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in Portuguese

É um campo de conhecimento e de intervenção em saúde, educação e na esfera social, reunindo tecnologias orientadas para a emancipação e autonomia de pessoas que, por razões ligadas a problemática específica (físicas, sensoriais, mentais, psicológicas e ou sociais), apresentam temporária ou definitivamente dificuldade na inserção e participação na vida social. As intervenções em Terapia Ocupacional dimensionam-se pelo uso da atividade, elemento centralizador e orientador, na construção complexa e contextualizada do processo terapêutico.

Definition in English

Occupational Therapy is a field of knowledge and intervention in health, education, and in the social sphere, bringing together technologies oriented to the emancipation and autonomy of people who, for reasons related to specific problems (physical, sensorial, mental, psychological, and/or social), present temporary or permanent difficulties in inclusion and participation in social life. The interventions in Occupational Therapy are dimensioned by the use of the activity, a centralizing and guiding element, in the complex and contextualized construction of the therapeutic process.

Date of definition:

1 May 2017

Bulgaria

Association of Bulgarian Ergotherapists

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Association of Bulgarian Ergotherapists has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in Bulgarian

Ерготерапията е клиент-центрирана здравна професия, насочена към промоция на здравето и благополучието чрез участие в дейности (WFOT, 2010).

Definition in English

Occupational therapy is a client-centred health profession focused on promoting health and well-being through participation in activities (WFOT, 2010).

Date of definition:

19 May 2025

Canada

Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists / Association canadienne des ergothérapeutes

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists / Association canadienne des ergothérapeutes has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in French

L'ergothérapie promeut la santé, le mieux-être et la qualité de vie en favorisant l'accès, l'initiation et le maintien de la participation aux choses que la clientèle veut et doit faire dans leur vie quotidienne, avec les personnes et dans les lieux où elle veut participer à ces occupations (Egan et Restall, 2022). Les membres de la profession de l'ergothérapie établissent et maintiennent des relations collaboratives avec leur clientèle, qui peut comprendre des individus, des familles, des groupes, des communautés, des organismes ou des populations (Egan et Restall, 2022). Les membres de la profession de l'ergothérapie travaillent avec une clientèle de toute âge et de toute état de santé, qui éprouve ou risque d'éprouver des difficultés à participer à leurs activités quotidiennes.

Dans le cadre de l'approche axée sur les relations collaboratives, les membres de la profession de l'ergothérapie cherchent à comprendre et à tenir compte de l'impact des contextes multidimensionnels (micro, méso, macro), des histoires, des identités et des expériences de la personne fournissant la thérapie, de la clientèle recevant la thérapie et du contexte de pratique où les services d'ergothérapie sont fournis (Restall et al., 2022). Ce processus de collaboration implique d'établir des liens, de chercher à comprendre et à définir l'objectif, d'explorer la participation occupationnelle, de coconcevoir les priorités, les résultats et le plan, de tester, d'explorer et de redéfinir les plans et de planifier la transition (Restall et al., 2022). Les membres de la profession de l'ergothérapie contribuent à un monde plus équitable et plus juste en reconnaissant les obstacles systémiques ou individuels à la participation occupationnelle et en prenant des mesures pour y remédier (ACORE et al., 2021).

Les membres de la profession de l'ergothérapie travaillent dans différents domaines, notamment : https://caot.in1touch.org/document/7746/Definitions%20-%20Areas%20of%20Practice_Feb%202022_%20FRA.pdf

L'Association canadienne des organismes de réglementation en ergothérapie, l'Association canadienne des programmes universitaires en ergothérapie et l'Association canadienne des ergothérapeutes. (2021). Le Référentiel de compétences pour les ergothérapeutes au Canada. https://acotro-acore.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/OT-Competency-Document-EN-web.pdf

Restall G, Egan M, Valavaara K, Phenix A, Sack C. (2022). Le cadre Canadien pour un processus de pratique ergothérapique axé sur les relations collaboratives (CanPPERC). Dans M. Egan & G. Restall (Eds.), L'ergothérapie axée sur les relations collaboratives pour promouvoir la participation occupationnelle. Association canadienne des ergothérapeutes.
Egan, M. et Restall, G. (2022). L'ergothérapie axée sur les relations collaboratives pour promouvoir la participation occupationnelle. Association canadienne des ergothérapeutes.

Definition in English

Occupational therapy promotes health, well-being, and quality of life by supporting access to, initiation of, and sustained participation in the things that clients want and need to do in their daily life, with the people and in the places that they want to participate in these occupations (Egan & Restall, 2022). Occupational therapy professionals collaboratively build and sustain relationships with their clients, which can refer to individuals, families, groups, communities, organizations, or populations (Restall et al., 2022). Occupational therapy

professionals work with clients of all ages and health status, who are, or may be at risk of, experiencing difficulties participating in their daily activities.

Within the collaborative relationship-focused approach, occupational therapy professionals seek to understand and take into consideration the impact of the multidimensional contexts (micro, meso, macro), histories, identities, and experiences of the therapist, the client(s), and the practice context where occupational therapy services are delivered (Restall et al., 2022). This collaborative process involves connecting, seeking understanding and defining purpose, exploring occupational participation, co-designing priorities/outcomes/plan, trialing/exploring/redefining plans, and planning for transition (Restall et al., 2022). Occupational therapy professionals contribute to a more equitable and just world by recognizing and taking action to address systemic or individual barriers to occupational participation (ACOTRO et al., 2021).

Occupational therapy professionals work in different areas of practice, including: https://caot.in1touch.org/document/7739/Areas%20of%20Practice%20-%20PDF.pdf

Association of Canadian Occupational Therapy Regulatory Organizations, Association of Canadian Occupational Therapy University Programs, & Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists. (2021). Competencies for occupational therapists in Canada. https://acotro-acore.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/OT-Competency-Document-EN-web.pdf

Restall G, Egan M, Valavaara K, Phenix A, Sack C. (2022). Canadian occupational therapy inter-relational practice process (COTIPP) framework. In M. Egan & G. Restall (Eds.), Promoting occupational participation: Collaborative relationship-focused occupational therapy. Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists.

Egan, M., & Restall, G. (2022). Promoting occupational participation: Collaborative relationship-focused occupational therapy. Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists.

Date of definition:

20 November 2023

Chile

Colegio de Terapeutas Ocupacionales de Chile A.G

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Colegio de Terapeutas Ocupacionales de Chile A.G has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in Spanish

Occupational therapy is a discipline of health field whose purpose of study is human occupation in all stages of life.

Human occupation includes all the activities of everyday life in which persons of any age are involved and it allows them to adapt themselves to their environment, to be productive and to obtain satisfactions in their autonomy, work and use of free time.

Date of definition:

25 June 2025

China Occupational Therapy Association

Definition of Occupational Therapy

China Occupational Therapy Association has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in Mandarin

作业治疗是一门以康复对象为中心，通过有选择的作业活动和(或)适当的环境干预来改善康复对象的躯体、心理和社会功能，促进活动和参与，提高生活质量的康复医学专业。

Definition in English

Occupational therapy is a rehabilitation medicine specialty that focuses on rehabilitation subjects and improves their physical, psychological and social functions, promotes activities and participation, and improves their quality of life through selected occupational activities and/or appropriate environmental interventions.

Date of definition:

30 December 2019

Colombia

Colegio Colombiano de Terapia Ocupacional

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Colegio Colombiano de Terapia Ocupacional has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in Spanish

La Terapia Ocupacional es una profesión liberal de formación universitaria que aplica sus conocimientos en el campo de la seguridad social y la educación ycuyo objetivo es el estudio de la naturaleza del desempeño ocupacional de las personas y las comunidades, la promoción de estilos de vida saludables y la prevención, tratamiento y rehabilitación de personas con discapacidades y limitaciones, utilizando procedimientos de acción que comprometen el autocuidado, el juego, el esparcimiento, la escolaridad y el trabajo como áreas esenciales de su ejercicio.

Titulo I, Capitulo I- Ley 949 de 2005, Diario Oficial No. 45.853 de 17 de marzo de 2005

Definition in English

Occupational Therapy is a liberal university-level profession that applies its knowledge in the field of social security and education, and aims to study: the nature of occupational performance of individuals and communities; the promotion of healthy life styles; and the prevention, promotion, intervention and rehabilitation for people with disabilities and impairments, through the use of processes pertaining to self-care, play, leisure, schooling, and work as essential areas of its professional scope.

Title I, Chapter I- Law 949 of 2005, Official record No. 45.853, 17 March 2005

Date of definition:

1 May 2017

Croatia

Hrvatska udruga radnih terapeuta

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Hrvatska udruga radnih terapeuta has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in Croatian

Radna terapija jest zdravstvena djelatnost čiji je cilj omogućiti pojedincima i skupinama postizanje optimalnog funkcioniranja u aktivnostima dnevnog života koje uključuju samozbrinjavanje, produktivnost i slobodno vrijeme.

Radna terapija je namijenjena osobama čije su sposobnosti obavljanja svakodnevnih aktivnosti umanjene razvojem, ozljedom ili bolešću, starenjem, psihološki, socijalno, kulturno, ili kombinacijom navedenog.

Djelatnost radne terapije obuhvaća:

- Radno-terapijsku procjenu i analizu izvođenja aktivnosti dnevnog života koje obuhvaćaju područje samozbrinjavanja, produktivnosti i aktivnosti slobodnog vremena,
- Radno-terapijsku procjenu i analizu senzomotoričkih, kognitivnih i psihosocijalnih sposobnosti te njihov utjecaj na izvođenje aktivnosti dnevnog života,
- Radno-terapijsku procjenu i analizu stambenog, radnog i društveno-kulturološkog okruženja u kojem se odvijaju svakodnevne aktivnosti,
- Promicanje, uspostavljanje, obnavljanje, održavanje i/ili modificiranje izvođenja aktivnosti samozbrinjavanja (hranjenje, oblačenje, osobna higijena, kupanje, funkcionalna mobilnost),
- Promicanje, uspostavljanje, obnavljanje, održavanje i /ili modificiranje izvođenja produktivnih aktivnosti (aktivnosti u kućanstvu i zajednici, profesionalne uloge i zadaci, briga o drugima, volonterski rad),
- Promicanje, uspostavljanje, obnavljanje, održavanje i /ili modificiranje izvođenja aktivnosti slobodnog vremena (igra, razonoda, hobiji, rekreacija i odmor),
- Promicanje, uspostavljanje, obnavljanje i održavanje senzomotoričkih, kognitivnih i psihosocijalnih komponenti aktivnosti upotrebom različitih terapeutskih pristupa, metoda i tehnika,
- Prilagođavanje stambenog, radnog i društvenog okruženja sposobnostima i potrebama pojedinca, savjetovanje i edukaciju pojedinca, skupina, članova obitelji, stručnjaka, studenata i drugih osoba, mjerenje ishoda radnoterapijske intervencije,
- Vođenje radnoterapijske dokumentacije,
- Planiranje i provedbu istraživanja o utjecaju svakodnevnih aktivnosti na unapređenje zdravlja i kvalitete života s ciljem razvijanja radnoterapijske prakse zasnovane na dokazima.

Definition in English

Occupational therapy is a health profession whose goal is to enable individuals and groups to achieve optimal functioning in activities of daily living including self-care, productivity and leisure.

Occupational Therapy is intended for people whose abilities of performing activities of self-care, productivity and leisure are reduced or impaired by development, physical injury or illness, old age, psychologically, socially or culturally or by combination of the mentioned.

Activities of occupational therapy include:

- Occupational therapy assessment and analysis of the performance of activities of daily living which include self-care, productivity and leisure time activities,
- Occupational therapy evaluation and analysis of sensory-motor, cognitive and psychosocial skills and their impact on the performance of activities of daily living,
- Occupational therapy evaluation and analysis of housing, employment and socio-cultural environment in which everyday activities are taking place,

- Promotion, establishment, restoration, maintenance and / or modification of the performance of self-care activities (feeding, dressing, personal hygiene, bathing, functional mobility),
- Promotion, establishment, restoration, maintenance and / or modification of the performance of productive activities (activities in the household and community, professional roles and tasks, caring, voluntary work),
- Promotion, establishment, restoration, maintenance and / or modification of performance of leisure time activities (play, recreation, hobbies, recreation and leisure),
- Promotion, establishment, restoration and maintenance of sensory-motor, cognitive and psychosocial components of activities using different therapeutic approaches, methods and techniques,
- adaptation of housing, employment and social environment, in tune with needs and abilities of the individual,
- Counselling and education of individuals, groups, family members, professionals, students and other persons,
- Measuring occupational therapy intervention outcomes,
- Occupational therapy documentation.

Date of definition:

1 June 2017

Cyprus Association of Occupational Therapists

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Cyprus Association of Occupational Therapists has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in English

For the purposes of this Law, occupational therapy is a health profession that promotes health and well-being through occupation. It assesses and therapeutically intervenes with individuals and groups whose ability to successfully engage in daily life roles and situations has been affected or is at risk due to physical, mental, psychological, or developmental illnesses, disabilities, impairments, or challenges. Occupational therapy uses purposeful and therapeutic activities to promote, maintain, and restore, to the greatest possible extent, an individual's functionality, participation, and independence across all areas of daily living.

Date of definition:

20 January 2006

Czech Association of Occupational Therapists

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Czech Association of Occupational Therapists has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in Czech

Ergoterapie je profese, která prostřednictvím smysluplného zaměstnávání usiluje o zachování a využívání schopností jedince potřebných pro zvládání běžných denních, pracovních, zájmových a rekreačních činností u osob jakéhokoli věku s různým typem postižení (fyzickým, smyslovým, psychickým, mentálním nebo sociálním znevýhodněním). Podporuje maximálně možnou participaci jedince v běžném životě, přičemž respektuje plně jeho osobnost a možnosti.

Pro podporu participace jedince využívá specifické metody a techniky, nácvik konkrétních dovedností, poradenství či přizpůsobení prostředí.

Pojmem „zaměstnávání" jsou myšleny veškeré činnosti, které člověk vykonává v průběhu života a jsou vnímány jako součást jeho identity. Primárním cílem ergoterapie je umožnit jedinci účastnit se zaměstnávání, které jsou pro jeho život smysluplné a nepostradatelné.

Definition in English

Occupational therapy is a profession that, through meaningful engagement in activities, aims to preserve and utilize an individual's abilities necessary for managing daily living, work, leisure, and recreational activities in people of all ages with various types of disabilities (physical, sensory, psychological, intellectual, or social disadvantages). It supports the individual's maximum possible participation in everyday life while fully respecting their personality and capabilities.

To promote participation, occupational therapy uses specific methods and techniques, training in concrete skills, counselling, and environmental adaptations.

The term "engagement in activities" refers to all the actions a person performs throughout their life that are perceived as part of their identity. The primary goal of occupational therapy is to enable individuals to participate in activities that are meaningful and essential to their lives.

Date of definition:

1 April 2017

Denmark

Danish Association of Occupational Therapists

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Danish Association of Occupational Therapists has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in Danish

Definition af ergoterapi som velfærdsydelse:
Ergoterapi er at muliggøre aktivitet og deltagelse i hverdagslivet for det enkelte menneske og grupper af mennesker.

Ved hverdagslivets aktiviteter forstås gøremål, der for den enkelte er meningsfulde eller nødvendige, og som relaterer sig til dagligdagen, arbejds- og fritidsliv samt involvering i samfundslivet.
I ergoterapi anvendes meningsfulde aktiviteter som middel og mål til at fremme sundhed, forebygge og rehabilitere funktionsevnenedsættelser og aktivitetsbegrænsninger samt vurdere, genskabe og udvikle menneskets mulighed for deltagelse i hverdagslivet.

Definition af ergoterapi som profession:

- Ergoterapi er en profession i social- og sundhedsvæsenet, der praktiseres på baggrund af en professionsbachelorgrad og Sundhedsstyrelsens autorisation.
- Ergoterapi udøves ud fra en forebyggende, habiliterende og rehabiliterende målsætning i samarbejde med målgrupper, der har aktivitetsproblemer i deres hverdag.
- Ergoterapeuter anvender viden og metoder til at skabe sammenhæng mellem personer, deres aktiviteter og omgivelser, med henblik på at muliggøre aktivitetsudøvelse og deltagelse, fordi aktivitet og deltagelse fremmer sundhed og et godt liv.

Definition in English

Definition of Occupational Therapy as a Social Welfare Service:
Occupational therapy is a question of promoting activity and participation in everyday activities for individuals and groups of people. By 'activities of everyday life' is meant pursuits that are meaningful or necessary for the individual, related to daily life, work, leisure and general involvement in the life of society. In occupational therapy, meaningful activities are used both as a means and as an end to promote health, prevent and rehabilitate reduced functions ability and occupational limitations and to assess, re-establish and further develop people's opportunities to participate in daily life.

Definition of Occupational Therapy as a Profession:

- Occupational therapy is a profession within the social and health service in Denmark, practised on a basis of a professional bachelor degree and authorisation by The Danish National Board of Health.
- Occupational therapy is practised in the light of an objective related to prevention and rehabilitation in cooperation with target groups that experience occupational problems in their daily lives.
- Occupational therapists apply specific knowledge and methods to create coherence between people, their activities and their environment, with a view to enabling occupational performance and participation, because these promote health and a good life.

Date of definition:

1 April 2017

Dominican Republic Society of Occupational Therapy (SODTEO)

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Dominican Republic Society of Occupational Therapy (SODTEO) does not have an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Estonian Association of Occupational Therapists

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Estonian Association of Occupational Therapists has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in Estonian

Eesmärgipäraselt valitud tegevuste kasutamine inimese ja/või grupi parima võimaliku tegevusvõime saavutamiseks igapäevaelus.

Definition in English

The use of purposefully selected activities to achieve the best possible occupational performance of a person and/or group in everyday life.

Date of definition:

1 May 2017

Ethiopian Association of Occupational Therapists

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Ethiopian Association of Occupational Therapists does not have an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Faroe Islands

Ergoterapeutfelagid / Faroese Occupational Therapists Association

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Ergoterapeutfelagid / Faroese Occupational Therapists Association has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Definition in English

Occupational therapy is a client-centred health profession concerned with promoting health and well-being through occupation. The primary goal of occupational therapy is to enable people to participate in the activities of everyday life. Occupational therapists achieve this outcome by working with people and communities to enhance their ability to engage in the occupations they want to, need to, or are expected to do, or by modifying the occupation or the environment to better support their occupational engagement.

Date of definition:

1 November 2015

Finland

Suomen Toimintaterapeuttiliitto ry

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Suomen Toimintaterapeuttiliitto ry has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in Finnish

Toimintaterapia on asiakaslähtöistä kuntoutusta. Toimintaterapiassa asiakas on oman elämänsä asiantuntija ja toimintaterapeutti on terapeuttisen toiminnan asiantuntija. Toimintaterapialla tuetaan asiakkaan päivittäistä elämää; itsestä huolehtimista, asioimista ja kotielämää, koulunkäyntiä ja opiskelua, työkykyä ja työssä selviytymistä, yhteiskunnallista osallistumista, vapaa-ajan viettämistä, leikkimistä ja lepoa. Toimintaterapian käsityksen mukaan ihminen voi vaikuttaa tulevaisuuteensa, terveyteensä ja hyvinvointiinsa valintojensa ja toimintansa kautta.

Toimintaterapeutti on kuntoutusalan ammattilainen. Toimintaterapeutti ymmärtää erilaisten toimintojen merkityksen yksilölle ja yhteisölle. Hän osaa muokata ja soveltaa toimintaa siten, että se edistää asiakkaan toimintamahdollisuuksia hänen omassa ympäristössään. Toimintaterapeutti tekee yhteistyötä asiakkaan ja hänen lähiyhteisönsä sekä eri alojen asiantuntijoiden kanssa. Toimintaterapeutti on laillistettu terveydenhuollon ammatti. Ammattinimikettä voi käyttää vain toimintaterapeutin tutkinnon suorittanut henkilö. Toimintaterapeutittyöskentelevätsosiaali-ja terveydenhuollon sekä kuntoutukseneri alueilla, opetustoimessa, järjestöissä sekä itsenäisinä ammatinharjoittajina.

Definition in English

Occupational therapy is client-oriented rehabilitation. In occupational therapy, the client is the expert in his/her own life, and the therapist is the expert of the therapeutic occupation. Occupational therapy supports the daily life of the customer: taking care of oneself, running errands and leading domestic life, attending school and studying, coping at work and working capacity, societal participation, spending leisure time, playing and resting. The understanding in occupational therapy is that a person can affect his/her future, health and wellbeing through his/her choices and actions.

An occupational therapist is a professional in rehabilitation. An occupational therapist understands the significance of various activities to the individual and the community. He/she is able to adapt the activities so that it promotes the client's possibilities of occupation in his/her own environment. An occupational therapist works in co-operation with the client and his/her immediate community as well as with the experts of different fields. The profession of occupational therapist is a certified health care profession. The professional title can only be used by those having completed a degree in occupational therapy. Occupational therapists work in the diverse areas of social welfare, health care services and rehabilitation, as well as in education, organisations and as self-employed professionals.

Date of definition:

1 May 2017

France

Association Nationale Francaise des Ergotherapeutes (ANFE)

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Association Nationale Francaise des Ergotherapeutes (ANFE) does not have an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Georgia

Georgian Occupational Therapists' Association

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Georgian Occupational Therapists' Association has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in Georgian

ოკუპაციური თერაპია არის ჯანმრთელობის ხელშემწყობი და კეთილდღეობისკენ მიმართული პროფესია, რომელიც სხვადასხვა თერაპიული მეთოდის, აქტივობებისა და გარემოს მოდიფიკაციის მეშვეობით ხელს უწყობს ინდივიდებსა და ჯგუფებს მათთვის მნიშვნელოვან, ღირებულ, ყოველდღიურ საქმიანობებსა და თანასაქმიანობებში ჩართვაში. იგი მიზნად ისახავს ფუნქციონირების გაუმჯობესებას, გარემოსთან ადაპტაციას და ცხოვრების ხარისხის გაზრდას ადგილობრივ ცხოვრების წესზე, ოჯახურ სტრუქტურებსა და კულტურულ ღირებულებებზე მორგებული მიდგომების გზით რაც უზრუნველყოფს პრაქტიკის არსებული რეალობისთვის შესაბამისობას.

Definition in English

Occupational therapy is a health-promoting and well-being-oriented profession that, through various therapeutic methods, activities, and environmental modifications, supports individuals and groups in engaging in meaningful, valuable, everyday occupations and co-occupations. Its aim is to improve functioning, promote adaptation to the environment, and enhance quality of life through approaches tailored to local lifestyles, family structures, and cultural values, ensuring the relevance of practice to the current reality.

Date of definition:

13 June 2025

German Association of Occupational Therapy e.V.

Definition of Occupational Therapy

German Association of Occupational Therapy e.V. has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in German

Ergotherapie unterstützt und begleitet Menschen jeden Alters, die in ihrer Handlungsfähigkeit eingeschränkt oder von Einschränkung bedroht sind. Ziel ist, sie bei der Durchführung für sie bedeutungsvoller Betätigungen in den Bereichen Selbstversorgung, Produktivität und Freizeit in ihrer persönlichen Umwelt zu stärken. Hierbei dienen spezifische Aktivitäten, Umweltanpassung und Beratung dazu, dem Menschen Handlungsfähigkeit im Alltag, gesellschaftliche Teilhabe und eine Verbesserung seiner Lebensqualität zu ermöglichen.

Definition in English

Occupational therapy supports and assists people of all ages whose participation is limited or at risk of being limited. The aim is to enable them to carry out meaningful occupations in the areas of self-care, productivity and leisure in their personal environment.

Specific activities, environmental adaptations and advice are used to enable people to act in everyday life, participate in society and improve their quality of life.

Date of definition:

30 August 2024

Occupational Therapy Association of Ghana

Definition of Occupational Therapy

✕ Occupational Therapy Association of Ghana does not have an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Guyana Association of Occupational Therapists

Definition of Occupational Therapy

✕ Guyana Association of Occupational Therapists does not have an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Haitian Association of Occupational Therapists

Definition of Occupational Therapy

✕ Haitian Association of Occupational Therapists does not have an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Hong Kong SAR China

Hong Kong Occupational Therapy Association

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Hong Kong Occupational Therapy Association has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Definition in English

Occupational therapy is a client-centred health profession concerned with promoting health and well being through occupation. The primary goal of occupational therapy is to enable people to participate in the activities of everyday life. Occupational therapists achieve this outcome by working with people and communities to enhance their ability to engage in the occupations they want to, need to, or are expected to do, or by modifying the occupation or the environment to better support their occupational engagement.

Date of definition:

1 May 2023

Icelandic Occupational Therapy Association

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Icelandic Occupational Therapy Association has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in Icelandic

Iðju_jálfun hefur _að markmið að styðja fólk til _átttöku í iðju sem er _ví mikilvæg og eflir heilsu og vellíðan. Nálgunin er einstaklingsmiðuð _ar sem horft er til aðstæðna, vilja og _arfa viðkomandi í samspili við tækifæri og hindranir í umhverfinu.

Definition in English

The goal of occupational therapy is to support people to participate in occupations that are meaningful to them and promote health and wellbeing. The approach is based on each person´s own perspective on their situation, wishes and needs in interaction with the opportunities and hindrances of the environment.

Date of definition:

5 August 2026

India

All India Occupational Therapists Association

Definition of Occupational Therapy

All India Occupational Therapists Association has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Definition in English

Occupational Therapy is a holistic evidence-based client- centred first contact and/or referral profession of modern health care system, based on science of occupation, with primary focus on purposeful goal-oriented activities/occupations, enhanced with the use of latest technological systems for evaluation, diagnosis, education and treatment of the patients (clients) of any age group, whose function(s) is (are) impaired by physical, psychosocial and cognitive impairments, development disorders, or the ageing process affecting their quality of life, with the aim to prevent disability, promote health and well-being and return to optimum occupational roles.

Specific occupational therapy services include but are not limited to: preventive health literacy, assessment and interventions in activities of daily living (ADL), work and productive activities, play, leisure and spiritual activities; functional capacity analysis, prescription, designing and training in the use of assistive technology, adaptive equipment and splints, and environmental modifications to enhance functional performances.

Date of definition:

1 April 2017

Iranian Occupational Therapy Association

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Iranian Occupational Therapy Association does not have an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Ireland

Association of Occupational Therapists of Ireland

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Association of Occupational Therapists of Ireland has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in English

Occupational Therapy is a healthcare profession offering support to people with physical, psychological and social problems to enable them to live life to the fullest. Occupational therapists help people to do the everyday activities they want and need to do when faced with illness, injury, disability or challenging life circumstances or events. The key features of Occupational Therapy are:

We focus primarily on the person's occupation. Occupational therapists use the term occupation to describe all the things we do to take care of ourselves and others; to socialise and have fun; to work and learn; and to participate and contribute to our community and society.

Our occupations are the activities that fill up our days and that give meaning and a sense of purpose to our daily lives. Occupational therapists understand How important these everyday activities are to all of us and are experts in enabling you to live life to the fullest despite challenges or limitations.

In the case of children, the focus will be on enabling participation in childhood occupations such as play and school and supporting development and emerging independence skills.
Occupational therapists understand how illness, injury, disability or challenging life circumstances and events can affect people's ability to do the everyday things that are important for them and know how to support them to reach their maximum level of independence and autonomy.

Occupational Therapists are experts at assessing how different health conditions can affect people's abilities and helping them to overcome or work around the difficulties that are affecting their daily occupations and roles. Occupational Therapy focuses on people's strengths and therapy is always guided by the client's preferences (or those of their family in the case of children).

Occupational Therapy is client-centred and helps people to live their lives in a way that is meaningful and satisfying for them by tailoring a programme that responds to their unique identity, situation and needs.

Date of definition:

19 August 2024

Israeli Union of Occupational Therapists

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Israeli Union of Occupational Therapists has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Definition in English

Occupational Therapy is a health-care profession which undertakes treatment, rehabilitation and education. It draws its knowledge from the medical, social, behavioural and occupational sciences. Its professional practice encompasses the everyday activities of learning, working, recreation, use of leisure time and social participation in both family and community settings. The aim of OT intervention and procedures is to assist individuals or groups to take part in everyday tasks and occupations which have meaning and purpose for them. Intervention and treatment promote the improvement of the individual or group's performance, participation and involvement in the communal and environmental contexts within which they live, and in maintaining their health, welfare and quality of life.

Date of definition:

30 August 2024

Italian Association of Occupational Therapy (A.I.T.O.)

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Italian Association of Occupational Therapy (A.I.T.O.) has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in Italian

La Terapia occupazionale è una professione sanitaria dell'area della riabilitazione che favorisce il diritto a vivere le occupazioni come fondamentali e arricchenti. Le occupazioni sono tutte le attività significative che una persona desidera fare, ritiene necessario o gli altri si aspettano che lei svolga, come il lavoro, le interazioni sociali o le attività di svago.

La Terapia occupazionale è incentrata sul Cliente, la condivisione degli obiettivi segue un processo decisionale collaborativo tra chi si rivolge al servizio e il terapista.

La Terapia occupazionale incentiva, riabilita, previene e promuove la salute e il benessere dei clienti con bisogni legati o meno alla disabilità e una limitazione delle attività o una restrizione della partecipazione.

La Terapia Occupazionale viene praticata negli ambienti di vita, compresi gli ospedali, i centri per la salute, il domicilio, i luoghi di lavoro, le scuole e le case di riposo.

La terapia occupazionale è erogata da professionisti abilitati: i terapisti occupazionali. Per esercitare devono essere iscritti nell'albo dedicato all'interno dell'Ordine TSRM PSTRP."

Definition in English

Occupational Therapy is a healthcare profession within the field of rehabilitation that supports the right to engage in occupations as essential and enriching aspects of life. Occupations are all the meaningful activities a person wants to do, needs to do, or is expected to do by others, such as work, social interactions, or leisure activities.

Occupational Therapy is client-centered; the setting of goals follows a collaborative decision-making process between the person seeking services and the therapist.

Occupational Therapy encourages, rehabilitates, prevents, and promotes the health and well-being of clients with or without disabilities, who experience activity limitations or participation restrictions.

Occupational Therapy is provided in various life settings, including hospitals, health centers, homes, workplaces, schools, and nursing homes.

Occupational Therapy is delivered by licensed professionals: occupational therapists. To practice, they must be registered in the dedicated register within the Ordine TSRM PSTRP.

Date of definition:

1 May 2017

Japanese Association of Occupational Therapists

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Japanese Association of Occupational Therapists has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in Japanese

作業療法は、人々の健康と幸福を促進するために、医療、保健、福祉、教育、職業などの領域で行われる、作業に焦点を当てた治療、指導、援助である。作業とは、対象となる人々にとって目的や価値を持つ生活行為を指す。
（註釈）
・作業療法は「人は作業を通して健康や幸福になる」という基本理念と学術的根拠に基づいて行われる。
・作業療法の対象となる人々とは、身体、精神、発達、高齢期の障害や、環境への不適応により、日々の作業に困難が生じている、またはそれが予測される人や集団を指す。
・作業には、日常生活活動、家事、仕事、趣味、遊び、対人交流、休養など、人が営む生活行為と、それを行うのに必要な心身の活動が含まれる。
・作業には、人々ができるようになりたいこと、できる必要があること、できることが期待されていることなど、個別的な目的や価値が含まれる。
・作業に焦点を当てた実践には、心身機能の回復、維持、あるいは低下を予防する手段としての作業の利用と、その作業自体を練習し、できるようにしていくという目的としての作業の利用、およびこれらを達成するための環境への働きかけが含まれる。

Definition in English

Occupational Therapy is occupation-focused therapy, guidance and support provided in fields such as medical care, public health, welfare, education and employment, with the aim of promoting human health and well-being. “Occupation” refers to daily activities that are purposeful and meaningful to each person.
(Notes)

1. Occupational therapy is grounded on the fundamental principle and academic evidence that “people’s health and well-being can be promoted through occupation".
2. “Clients” are individuals or groups of people who have or are expected to have difficulties in their daily activities as a result of physical, mental, developmental, or age-related disabilities or difficulty adjusting to their environment.
3. “Occupations" include daily activities such as activities of daily living, housework, work, hobbies, play, interpersonal interaction, and rest; and are founded on physical and mental components for each activity.
4. “Occupations” are activities that a person wants to, needs to, or is expected to do, and have purpose and meaning for each person.
5. Occupation-focused practice involves using occupations as ends to restore, maintain, or prevent the decline of physical and mental function, and occupations as means to practice and achieve occupational engagement, and modifying environment to support its achievement.

Date of definition:

26 May 2018

Jordanian Society for Occupational Therapy

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Jordanian Society for Occupational Therapy has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Definition in English

The art and science of assessment and treatment of the physical and mental handicap through the specific use of selected therapeutic activities guided and adopted by the Occupational Therapist aiming to reach the optimal level of independence in all aspects of daily life.

Date of definition:

1 April 2017

Kenya Occupational Therapists Association

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Kenya Occupational Therapists Association has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Definition in English

Occupational Therapy (OT) is a health and rehabilitation profession that provides services to individuals of all ages who have physical, developmental, emotional and/or social deficits. Because of these conditions, individuals need specialized assistance in learning functional skills, which enable them to live independent, productive and satisfying lives.

An occupational therapist selects therapeutic procedures that are meaningful to the individual receiving treatment and are designed to achieve improved functional outcomes.

Date of definition:

1 August 2013

Kosovo

Instituti Kosovar i Ergoterapise / Kosovo Institute of Ergotherapy

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Instituti Kosovar i Ergoterapise / Kosovo Institute of Ergotherapy has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in Albanian

Ergoterapia është profesion shëndetësor që ndihmon individët të marrin pjesë në aktivitetet e përditshme që janë të rëndësishme për ta. Ajo mbështet fëmijët dhe të rriturit që përballen me vështirësi fizike, mendore apo zhvillimore, për të përmirësuar pavarësinë, funksionimin dhe përfshirjen e tyre në jetë dhe në shoqëri.

Definition in English

Occupational therapy is a health profession that helps individuals participate in everyday activities that are important to them. It supports children and adults who face physical, mental, or developmental challenges to improve their independence, functioning, and inclusion in life and society.

Date of definition:

10 June 2025

Kuwaiti Occupational Therapy Association

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Kuwaiti Occupational Therapy Association has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in Arabic

تخصص العلاج المهني من التخصصات الطبية المساندة .يهتم التخصص بعلاج وتأهيل المرضى من خلال المشاركة بالأنشطة العلاجية ذو هدف ومعني مما يؤدي الى استقلالية المرضى والعيش بحياة كريمة

Definition in English

Occupational therapy is a health care profession, that is concerned with the treatment and rehabilitation of patients through participation in therapeutic activities. Such therapeutic activities should have meaning and purpose for the patients thus leading to their independence and better quality of life.

Date of definition:

8 January 2023

Latvia

Latvian Association of Occupational Therapists

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Latvian Association of Occupational Therapists has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in Latvian

Ergoterapija ir veselības aprūpes profesija, kas pamatojas uz zināšanām par mērķtiecīgām nodarbēm, veicina pacienta dalību ikdienas dzīves nodarbēs, veselību un labklājību visos dzīves aspektos.

Definition in English

Occupational therapy is a health care profession that is based on knowledge about meaningful activities. Occupational therapy promotes clients' engagement in activities of daily living, and fosters health and well-being in all aspects of life.

Date of definition:

29 July 2025

Lebanon

Lebanese Occupational Therapists Syndicate

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Lebanese Occupational Therapists Syndicate has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in Arabic

هي مهنة في الحقل الطبي الحليف ترتكز على توفير التدخل العلاجي التأهيلي الملائم لك لتعزيز قدرتك على القيام بكافة أنشطتك اليومية، وأداء أدوارك الحياتية بشكل آمن ومستقل.

كذلك تهتم هذه المهنة بتكييف البيئة الفيزيائية والثقافية والتنظيمية المحيطة بك بشكل يتلائم واحتياجاتك لتسهيل انخراطك في محيطك الإجتماعي وتفعيل مشاركتك على كافة الأصعدة الحياتية.

Definition in English

"Occupational therapy is the art and science of facilitating participation in daily life, through occupation; the empowerment of people to perform occupations that promote health and well being; the promotion of a just and inclusive society so that everyone can participate to their full potential in the daily activities of life."
(Townsend & Polatajko, 2007)

Date of definition:

20 May 2013

Lithuania

Lithuanian Association of Occupational Therapists

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Lithuanian Association of Occupational Therapists has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in Lithuanian

Ergoterapija - tai asmens / grupių įgalinimas prasminga veikla, siekiant asmens / grupių gerovės, skatinant aktyvumą ir įsitraukimą į prasmingą (-as) veiklą (-as), ugdant reikiamus įgūdžius, įpročius, vaidmenis kasdienėje, mokymosi, darbinėje / profesinėje bei laisvalaikio aplinkose namuose ir bendruomenėje.

Definition in English

Occupational therapy is the empowerment of individuals/groups through meaningful activities, aiming at the well-being of individuals/groups, promoting activity and engagement in meaningful activity(ies), developing necessary skills, habits, and roles in everyday, learning, work/professional, and leisure environments at home and in the community.

Date of definition:

1 June 2017

Luxembourg

Association Luxembourgeoise des Ergothérapeutes Diplômés (ALED)

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Association Luxembourgeoise des Ergothérapeutes Diplômés (ALED) has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in French

Ergothérapie - une Profession de Santé qui s'applique dans les domaines de la rééducation, de la réadaptation, de la prévention et du conseil.

L'ergothérapie s'adresse aux enfants, aux adultes et aux personnes âgées limités momentanément ou de façon durable dans leur capacité d'action en raison:

- d'un accident
- d'une maladie ou d'un handicap physique, psychique ou mental
- d'un problème du développement

Lieux d'intervention de l'ergothérapeute:

- Cliniques spécialisées et hôpitaux
- Maisons de soins et de retraite
- Institutions et foyers pour personnes handicapées physiques, mentales et/ou sensorielles
- Centres de consultation pédiatriques
- Information et assistance à domicile
- Pratique libérale

L'ergothérapie vise à promouvoir la santé et le bien-être du client dans son milieu familial, professionnel et social.

Le principal objectif est d'acquérir un niveau maximal d'autonomie et de participation dans les domaines de la vie: les soins personnels, la productivité et les loisirs. Afin d'atteindre cet objectif, les ergothérapeutes utilisent l'approche centrée sur le client.

Cette approche donne au client la possibilité de mettre en valeur ses capacités d'action et de participation ou de modifier son environnement pour favoriser une meilleure participation.

Secteurs d'activités en ergothérapie:

- Neurologie
- Traumatologie / Rhumatologie
- Pédiatrie
- Psychiatrie
- Handicap mental
- Gériatrie

L'ergothérapie part du principe qu'agir est un besoin fondamental de l'être humain et que l'action possède des effets thérapeutiques favorables à la santé.

Après une évaluation ergothérapeutique différenciée, les objectifs individuels sont élaborés, en collaboration avec le patient et/ou son entourage proche. Le choix, l'organisation, l'emploi et l'adaptation de l'activité sont la

spécificité de l'ergothérapeute. Il s'agit d'activités thérapeutiques finalisées au niveau des soins personnels, de la productivité et des loisirs:

- Activités de la vie journalière (AVJ)
- Activités artistiques et artisanales
- Activités ludiques et récréatives
- Activités intellectuelles et éducatives
- Activités professionnelles et industrielles

Date of definition:

1 April 2017

Macau SAR China

Macau Occupational Therapists Association

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Macau Occupational Therapists Association has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in Chinese

工作及職務包括評估個案的身體、感知、認知與精神功能，並因應個案在物理與社會環境方面的日常生活、工作、學習及休閒活動之所需訂定治療方案。治療方法尤其包括徒手治療、日常生活功能訓練、多感官刺激與感覺統合治療法、製作矯形支架與壓力衣、義肢及輔具訓練、痛症管理、餵食訓練、職業復康、環境調整及諮詢

Definition in English

The work and duties include assessing the physical, perceptual, cognitive, and mental functions of the case, and formulating treatment plans in response to the case's needs in daily life, work, study, and leisure activities in terms of the physical and social environments. The treatment methods especially include manual therapy, daily living function training, multisensory stimulation and sensory integration therapy, making orthopedic braces and pressure garments, prosthetic and assistive device training, pain management, feeding training, vocational rehabilitation, environmental adjustment, and consultation.

Date of definition:

11 June 2025

Madagascar

Association Malgache Pour L'Ergotherapie (AMET)

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Association Malgache Pour L'Ergotherapie (AMET) does not have an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Occupational Therapy Association of Malawi

Definition of Occupational Therapy

✕ Occupational Therapy Association of Malawi does not have an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Malaysian Occupational Therapy Association

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Malaysian Occupational Therapy Association has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in Malay

Terapi Carakerja adalah profesion rawatan pemulihan dan penjagaan kesihatan yang memfokus kepada membantu individu daripada semua lapisan umur untuk melibatkan diri dan melakukan aktiviti kehidupan harian, produktiviti, dan aktiviti masa lapang yang terganggu akibat daripada masalah fizikal, psikologikal atau sosial.

Terapi Carakerja menggunakan pendekatan berpusatkan klien melalui aktiviti yang bertujuan dan bermakna, modifikasi peralatan dan persekitaran, adaptasi perlaksanaan pekerjaan, teknik terapeutik dan modaliti fizikal, pendidikan, dan konsultasi bagi mengekalkan, meningkatkan dan/atau mewujudkan kemahiran dan keupayaan individu tersebut supaya mereka dapat melaksanakan peranan secara optimum dan lebih bermakna dalam persekitaran sosio-budaya masing-masing.

Definition in English

Occupational therapy is a rehabilitation and health care profession, which focuses on helping individuals of all ages to engage and perform activities of daily living, productivity, and leisure that have been affected by physical, psychological or social problems.

Occupational Therapy uses a client-centred approach through purposeful and meaningful activities, tools and environmental modifications, occupational adaptations, therapeutic techniques and physical modalities, education, and consultation in order to maintain, improve and/or establish individuals' skill and ability to perform their role optimally and meaningfully in their social-cultural environment.

Date of definition:

1 April 2017

Malta Association of Occupational Therapists

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Malta Association of Occupational Therapists has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Definition in English

Occupational Therapy is the assessment and treatment of physical and psychological conditions through selected techniques and purposeful activities aimed at improving the individual's level of functional independence and quality of life.

Date of definition:

1 April 1998

Occupational Therapists' Association of Mauritius

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Occupational Therapists' Association of Mauritius has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Definition in English

Occupational Therapy is a health profession which caters for people of all ages who cannot cope with daily life situations because of disability or illness due to physical, psychiatric or social causes. Occupational Therapy aims at bringing to light abilities to counteract difficulties so as to overcome performance deficits at work, at home or during leisure time.

Methods used are through purposeful activities and through counselling. The Occupational Therapist acts as a Mediator between the person with disability and the people surrounding him in the community in which he lives. Hence it is essential for the Occupational Therapist to take into consideration the particular way of living of the individual with disability he is working with.

Date of definition:

1 December 2002

Mexico

Asociacion de Profesionales en Terapia Ocupacional AC

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Asociacion de Profesionales en Terapia Ocupacional AC does not have an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Occupational Therapy Association of Moldova

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Occupational Therapy Association of Moldova has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in Romanian

Terapia ocupațională este o profesie medicală centrată pe client, care ajută indivizii să dezvolte, să recupereze sau să mențină abilitățile necesare pentru viața de zi cu zi și activități semnificative. Aceasta încorporează cadre precum teoria integrării senzoriale pentru a sprijini răspunsurile adaptive și a îmbunătăți performanța funcțională prin activități structurate, direcționate către obiective.

Definition in English

Occupational therapy is a client-centered healthcare profession that helps individuals develop, recover, or maintain the skills needed for daily living and meaningful activities. It incorporates frameworks such as sensory integration theory to support adaptive responses and enhance functional performance through structured, goal-directed activities.

Date of definition:

22 April 2026

Mongolian Occupational Therapy Association

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Mongolian Occupational Therapy Association has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in Mongolian

Хөдөлмөр заслын шинжлэх ухаан нь аливаа бэрхшээлийн улмаас үүссэн өдөр тутмын үйл ажиллагаан дахь хөдөлмөрийн гүйцэтгэл, хөдөлмөрийн оролцооны хязгаарлагдмал байдлыг үнэлэн, хийхийг хүсч буй, хийх шаардлагатай байгаа хөдөлмөрөөр дамжуулан амьдралын чанар, сайн сайхан байдалд хүргэдэг хөдөлмөр, нийгмийн харилцаа болон анагаахын шинжлэх ухааны нийлмэл ойлголт юм.

Definition in English

Occupational therapy is an interdisciplinary science that integrates elements of occupation, social interaction, and medicine to assess limitations in occupational performance and restrictions of participation in daily activities caused by various difficulties, and to enhance quality of life and well-being by providing therapeutic interventions through activities that individuals need or wish to engage in.

Date of definition:

12 June 2025

Occupational Therapy Association of Morocco

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Occupational Therapy Association of Morocco has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in French

L'ergothérapie est une profession de santé, qui vise la promotion de la santé et le bien-être par l'occupation. Son objectif principal est de faciliter la participation sociale et l'équilibre occupationnel, en permettant aux personnes de s'engager dans les activités de la vie quotidienne avec un maximum d'autonomie et d'indépendance. L'ergothérapeute, membre d'une équipe pluridisciplinaire, atteint ce résultat auprès de personnes et de communautés par des processus de prévention, de rééducation, de réadaptation, d'inclusion sociale et professionnelle. Son action porte aussi bien sur les personnes que sur leurs environnements et leurs occupations.

Official definition in Arabic

اليومية والهادفة (سواء كانت تلك المشاكل ناتجة عن أمراض أو إصابات أو إعاقات جسدية أو نفسية أو تطورية أو اضطرابات سلوكية أو نفس-اجتماعية .و يستخدم في العلاج سواء الفردي أو الجماعي الطرق و الوسائل و الانشطة الهادفة والتمارين العلاجية والادوات وأجهزة التكنولوجيا المساعدة و عمل الجبائر الطرية وذلك لزيادة استقلالية المريض و تمكينه من أداء وظائفه اليومية وإعادة تأهيله في مجتمعه .كما تهدف هذه المهنة الى الارتقاء في صحة الأفراد .والجماعات

What is Occupational Therapy? Source: http://www.jsot-jo.org/AboutUs.aspx

Definition in English

Occupational Therapy (OT) is a science-driven, evidence-based profession that enables people of all ages live life to its fullest by helping them promote health, prevent—or live better with—injury, illness, or disability. This is accomplished through designing strategies for everyday living and customizing environments to develop and maximize potential. By taking the full picture into account—a person's psychological, physical, emotional, and social make-up—occupational therapy assists people in: Achieving their goals, functioning at the highest possible level, concentrating on what matters most to them, maintaining or rebuilding their independence, participating in the everyday activities that they need to do or that simply make life worth living. OT helps individuals design their lives, develop skills, adjust home, school, or work environments, and build health-promoting habits and routines. Occupational Therapy uses everyday activities as the means to enable people to thrive. OT works to get beyond disability or limitations, creating ways for individuals to live life to its fullest no matter what.

Date of definition:

1 September 2017

Namibian Association of Occupational Therapists

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Namibian Association of Occupational Therapists has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in English

Occupational therapy is a profession concerned with promoting health and well being through occupation. The primary goal of occupational therapy is to enable people to participate in the activities of everyday life. Occupational therapists achieve this outcome by enabling people to do things that will enhance their ability to participate or by modifying the environment to better support participation.

Occupational therapists have a broad education that equips them with skills and knowledge to work collaboratively with individuals or groups of people or communities, who have limitations or an impairment of body structure or function due to a health condition, and who experience barriers to participate.

Occupational therapists believe that participation can be supported or restricted by physical, social, attitudinal and legislative environments. Therefore, occupational therapy practice may be directed to change aspects or the environment to enhance participation.

Occupational therapy is practised in a wide range of settings, including hospitals, health centers, homes, workplaces, schools, reform institutions, housing for seniors and community based settings. Clients are actively involved in the therapeutic process, and outcomes of occupational therapy are diverse, client-driven and measured in terms of participation or satisfaction derived from participation.

Date of definition:

1 September 2007

Association of Nepal Occupational Therapists

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Association of Nepal Occupational Therapists does not have an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Netherlands

Ergotherapie Nederland

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Ergotherapie Nederland has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in Dutch

Ergotherapie is gericht op het mogelijk maken van het handelen, zodat participatie - het deelnemen van mensen aan het dagelijks en maatschappelijk leven - gerealiseerd wordt ten behoeve van gezondheid en welzijn. Dit wordt bereikt door de mogelijkheden van personen, organisaties of populaties in het handelen te benutten en te vergroten, dan wel door de omgeving aan te passen en/of te gebruiken.

Definition in English

Occupational Therapy focuses on enabling occupation, in order to realize participation in daily and societal life, for the benefit of health and well being. This will be accomplished by using and increasing the abilities of persons, organizations and populations, and or by modifying and using the environment.

Date of definition:

1 April 2017

Occupational Therapy New Zealand / Whakaora Ngangahau Aotearoa

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Occupational Therapy New Zealand / Whakaora Ngangahau Aotearoa has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in English

The New Zealand Association of Occupational Therapists / Whakaora Ngangahau Aotearoa (NZAOT) has adopted the following key terms, in doing so we acknowledge the unique bi-cultural and varied practice contexts in which occupational therapists / nga kaiwhakaora ngangahau participate in.

Occupational Therapy / Whakaora Ngangahau: is "a client-centred health profession concerned with promoting health and well-being through occupation. The primary goal of occupational therapy [whakaora ngangahau] is to enable people to participate in the activities of everyday life. Occupational therapists [nga kaiwhakaora ngangahau] achieve this by working with people and communities to enhance their ability to engage in the occupations they want to, need to, or are expected to do, or by modifying the occupation or the environment to better support their occupational therapy engagement (WFOT, 2012).

Occupations: "are groups of activities and tasks of everyday life, named, organised, and given value and meaning by individuals and a culture: occupation is everything people do to occupy themselves, including looking after themselves (self care), enjoying life (leisure), and contributing to the social and economic fabric of their communities (productivity); [they are] the domain of concern and therapeutic medium of occupational therapy" (Townsend & Polatajko, 2007, p. 369).

Occupational Science: is the systematic study of the things that people do (their occupations) and includes research at an individual, group or population level. The focus of research might be on the meanings occupations hold; patterns of occupations; or the relationship between occupation and health. (Hocking, 2012, p. 1 – abridged).

General Scope of Practice:

Occupational therapist [Kaiwhakaora ngangahau]:
Occupational therapists[nga kaiwhakaora ngangahau] are registered health professionals, who use processes of enabling occupation to optimise human activity and participation in all life domains across the lifespan, and thus promote the health and well-being of individuals, groups, and communities. These life domains include: learning and applying knowledge; general tasks and demands; communication; mobility; self-care; domestic life; interpersonal interaction and relationships; major life areas; and community, social and civic life.

Enabling occupation incorporates the application of knowledge, principles, methods and procedures related to understanding, predicting, ameliorating or influencing peoples' participation in occupations within these life domains. Such practice is evidence-based, undertaken in accordance with the Occupational Therapy Board of New Zealand's prescribed Competencies and Code of Ethics, and within the individual occupational therapist's / nga kaiwhakaora ngangahau area and level of expertise (Occupational Therapy Board of New Zealand, (n.d.).
Te Reo translations:
In 2010, Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori (the Māori Language Commission) confirmed an official te reo title for occupational therapy and occupational therapist.

Occupational therapy is translated as whakaora ngangahau. Whakaora' means 'to restore to health' and 'ngangahau' is an adjective meaning 'active, spirited, zealous'. In choosing this translation, the Commission is conveying the idea of 'reawakening, or restoring to health one's activeness, spiritedness and zeal' (occupational therapy).

Occupational therapist is translated as kaiwhakaora ngangahau. If wanting to use the plural - occupational therapists, then the term is preceded with nga as in 'nga kaiwhakaora ngangahau'.
References:
Hocking, C. (2012). Occupational science. In M D Gellman & J. R. Turner (Eds.), Encyclopedia of behavioural medicine (Online ed.). Springer-Verlag.

Occupational Therapy Board of New Zealand (n.d.). Notice of scope of practice and related qualifications prescribed by the Occupational Therapy Board of NZ. Retrieved from http://www.otboard.org.nz/Registration/Currentlyregisteredoccupationaltherapists/OTScopeofPractice.aspx

Townsend, E.A., & Polatajko, H.J. (2007). Enabling occupation II: Advancing an occupational therapy vision for health, well-being, & justice through occupation. Ottawa, ON: CAOT.

World Federation of Occupational Therapy. (2012). Definition of occupational therapy. Retrieved from: https://wfot.org/about/about-occupational-therapy

Translation expertise
Hohepa MacDougall Kaiwhakamāori / Translator, Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori / Māori Language Commission (2010).

Date of definition:

1 April 2017

Nigeria

Occupational Therapist Association of Nigeria (OTAN)

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Occupational Therapist Association of Nigeria (OTAN) has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Definition in English

Occupational therapy is the means by which people of all age groups with health conditions can be involved in the art of living a productive and meaningful life. People are assisted to realize the qualities they possess and to build on these for sustained existence. Doing this provides the avenue for opportunities to perform activities identified with self-care, work / play and free time. Occupational therapy works with the individual towards promoting freedom from dependence on others and to attract respect and not pity.

Occupational therapy demonstrates that:

1. It is every individual's right to participate in life activities associated with the age group whatever the condition.
2. Obstacles within or outside the person preventing function can be addressed.
3. Each individual can be assisted to be aware of his own potential and to be motivated.
4. Tapping on this knowledge promotes health, encourages performance and contributes quality to life.

Date of definition:

1 March 2005

Norwegian Association of Occupational Therapists

Definition of Occupational Therapy

✕ Norwegian Association of Occupational Therapists does not have an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Pakistan Occupational Therapy Association

Definition of Occupational Therapy

✕ Pakistan Occupational Therapy Association does not have an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Asociacion de Terapeutas Ocupacionales de Panama

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Asociacion de Terapeutas Ocupacionales de Panama does not have an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Asociacion Profesional de Terapeutas Ocupacionales del Peru

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Asociacion Profesional de Terapeutas Ocupacionales del Peru does not have an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Poland

Polish Occupational Therapy Association

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Polish Occupational Therapy Association has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in Polish

Terapia zajęciowa to profesja zorientowana na wspieranie zdrowia i dobrego samopoczucia poprzez zajęcie, a jej podstawowym celem jest umożliwienie ludziom pełnego uczestnictwa w czynnościach dnia codziennego.

Definition in English

Occupational therapy is a profession focused on promoting health and well-being through occupation. Its primary goal is to enable people to fully participate in everyday activities.

Date of definition:

2 September 2024

Portugal

Associacao Portuguesa de Terapeutas Ocupacionais

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Associacao Portuguesa de Terapeutas Ocupacionais has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in Portuguese

A avaliação, tratamento e habilitação de indivíduos com disfunção física, mental, de desenvolvimento, social ou outras, utilizando técnicas terapêuticas integradas em atividades selecionadas consoante o objetivo pretendido e enquadradas na relação terapeuta/utente; prevenção da incapacidade através de estratégias adequadas com vista a proporcionar ao indivíduo o máximo de desempenho e autonomia nas suas funções pessoais, sociais e profissionais e, se necessário, o estudo e desenvolvimento das respetivas ajudas técnicas, em ordem a contribuir para uma melhoria da qualidade de vida.

Definition in English

The assessment, treatment and habilitation of individuals with physical, mental, developmental, social or other dysfunctions, using therapeutic techniques integrated into activities selected according to the intended objective and framed in the therapist/user relationship; prevention of disability through appropriate strategies in order to provide the individual with maximum performance and autonomy in their personal, social and professional functions and, if necessary, the study and development of the respective technical aids, in order to contribute to an improvement in the quality of life.

Date of definition:

1 April 2017

Republic of Korea

Korean Association of Occupational Therapists

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Korean Association of Occupational Therapists has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in Korean

작업치료에서 작업은 사람들이 개인, 가족 및 지역사회와 함께 시간을 보내고 삶의 의미와 목적을 가져오는 일상 활동을 말합니다. 작업은 사람들이 필요로 하고, 원하고, 할 것으로 예상되는 일들을 포함합니다.

작업치료는 작업을 통해 건강과 웰빙을 증진시키는 일에 관심을 갖는 클라이언트 중심의 보건 전문직 입니다.

작업치료의 주요 목표는 사람들이 일상의 활동에 참여할 수 있도록 하는 것입니다.

Definition in English

In occupational therapy, occupations refer to the everyday activities that people do as individuals, in families and with communities to occupy time and bring meaning and purpose to life. Occupations include things people need to, want to and are expected to do.

Occupational therapy is a client-centered healthcare profession focused on promoting health and well-being through occupation. The primary goal of occupational therapy is to enable people to participate in daily activities.

Date of definition:

1 January 2023

Professional Association of Occupational Therapists from Romania

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Professional Association of Occupational Therapists from Romania has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in English

Occupational therapy is a client-centred health profession concerned with promoting health and wellbeing through occupation. The primary goal of occupational therapy is to enable people to participate in the activities of everyday life. Occupational therapists achieve this outcome by working with people and communities to enhance their ability to engage in the occupations they want to, need to, or are expected to do, or by modifying the occupation or the environment to better support their occupational engagement.

Date of definition:

1 April 2017

Russian Professional Association of Ergotherapists

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Russian Professional Association of Ergotherapists has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in Russian

Эрготерапия - это специальность, которая, используя целенаправленную деятельность, помогает людям с различными физическими или психическими нарушениями достигнуть максимальной независимости во всех аспектах повседневной жизни.

Definition in English

Occupational therapy is a specialty that, using targeted activities, helps people with various physical or mental disabilities achieve maximum independence in all aspects of daily life.

Date of definition:

28 August 2024

Rwanda Occupational Therapy Association

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Rwanda Occupational Therapy Association has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in Kinyarwanda

Occupational Therapy ni umwuga w'ubuvuzi wifashisha ibikorwa hagamijwe guha no kongerera ubushobozi umurwayi cyangwa undi muntu ufite imbogamizi mubuzima bwe bwa buri munsi (Rwanda Occupational Therapy Association, 2024).

Definition in English

Occupational Therapy is holistic health care profession that uses the purposeful and meaningful activities to habilitate or rehabilitate the persons with limitation in everyday life to achieve optimal functioning independence (Rwanda Occupational Therapy Association, 2024).

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Occupational Therapy Association

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Saudi Occupational Therapy Association does not have an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Association of Occupational Therapists of Serbia

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Association of Occupational Therapists of Serbia has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in Serbian

Radna terapija je svaka aktivnost, mentalna ili fizička, koja je medicinski propisana i stručno vođena, sa svrhom da pomogne pacijentu u da postigne maksimalnu funkcionlnu nezavisnost posle neke bolesti ili povreda.

Seychelles Occupational Therapy Association

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Seychelles Occupational Therapy Association has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in Seychellois Creole

Definisyon Terapi Lokipasyonel
Terapi okipasyonel i en service ki santre otour bann pasyan ek kliyan dan domenn lasante ek servis sosyal ki annan bi pou promot bon fason viv ek lasante atraver nou bann aktivite toulezour. Aktivite toulezour i bann keksoz ki nou fer koman nou bann lokipasyon ki striktire otour nou lazournen dan nou kiltir. Lokipasyon i sa ki nou sipoze fer, sa ki nou anvi fer e osi sa ki dimoun dan nou zalantour i ekspekte nou fer a diferan laz ek staz dan nou lavi an grandisan osi sa ki ganny asosye avek nou kiltie. Atraver terapi okipasyonel bann pasyan ek kliyan i aprann e reaprann fason pou sirviv, pran ka ek zot lekor osi byen ki lezot ki dan zot zalantour ek kominote kot zot apartenir. I osi ed nou form parti en group oubyen en kominote, I fer nou santi nou konplet akoz tou sa bann keksoz ki nou kapab fer e ki siport nou pou grandi, amelyore e epanoui.

Definition in English

Occupational therapy is a client centred profession within the domain of health and social care that promotes health and wellbeing through the use of everyday occupations. Everyday Occupations are the things we chose to do that occupy and give structure to our daily lives in our cultural context. Occupation is what one needs to do, wants to do and are expected to do at different ages of our life and which are meaningful and culturally acceptable to us. Through engaging in occupational therapy a client learns how to survive, take care of themselves, others and their environment, belong and contribute to a group and community, feel fulfilled and be able to perform all those things that we do that support us in our efforts to grow, improve and thrive.

The aims of occupational therapy are to help the users of the service:
Who are affected by adverse events such as disease, development delays, trauma or deprivation regain or re-engage with their chosen occupations;
Overcome physical, psychological and social barriers to participation in their chosen occupations and thereby fulfil their roles and responsibilities;
Continue to engage in health promoting occupations;
Experience meaning and purpose in their lives through participating in relevant occupations;
Improve the quality of and satisfaction with life in spite of disabilities;
As well as advocate on their behalf and ensuring that their rights for inclusivity is taken into consideration.

Date of definition:

19 June 2025

Singapore Association of Occupational Therapists

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Singapore Association of Occupational Therapists has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Definition in English

Occupational therapy is a health profession that uses activities (occupations) with specific goals to help people of all ages to participate in activities of everyday living. Activities of everyday living include and are not limited to self-care, leisure, school and work. It is believed that participation in meaningful activities and roles essential to the individual helps to maintain or enhance our health and wellbeing.

Occupational therapists work with people with a range of conditions, including those who have physical disabilities, mental or social difficulties either from birth or as the result of accident, illness or ageing. Occupational therapists will consider the importance of how a person's physical, mental and social needs will impact on their recovery process and help them to achieve the goals that are most important to them.

Their work involves:

- Enhancing physical and psychological functions
- Preventing illnesses
- Facilitating independent living
- Improving quality of life of people with disabilities or special needs
- Promoting reintegration to home, work and society

To achieve these outcomes, occupational therapists will work with a person to design a treatment programme based on the individual's unique lifestyle and preferences. Therapy usually involves carefully designed activities and processes or sometimes, even includes modifications to the environmental surroundings of the person.

Occupational therapy services may include:

- Consultations
- Customized interventions (skills-based or activity-focused) ·
- Home and workplace evaluations
- Prescription of environment adaptations and assistive devices
- Family/Caregiver education and training

Date of definition:

1 May 2017

Occupational Therapy in Sint Maarten

Definition of Occupational Therapy

✕ Occupational Therapy in Sint Maarten does not have an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Slovenian Association of Occupational Therapists

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Slovenian Association of Occupational Therapists has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in Slovenian

Delovna terapija je zdravstvena stroka, ki se ukvarja z uporabnikom na področju zdravja in dobrega počutja. Osredotočena je na uporabnike vseh starosti, z različnimi zdravstvenimi težavami, katere uporabnikom povzročajo omejitve v izvajanju vsakodnevnih aktivnosti/dejavnosti. Primarni cilj delovnoterapevtske obravnave je omogočiti izboljšanje sodelovanja in vključenosti uporabnikov v aktivnosti/dejavnosti vsakodnevnega življenja. Z namenskimi aktivnostmi, s strategijami, s terapevtskimi tehnikami in pristopi izboljšuje uporabnikove sposobnosti za vključevanje v aktivnosti/dejavnosti, katere si uporabniki želijo izvajati, so zanje potrebne, ali se jih od njih pričakuje. S prilagajanjem same izvedbe aktivnosti/dejavnosti ali okolja uporabnikovim sposobnostim, delovni terapevt uporabniku omogoči lažje in učinkovitejše vključevanje v izvajanje njemu smiselne aktivnosti/dejavnosti.

Definition in English

Occupational therapy is a client-centred health profession concerned with promoting health and well-being through occupation. The primary goal of occupational therapy is to enable people to participate in the activities of everyday life. Occupational therapists achieve this outcome by working with people and communities to enhance their ability to engage in the occupations they want to, need to, or are expected to do, or by modifying the occupation or the environment to better support their occupational engagement.

Date of definition:

1 May 2017

South Africa

Occupational Therapy Association of South Africa

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Occupational Therapy Association of South Africa has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in English

Occupational therapy is a client-centred health profession concerned with promoting health and wellbeing through occupation. The primary goal of occupational therapy is to enable people to participate in the activities of everyday life. Occupational therapists achieve this outcome by working with people and communities to enhance their ability to engage in the occupations they want to, need to, or are expected to do, or by modifying the occupation or the environment to better support their occupational engagement.
Occupational Therapy Association of South Africa is currently using the WFOT definition but are planning on developing their own definition at a workshop in 2016.

Date of definition:

1 May 2017

Spain

Consejo General de Colegios de Terapeutas Ocupacionales

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Consejo General de Colegios de Terapeutas Ocupacionales has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in Spanish

La Terapia Ocupacional es la disciplina sociosanitaria que evalúa la capacidad de la persona (niño, adulto o mayor) para desempeñar las actividades de la vida cotidiana e interviene cuando dicha capacidad está en riesgo o dañada por cualquier causa. El Terapeuta Ocupacional utiliza, con finalidad terapéutica, la actividad con propósito y el entorno donde se realiza dicha actividad para la promoción de la salud, prevención, habilitación, mejora, mantenimiento o compensación y adaptación de las posibles limitaciones funcionales, con el objetivo de conseguir el máximo nivel de salud, autonomía personal e integración en el entorno de la persona y/o grupos, y permitir así la justicia social y una participación plena en la Comunidad.

Definition in English

Occupational Therapy is a health and social discipline that evaluates the ability of the person (child, adult or older) to perform the activities of daily life and intervenes when that capacity is at risk or damage from any cause. Occupational Therapist uses meaningful activities with therapeutic purposes, as well as the environment in which such activity is performed, in order to gain health promotion, prevention, improvement, maintenance, development or compensation and adaptation of functional limitations, with the aim of achieving the highest level of Health, personal autonomy and integration in the environment of the individual and/or groups, to allow social justice and full participation in the Community.

Date of definition:

1 February 2017

Sri Lanka Society of Occupational Therapists

Definition of Occupational Therapy

✕ Sri Lanka Society of Occupational Therapists does not have an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Sweden

Swedish Association of Occupational Therapists

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Swedish Association of Occupational Therapists has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in Swedish

Målet med arbetsterapi är att stödja personen att engagera sig i för dem meningsfulla aktiviteter som främjar delaktighet och hälsa. Detta sker med utgångspunkt från personens syn på sin situation, önskemål och behov, samt med hänsyn till möjligheter och hinder i det sammanhang som hen befinner sig i.

Definition in English

The goal of occupational therapy is to support people in engaging in occupations that are meaningful to them and that promote participation and health. This is based on the person's own perspective on their situation, wishes and needs, while also considering opportunities and constraints in the context in which the person lives.

Date of definition:

1 January 2024

Switzerland

Ergotherapie-Verband Schweiz

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Ergotherapie-Verband Schweiz has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in German

Ergotherapie stellt die Handlungsfähigkeit des Menschen in den Mittelpunkt. Sie trägt zur Verbesserung der Gesundheit und zur Steigerung der Lebensqualität bei. Sie befähigt Menschen, an den Aktivitäten des täglichen Lebens und an der Gesellschaft teilzuhaben.(EVS/ASE 2012)

Official definition in French

L'ergothérapie est une profession centrée sur le développement et le maintien de la capacité d'agir des personnes. Elle contribue à l'amélioration de la santé et de la qualité de la vie. Elle facilite la participation à la société en permettant de prendre part aux activités quotidiennes.(EVS/ASE 2012)

Official definition in Italian

L'ergoterapia mette al centro lo sviluppo e il mantenimento della capacità d'agire delle persone. L'intervento contribuisce al miglioramento della salute e all'aumento della qualità di vita. L'ergoterapia facilita le persone nello svolgimento delle attività della vita quotidiana permettendo di partecipare alla vita sociale. (EVS/ASE 2012)

Definition in English

Occupational therapy focuses on the person's ability to perform occupations and contributes to improvement of health and enhancement of quality of life. It enables persons to participate in activities of daily life as well as in society. (EVS/ASE 2012)

Date of definition:

1 April 2017

Taiwan Occupational Therapy Association

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Taiwan Occupational Therapy Association has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Definition in English

Occupational therapy is aimed at improving an individual's quality of life by assisting him/her to choose, arrange and carry out daily activities. Individuals who may benefit from occupational therapy include those whose daily function and social participation are limited by physical and/or psychosocial dysfunction, developmental disabilities, learning disabilities, aging, or inadequate socio-cultural environment. Occupational therapy professionals apply principles of occupational science and of activity analysis to determine factors influencing the individual's occupational performance, and approach these factors from a bio-psycho-social perspective. In addition, occupational therapists often use methods of environmental adaptation, splinting, assistive devices, work simplification and work hardening to help the individual engage in meaningful daily activities, maintain his/her sense of well-being and prevent regression in function to ensure one's satisfaction of life.

Date of definition:

1 May 2017

Tanzania Occupational Therapy Association

Definition of Occupational Therapy

✕ Tanzania Occupational Therapy Association does not have an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Occupational Therapists Association of Thailand (OTAT)

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Occupational Therapists Association of Thailand (OTAT) has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in Thai

กิจกรรมบำบัด (Occupational Therapy) หมายความว่า การกระทำเกี่ยวกับความสามารถของบุคคลที่มีความบกพร่องทางด้านร่างกาย จิตใจ การเรียนรู้และการพัฒนาเกี่ยวกับเด็ก โดยกระบวนการตรวจ ประเมิน ส่งเสริมป้องกัน บำบัด ฟื้นฟูสมรรถภาพ ให้สามารถทำกิจกรรมต่างๆ ได้ เพื่อให้บุคคลดำเนินชีวิตได้ตามศักยภาพ โดยการนำกิจกรรม วิธีการ และอุปกรณ์ที่เหมาะสมมาเป็นวิธีการในการบำบัด

Definition in English

Occupational Therapy is an intervention concern with performance of individuals who have physical disabilities, mental disabilities, learning disability and developmental disabilities. The process composes of examination, evaluation, promotion, prevention, provide therapy and rehabilitation so they can be able to live with their full potential. The means for therapy is using meaningful activities, appropriate method and instruments.

Date of definition:

1 April 2017

Trinidad and Tobago Occupational Therapy Association

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Trinidad and Tobago Occupational Therapy Association does not have an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Association Tunisienne d'Ergothérapie

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Association Tunisienne d'Ergothérapie has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in French

L'ergothérapie est une profession de santé, qui vise à faciliter la participation des personnes et des communautés dans la vie en société en leur permettant de s'engager dans leurs activités avec un maximum d'autonomie et d'indépendance. Elle soutient les personnes dans la réalisation de ce qu'elles souhaitent ou doivent faire (vivre, travailler et apprendre), en intervenant sur les composantes de l'individu, de l'occupation (l'ensemble de leurs activités et habitudes de vie) ou de l'environnement physique ou social.
L'ergothérapie est indiquée pour des personnes de tout âge qui, temporairement ou durablement, sont limitées ou risquent de l'être dans leur fonctionnement quotidien. Leurs problèmes de santé peuvent inclure une maladie, un trouble, une blessure ou un traumatisme, ainsi que d'autres circonstances telles qu'une incapacité ou une situation de handicap, un problème psychosocial, de développement ou le vieillissement, une anomalie congénitale ou une prédisposition génétique.

L'ergothérapeute intervient dans un environnement médical, social, éducatif et professionnel. Il agit sur prescription médicale lorsque la nature des activités qu'il conduit l'exige. L'ergothérapeute assure des activités de rééducation et de réadaptation, il assure une bonne installation de la personne, il réalise et conseille des appareillages et des aides techniques, évalue les besoins techniques et aides humaines. Il conçoit, aménage et adapte les environnements de l'habitat, du lieu professionnel ou de l'école de manière sécurisée, accessible, évolutive et durable. L'ergothérapeute aide la personne et ses proches à développer des habiletés pour s'engager dans ses occupations ou ses rôles ou à apprendre de nouvelles façons de les pratiquer.

L'intervention ergothérapique contribue à l'amélioration de la santé, la qualité de vie et une société plus inclusive et juste, et ce par

- son approche centrée sur l'activité (occupation) et la participation sociale, qui représentent à la fois l'objectif et le moyen de l'ergothérapie,
- son approche globale et systémique de l'interaction entre les facteurs de la personne, de l'activité/occupation et l'environnement,
- une approche très pratique et créative des questions de réadaptation et de réhabilitation ajustée aux besoins spécifiques des personnes,
- une approche de citoyenneté participative qui considère toutes les personnes comme sujets et partenaires de collaboration.

Definition in English

Occupational therapy is a health profession, which aims to facilitate the participation of people and communities in life in society by enabling them to engage in their occupations with a maximum of autonomy and independence. Occupational therapy supports people in achieving what they wish or must do (live, work and learn), by targeting and eliciting change of components of the person, of the occupation (all of their activities and life habits) and/or the physical and social environment.

Occupational therapy is indicated for people of all ages who, temporarily or permanently, are limited or at risk of being limited in their daily functioning. Their health issues may include an illness, disorder, injury or trauma, as well as other circumstances such as incapacity or disability, psychosocial and developmental problems or aging, a congenital anomaly or a genetic predisposition.

The occupational therapist works in a medical, social, educational and vocational environment. A medical prescription may be required depending on the nature of the professional activities. The occupational therapist provides activities in re-education and rehabilitation, ensures good positioning of the person, manufactures and advises assistive devices and equipment, and assesses needs for technical and human aid. He designs, modifies and adapts the home-environment, the workplace or the educational environment in a secure, accessible, scalable and sustainable manner.

The occupational therapist helps the person and his relatives to develop skills to engage in occupations and roles or to learn new ways of performing them.

Occupational therapy intervention contributes to the improvement of health and of quality of life and to a more inclusive and just society, through

- Its approach centred on occupation and social participation, which represent both the objective and the means of occupational therapy,
- Its global and systemic approach to the interaction between the factors of the person, the occupation and the environment,
- A very practical and creative approach to problem solving in rehabilitation tailor made to the specific needs of people,
- A participatory citizenship approach that considers all people as subjects and partners in collaboration.

Date of definition:

1 December 2020

Uganda Association of Occupational Therapists

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Uganda Association of Occupational Therapists has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in Swahili

Okujjanjaba nga weyambisa emirimo egya bulijjo, lyettabi ly'obulamu, ery'obuvunanyizibwa, eri abantu abalema, nabo abatategeera bulungi mu bwongo era ne bakateyamba. Obuleema buyinza okuba nga bwa kiseera oba nga bwalubeereera.

Munzijanjaba eno, omukugu ayigiriza abantu bano okwenyigira mu mirimu egitekeddwa okuba sobozesa okukozesa ebitundu byabwe eby'omubiri mu bujjuvu, nge'ekigendererwa, basobole okutukiriza ebyetaago byabwe mukukola, okukolagana nabalala awamu n'okwetaba mubulamu obujjuvu.

Definition in English

A method of treatment where functional activity is the focus to help people with physical, mental, and social problems to be as independent as possible in activities of daily living. The aim of Occupational Therapy is to improve independence, to prevent or reduce disability and to maintain health.

Date of definition:

17 July 2025

Ukraine

Ukrainian Society of Ergotherapists

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Ukrainian Society of Ergotherapists has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in Ukrainian

Ерготерапія сприяє покращенню здоров'я та благополуччя, підтримуючи участь у значущих заняттях, які люди хочуть або потребують виконувати, а також у заняттях, виконання яких від них очікується (WFOT, 2025).

Definition in English

Occupational therapy promotes health and wellbeing by supporting participation in meaningful occupations that people want, need, or are expected to do (WFOT, 2025).

Date of definition:

19 August 2025

United Arab Emirates

Emirates Society Of Occupational Therapy

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Emirates Society Of Occupational Therapy does not have an official definition of Occupational Therapy

United Kingdom

Royal College of Occupational Therapists

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Royal College of Occupational Therapists has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in English

'Occupational Therapy enables people to achieve health, well being and life satisfaction through participation in occupation.'

Adopted by council at COT2 2003-04 (14th January 2004)

Definition of Occupation: daily activities that reflect cultural values, provide structure to living and meaning to individuals; these activities meet human needs for self care, enjoyment and participation in society.
Willard & Spackman 10th Edition 2003.

Date of definition:

14 January 2004

United States of America

American Occupational Therapy Association Inc

Definition of Occupational Therapy

American Occupational Therapy Association Inc has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in English

Definition of Occupational Therapy Practice for the AOTA Model Practice Act
The practice of occupational therapy means the therapeutic use of everyday life activities (occupations) with individuals or groups for the purpose of participation in roles and situations in home, school, workplace, community, and other settings. Occupational therapy services are provided for the purpose of promoting health and wellness and to those who have or are at risk for developing an illness, injury, disease, disorder, condition, impairment, disability, activity limitation, or participation restriction. Occupational therapy addresses the physical, cognitive, psychosocial, sensory, and other aspects of performance in a variety of contexts to support engagement in everyday life activities that affect health, well-being, and quality of life.
The practice of occupational therapy includes:

A. Methods or strategies selected to direct the process of interventions such as:
    1. Establishment, remediation, or restoration of a skill or ability that has not yet developed or is impaired.
    2. Compensation, modification, or adaptation of activity or environment to enhance performance.
    3. Maintenance and enhancement of capabilities without which performance in everyday life activities would decline.
    4. Health promotion and wellness to enable or enhance performance in everyday life activities.
    5. Prevention of barriers to performance, including disability prevention.

B. Evaluation of factors affecting activities of daily living (ADL), instrumental activities of daily living (IADL), education, work, play, leisure, and social participation, including:
    1. Client factors, including body functions (such as neuromuscular, sensory, visual, perceptual, cognitive) and body structures (such as cardiovascular, digestive, integumentary, genitourinary systems).
    2. Habits, routines, roles, and behavior patterns.
    3. Cultural, physical, environmental, social, and spiritual contexts and activity demands that affect performance.
    4. Performance skills, including motor, process, and communication/interaction skills.

C. Interventions and procedures to promote or enhance safety and performance in activities of daily living (ADL), instrumental activities of daily living (IADL), education, work, play, leisure, and social participation, including:
    1. Therapeutic use of occupations, exercises, and activities.
    2. Training in self-care, self-management, home management, and community/work reintegration.
    3. Development, remediation, or compensation of physical, cognitive, neuromuscular, sensory functions and behavioral skills.
    4. Therapeutic use of self, including one's personality, insights, perceptions, and judgments, as part of the therapeutic process.
    5. Education and training of individuals, including family members, caregivers, and others.
    6. Care coordination, case management, and transition services.
    7. Consultative services to groups, programs, organizations, or communities.
    8. Modification of environments (home, work, school, or community) and adaptation of processes, including the application of ergonomic principles.

9. Assessment, design, fabrication, application, fitting, and training in assistive technology, adaptive devices, and orthotic devices, and training in the use of prosthetic devices.
10. Assessment, recommendation, and training in techniques to enhance functional mobility, including wheelchair management.
11. Driver rehabilitation and community mobility.
12. Management of feeding, eating, and swallowing to enable eating and feeding performance.
13. Application of physical agent modalities, and use of a range of specific therapeutic procedures (such as wound care management; techniques to enhance sensory, perceptual, and cognitive processing; manual therapy techniques) to enhance performance skills.

Adopted by the Representative Assembly 5/21/04 (Agenda A11, Charge 60)

Date of definition:

1 September 2007

Venezuela

Federacion Venezolana de Terapeutas Ocupacionales

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Federacion Venezolana de Terapeutas Ocupacionales has an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Official definition in Spanish

La Terapia Ocupacional es una profesión del área de la salud, cuya propósito primordial es facilitar que las personas con alteraciones del funcionamiento, discapacidad, o riesgo de presentar discapacidad, puedan elegir, organizar y desempeñar ocupaciones satisfactorias y valoradas por la persona y su grupo social. El propósito secundario es desarrollar, o recuperar y mantener, las habilidades físicas, cognitivas y sociales necesarias para el desempeño de las actividades cotidianas y de los roles ocupacionales. El instrumento de intervención es la ocupación en las áreas del cuidado de sí mismo, de la recreación, del estudio y del trabajo. (Article 2 of the Project of Law for the Practice of OT)

Definition in English

Occupational therapy is a health profession, whose primary role is to enable persons with altered function, disability, or who are at risk for disability, to choose, organize and perform satisfactory occupations which are valued by the person and his/her social group. Its secondary role is to develop, or recover and maintain, the physical, cognitive and social abilities necessary to perform daily activities and occupational roles. The intervention instrument is occupation in the areas of self-care, leisure, study and work.

Date of definition:

1 August 2013

Zambia Occupational Therapy Association

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Zambia Occupational Therapy Association does not have an official definition of Occupational Therapy

Zimbabwe Association of Occupational Therapists

Definition of Occupational Therapy

Zimbabwe Association of Occupational Therapists does not have an official definition of Occupational Therapy

The information in this document has been supplied by WFOT Member Organisations. While we maintain regular contact with these organisations to support accuracy, WFOT has not independently verified the information provided.

For the latest details, please refer to the Member Organisation profiles on the WFOT website: https://wfot.org/membership/organisational-membership/member-organisations-profiles

WFOT