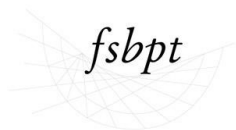


# National Physical Therapy Examination<sup>®</sup> (NPTE<sup>®</sup>) Candidate Handbook

For the Physical Therapist (PT) and Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) Exams



*Promoting Safety and Competence*



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## Section 1: General information

### **About the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy® (FSBPT®)**

The mission of FSBPT is to protect the public by providing service and leadership that promote safe and competent physical therapy practice.

FSBPT's vision is that state licensing boards and FSBPT will achieve a high level of public protection based upon a strong foundation of laws and regulatory standards in physical therapy, effective tools and systems to assess entry-level and continuing competence, and public and professional awareness of resources for public protection.

FSBPT develops, maintains, and administers the National Physical Therapy Examination® (NPTE®) for physical therapists (PTs) and physical therapist assistants (PTAs).

### **Purpose of the NPTE Program**

The PT and PTA exams are designed to assess a candidate's basic entry-level competence after graduation from a PT or PTA program accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE) or from an equivalent non-accredited program. The exams have two main purposes:

1. To help ensure that only those individuals who have the requisite knowledge of physical therapy are licensed in the physical therapy field; and
2. To help regulatory authorities evaluate candidates and provide standards that are comparable from jurisdiction to jurisdiction.

The national exams are only one part of the evaluation process used by licensing authorities. In some jurisdictions, the national exam is supplemented by other means of assessing candidates' ability to practice physical therapy. For more information on each jurisdiction's licensure requirements, see the [Licensing Authorities Contact Information](#) page on FSBPT's website.

### **Exam Development**

Questions (also known as items) appearing on the NPTE are developed by volunteer item writers. These volunteers are licensed PTs and PTAs who represent a broad range of practice settings from across the country. Item writers attend workshops and receive instruction to enable them to write high-quality, job-related examination items.

Once items have been developed and submitted to FSBPT, the Exam Development Committee (EDC) reviews the items and determines if the item is appropriate for an entry-level practitioner; that it tests current content; and it contains only one correct answer. These items will later become pre-test questions on exams to determine fairness before appearing on the NPTE as actual scored items. There are 45 pretest items on the NPTE-PT and 40 pretest items on the NPTE-PTA. The EDC also reviews each fully composed exam to ensure that questions do not share content or provide information that makes it easy to answer another question.

Examinations are built based on an examination content outline. This outline identifies the content areas that must be on the examination and the number of questions to be included from each content area. The outline is developed from a job analysis, which identifies the activities and tasks that comprise the entry-level practice of physical therapy. The job analysis is based on survey data from currently licensed practitioners and expert judgments.

The involvement of a representative group of practicing physical therapists, physical therapist assistants, and



other professionals during examination development ensures that the examinations are relevant to the current practice of physical therapy and developed without bias. Additionally, staff and technical advisors work to maintain the examinations and ensure compliance with established testing standards.

## Section 2: Exam Integrity and Security

### **What should I know about NPTE Security?**

Passing the NPTE is a big step toward receiving your license to practice physical therapy. Understandably, you want to take advantage of all available resources when preparing for this important examination. In the past, when you prepared for examinations in school, you may have considered fellow students to be good resources for learning about questions that were on those tests. **This should not be the case when preparing for the NPTE.**

The NPTE is the property of FSBPT and is protected by contract, trade secret, and federal copyright laws. It is a violation of these laws, and thus illegal, to share any information whatsoever about any NPTE question. Sharing information about a question recalled from memory, or asking someone who has taken the NPTE to share such information, is illegal.

### **Sharing questions I remember from the exam is illegal?**

Yes! Soliciting recalled questions from test takers who have previously taken the exam is deeply unethical. You are expected to pass the test based on your own merit and without assistance. The members of the public who will entrust you with their well-being expect that you are a trustworthy and competent individual. By asking previous test takers to share questions with you, you are committing an illegal act and are undermining the very purpose of the exam. Also, by soliciting questions from previous test takers, you are encouraging others to commit illegal acts.

### **What happens if I share questions I recall or ask someone to share questions with me?**

FSBPT aggressively protects the integrity of the NPTE. This protection is important to safeguarding the public from persons who do not have the requisite knowledge of physical therapy and therefore are not qualified to practice physical therapy. Any person for whom FSBPT has a reasonable suspicion of sharing or soliciting information about any NPTE question may be prohibited from sitting for the NPTE until a full investigation has determined that the person did not share or solicit such information.

FSBPT has prosecuted and will continue to prosecute individuals who share, or solicit others to share, any information whatsoever about any NPTE question. FSBPT will also report any incidents of candidates requesting questions or sharing questions to licensing jurisdictions.

### **Are there other ways I can violate the security of the NPTE?**

In addition to any attempt to share questions, any attempts to bring in materials to aid with answering questions on the exam is strictly prohibited. This can be done by trying to hide notes in your clothing, making notes on a body part that you think will not be seen, or leaving notes in an area outside of the testing room. It is also prohibited to attempt to remove any notes you may have taken about the exam while in the secure testing room.

**The bottom line:** Violating the security of the NPTE is taken very seriously, and candidates who are determined to have done so will severely damage their chances of *ever* being licensed in *any* jurisdiction and



are subject to prosecution and civil action.

## How is security handled on test day?

Candidates are required to provide two currently valid forms of identification to be able to sit for the examination. Before entering the testing room, a Prometric staff member will scan you with a metal detector wand, take a digital image of your fingerprint, and take your photograph. You will need to give a fingerprint scan each time you enter or leave the testing room. Additionally, Prometric records all testing sessions on video.

You can review Prometric's Testing Center Regulations and view a video outlining what to expect on test day on Prometric's website, [www.prometric.com](http://www.prometric.com).

If you give or receive assistance during the examination or if you violate any other security policy, you may be required to stop testing immediately and leave the testing room. Your examination will not be scored. Prometric and FSBPT monitor all candidates and will statistically analyze scores for the purposes of detecting and verifying cheating. If FSBPT determines that your score is unable to be validated due to an unlikely response pattern, we will cancel your score and notify your licensing authority.

## How is security handled after I take my test?

FSBPT conducts additional validation and screening analyses following testing. In some cases, examination scores are withheld for additional validation analyses. Reasons we may hold scores include:

- An incident at a test center that requires investigation,
- A mismatch between registration data and data received from Prometric,
- Response patterns that suggest a very narrow range of studying,
- An answer selection pattern that is very similar to another candidate's,
- The score is very low (near guessing), or
- A very large score increase from the previous testing attempt.

Candidates whose examinations are held for additional validation will be contacted via email by FSBPT staff. Candidates will be required to provide additional information about how they prepared for the NPTE before their scores are released. FSBPT will not release these candidates' scores until they complete this additional step or if the candidates provide inaccurate information. Responding promptly and accurately to this request will help to facilitate the release of your exam scores. See [FSBPT's website](#) for additional information about withheld scores.

Candidates who do not complete the investigation within 60 days of testing are subject to having their scores canceled.

## NPTE Security Agreement, General Terms of Use, and Arbitration Policy

For purposes of examination security, each candidate who wishes to take the NPTE is required to enter into an agreement as part of the registration and examination-taking process. The full NPTE Security Agreement, General Terms of Use, and Arbitration Policy can be found at this webpage: [NPTE Security Agreement](#).

## Additional Security Information

If you have questions about examination security, or if you know of someone who has violated FSBPT's exam security policies, please email [security@fsbpt.org](mailto:security@fsbpt.org).



## Section 3: Eligibility Requirements

### **What requirements must I meet to sit for the NPTE?**

In order to sit for the NPTE, you must meet the following eligibility requirements:

1. You must be at least eighteen years old.
2. You must submit an online registration and pay the examination fee.
3. You cannot have an open exam registration for the same exam level.
4. You must have a degree appropriate for the exam level from a CAPTE-accredited institution or have an education that has been determined to be substantially equivalent by a recognized credentialing agency.
5. You cannot have an open security investigation or sanctions that have not been completed.
6. You must be approved by the licensing authority, or their authorized designee, in the jurisdiction where you intend to be licensed.

Your licensing jurisdiction may have additional eligibility requirements beyond those outlined above. Make sure you have thoroughly reviewed your jurisdiction's licensure requirements before you register for the NPTE.

### **Are there limits to how many times I can take the exam?**

The following testing limits apply to all candidates taking the NPTE:

1. You cannot test more than three consecutive times in a 12-month period. If you have tested three consecutive times, you must skip the next exam date.
2. You cannot test more than six times in your lifetime at either exam level. You may test up to six times at both the PT and PTA level if you are otherwise qualified to test at both levels.
3. You cannot test if you previously took the exam twice and received two scores below 400.

## Section 4: Understanding the NPTE

### **Exam Administration**

The PT and PTA exams are computer-based and administered at Prometric testing centers throughout the United States. Exams are administered on set dates four times per year in January, April, July, and October. Because of the time between exams, it is extremely important to carefully review and fully understand the registration deadlines associated with an exam date, as any candidate who does not meet a deadline must wait until the next scheduled exam date to test.

You may take your exam at any Prometric center offering the NPTE, regardless of the jurisdiction you selected during your exam registration.

### **What deadlines are important for me to know?**

Every exam administration includes two deadlines that are important for every test taker to know. The full list of [Dates and Deadlines](#) can be found online. The two most important deadlines for the exam are:

- **Registration and Payment:** this is the date by which you need to have **both** registered for an exam and





paid for it. You must pay for your registration by 11:59 PM Eastern Standard Time on the deadline date. If you have registered but not paid by the deadline, your registration **will be closed**, and you will have to wait until the next exam date.

- **Jurisdiction Approval Deadline:** this is the date by which your jurisdiction, or their designee, must approve you to take the exam. It is best to have all necessary documentation to the state **well before** this deadline, as state processing times vary. If you are not made eligible by the jurisdiction deadline, your registration will be closed and you will receive a refund of the exam fee, minus a processing fee of \$50.

## What is the format of the exam?

Both the PT and PTA exams are administered in sections, with 45 multiple-choice questions in each exam section. A scheduled fifteen-minute break is offered following the second section of both exams. Candidates may also take unscheduled breaks following the other sections of the exam, but time taken for unscheduled breaks will be deducted from the overall exam time.

Each exam includes stand-alone multiple-choice questions, some of which can include a graphic or video. Some questions will refer to a shared clinical scenario. These “scenario-based” questions will appear at the end of each section. Each scenario can include between 2 and 5 questions. Each of these questions is independent: they do not build on each other, can be answered in any order, and answering one incorrectly does not predispose you to miss any other question associated with that scenario. For the PT exam, the exam can include up to 40 scenario-based questions. For the PTA exam, up to 35 of the questions can be scenario-based.

The exam time is presented as a block of overall exam time; each section is not separately timed. You may use the exam time as you wish. The exam will terminate after the testing time has elapsed.

Exam Level	Sections	Total Questions	Testing Time	Total Appointment Time*
Physical Therapist (PT)	5	225	5 Hours	5 Hours, 30 minutes
Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA)	4	180	4 Hours	4 Hours, 30 minutes

\*Includes scheduled break time, pre-exam tutorial and post-exam survey.

## How is the exam scored?

The NPTE is a multiple-choice exam with one correct answer for each question. Scores are determined by the number of questions you answer correctly, with no penalty for choosing incorrectly. It is in your interest to answer every question, even if you are unsure of the answer.

The NPTE uses scaled scores to make sure test scores are comparable.

Because different forms of the NPTE may vary slightly in their level of difficulty, raw scores (the number of questions you answer correctly) are converted to scaled scores. The scaled scores represent equivalent levels of achievement regardless of the examination form taken, ensuring that scores on all forms of the examination are comparable. This process converts raw scores to a scale that ranges from 200 to 800. Please note that a score of 800 does not equal a perfect score—it is only the highest score that FSBPT reports.



All jurisdiction licensing authorities have adopted the same criterion-referenced passing standard for the NPTE. Although FSBPT reports scores ranging from 200 to 800, the NPTE is a pass/fail examination. The examination is designed to distinguish whether a candidate has at least the minimum level of competence required to practice as an entry-level PT or PTA. The passing standard is a scaled score of 600; therefore, any score of 600 or higher is a passing score, and any score below 600 is a failing score. The number of questions that have to be answered correctly to achieve a score of 600 can change from form to form but is generally within a one to two question range.

## Section 5: Preparing for the NPTE

### **What resources are available as I prepare for the exam?**

FSBPT provides several helpful resources aimed at assisting you with getting ready to take the NPTE. Full details about each of these resources can be found at our [Prepare for the Exam](#) webpage.

### **Content Outlines**

The first step in preparing for the NPTE is reviewing and understanding the content presented in the exam. Abridged content outlines are included in Appendix A of this Handbook. Complete content outlines are posted on the [FSBPT website](#).

### **Practice Exam and Assessment Tool**

The Practice Exam and Assessment Tool (PEAT) is a timed, computer-based, multiple-choice practice exam that can help to identify your strengths and weaknesses prior to taking the NPTE. PEAT has several benefits:

- The same types of questions as the actual NPTE.
- Immediate and automatic scoring.
- A detailed performance report by content area, by body system, and by exam section.
- Explanations and rationales behind correct answers.
- References to help you increase your knowledge.

Your PEAT purchase includes two timed exams for your exam level (PT or PTA). Each set consists of a retired NPTE form and a practice form. The fee for PEAT is \$99 for ninety days' access.

For more detailed information, please see the [PEAT FAQs](#).

### **NPTE Demonstration Examination**

The [NPTE Demonstration Examination](#) is designed to give candidates the look and feel of the NPTE as it will look on the day of your exam. The demo includes:

- NPTE Security Agreement
- Tutorial for navigating the system
- Sample PT and PTA questions (with answers)

### **NPTE in Sixty Seconds**

The [NPTE in Sixty Seconds](#) is a series of short videos that address some of the most frequently-asked questions about the NPTE, including how to use Journey Maps, how to register for an exam, and what steps need to be taken if you need to withdraw from an exam date.



## Section 6: Exam Registration and Scheduling

### I'm close to graduation. What steps do I need to take?

#### Your Journey Map

The best first step in the exam registration process is to access and review your [personalized Journey Map](#). This feature details the major milestones you will come across when you register to take the NPTE. Each test taker's path through the NPTE registration process may differ depending on your educational background and the jurisdiction where you would like to practice. Journey maps help you navigate the process, guiding you through each step along the way.

#### How do I get an FSBPT Account?

If you are graduating from a CAPTE-accredited program, your school will create your FSBPT profile for you. You will receive an email confirming your account creation and requesting that you complete your FSBPT profile. You must complete your profile before you are able to access FSBPT exams and services.

If you graduated from a program that is not accredited by CAPTE, you will need to request that an FSBPT profile be created on your behalf. To do so, go to the [Customer Login page](#) and complete the survey linked on the right side of the page. If you do not have a Social Security Number, an Alternate ID number will be assigned to you after you complete the survey. Allow three business days for creation of your account.

#### How do I register for the NPTE?

If you attend a CAPTE-accredited program, your school needs to validate that you are on track to graduate prior to your graduation date. You will not be able to register for the NPTE prior to having your graduation validated by your school. FSBPT allows candidates to sit for the NPTE up to ninety days prior to their graduation date; however, jurisdictions may have more restrictive policies. For more information, [contact your jurisdiction](#) directly. You can also consult FSBPT's [Licensure Reference Guide](#).

If you did not attend a CAPTE-accredited program, you will be able to register for an exam at any time. Please note that every jurisdiction must approve candidates who did not attend a CAPTE-accredited program to take the exam. Please contact your jurisdiction **before registering** for more information about the necessary requirements to be approved for the NPTE.

Register for the NPTE by logging in to [your FSBPT dashboard](#) and clicking the "NPTE" button in the green "Services" area of the screen. Carefully read the information on each screen before continuing. On the final screen, you will be asked to pay the \$485 exam fee using a Visa, MasterCard, or Discover credit or debit card.

#### I registered for the NPTE. How do I get approved to take the exam?

Once you register for the NPTE, you will need to be approved for the exam. [This map](#) shows which jurisdictions are Alternate Approval Pathway (AAP) jurisdictions. AAP means that the jurisdiction allows CAPTE-accredited graduates to be approved for the NPTE by FSBPT. If your jurisdiction is green, you will be approved for the NPTE by FSBPT. Please note that you will still need to submit a licensure application and all necessary supporting documentation to your jurisdiction in order to become licensed.

If your jurisdiction is gray or if you did not attend a CAPTE-accredited school, the jurisdiction will need to approve you for the exam. This process differs by state, so it is important to understand your jurisdiction's policies and licensing requirements. Jurisdictions often require a licensure application, supporting academic



records, an application fee, and/or other documentation before they make their candidates eligible for the NPTE. It is your responsibility to ensure that your jurisdiction has all necessary information to approve you for the exam.

You must be approved for the exam prior to the Jurisdiction Approval Deadline, which is approximately seven days after the registration and payment deadline. If you are not made eligible by this deadline, your registration will be closed, and your exam fee will be refunded, minus a \$50 processing fee.

**Important Note:** If you have registered for the NPTE but have not yet been approved for the exam, contact your [jurisdiction directly](#) to determine what additional information is necessary to be made eligible.

### What is the process if I need testing accommodations?

FSBPT offers reasonable testing accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to candidates who have a recognized disability or impairment and who demonstrate that accommodations are necessary to access the NPTE. To request testing accommodations, make sure to indicate that you have a disability covered by the ADA when you register for the NPTE.

The process for submitting an application for testing accommodations depends on where you are seeking licensure. Please visit our [Testing Accommodations webpage](#) for more detailed information.

### When will I receive my Authorization to Test (ATT) letter?

Once you have been approved for the NPTE and your request for accommodations has been reviewed (if applicable), you will receive an Authorization to Test (ATT) letter via email. You can also access this letter within your FSBPT dashboard by clicking on the “Status of my Request” link in the Services menu. The ATT letter is emailed to you within two business days of you being approved for the exam.

When you receive your ATT letter, take a few minutes to review it carefully. The ATT letter includes instructions on how to schedule your testing appointment, the exam fee you will pay to Prometric, and your name as it exists in Prometric’s registration system. **Make sure your first and last names exactly match your name on the IDs you will be presenting on test day.** If the names do not match, update your name in your FSBPT profile. If you have any doubts about the information contained in your ATT letter, contact FSBPT Exam Services well in advance of test day.

### How do I schedule my exam?

You can schedule your exam appointment with Prometric online or over the phone. Most registrations with testing accommodations can now be scheduled online. If you are unable to schedule with your accommodations online, please call Prometric. Both the website and phone number can be found on your ATT letter. Prometric’s exam fees are due when you schedule your appointment and are payable with a Visa or MasterCard or by direct debit to a checking account. The fees for Prometric are:

Exam	Prometric Fee
Physical Therapist	\$100.30
Physical Therapist Assistant	\$82.60
Jurisprudence	\$29.50

Prometric testing centers fill up quickly, so it is critical to schedule as soon as possible after receiving your ATT letter. If your preferred testing center is not available on your exam dates, you may need to schedule your exam at a different location. You can continue to check Prometric’s real-time seating availability using their



website in case a seat in a more convenient location becomes available, but there is no guarantee this will be the case.

In very rare instances, candidates may not be able to find a seat within 250 miles of their preferred location. If you are unable to find a seat within this radius, please contact FSBPT Exam Services for additional assistance. If an Exam Services agent cannot find you a seat within this radius and you decide to withdraw from your exam, FSBPT will waive the standard processing fee.

## Section 7: Rescheduling, Withdrawing, and No-Shows

There are two steps that must be completed if you want to cancel your exam registration:

1. Cancel your testing appointment with Prometric, and
2. Withdraw your registration from FSBPT.

### **How do I cancel or reschedule my appointment with Prometric?**

Once you have scheduled a testing appointment with Prometric, you can change your exam location or appointment time, depending on availability, by contacting Prometric. You can only reschedule your exam appointment within the testing window shown on your ATT letter.

If you no longer wish to test in a specific testing window, you must cancel your appointment with Prometric. Canceling your testing appointment with Prometric **does not** automatically cancel your exam registration in FSBPT’s system.

Prometric’s cancellation and rescheduling fees can be found in the table below:

<b>Days before Cancellation/Rescheduling</b>	<b>Fee</b>
30+ days before scheduled exam	No Charge
5–29 days before scheduled exam	\$50
Less than 5 days before scheduled exam	Full Sitting Fee

### **How do I withdraw from an exam with FSBPT?**

You can withdraw from an exam from your FSBPT dashboard by clicking on “Withdraw from an Exam” in the Services menu. You will be given the option to request a refund or to apply the exam fee to a future exam registration. Regardless of your decision, a processing fee will apply:

<b>If you withdraw from an exam...</b>	<b>The processing fee is...</b>
30 days or more before exam day	\$50
Fewer than 30 days before exam day	\$120

You can withdraw from an exam up until the end of the testing window. After that date, you will no longer be able to withdraw from the exam, and you will forfeit your exam fee.

### **What happens if I don’t show up for my exam appointment?**

If you do not appear for your scheduled exam appointment, or if you are not allowed to test due to lack of qualifying ID, you will be marked as a “no-show” in Prometric’s system and will forfeit the scheduling fee paid to Prometric. However, you are still able to withdraw from the exam and secure a partial refund of your FSBPT



exam fee as long as you withdraw by the end of your testing window (see above).

FSBPT does not make exceptions to testing due to illness. If you are sick on the day of your exam, you will need to withdraw from your exam to receive a partial refund of your exam fee. If you do not withdraw, you will forfeit your full fee.

No-shows do not count against your annual or lifetime testing limits.

## Section 8: Test Day

### **What happens when I arrive at my testing center on my exam day?**

Arrive at your testing center at least 30 minutes before the scheduled start time to allow for an efficient check-in process. Upon arrival, you will be greeted by a Test Center Administrator (TCA) and asked to store any personal belongings in an assigned locker. You will take your ID documents and locker key to the check-in station. Turn off all electronic devices when storing them in your locker.

During the check-in process, the TCA will do the following:

- Ask you to present qualifying identification (see next section for more information).
- Scan your primary ID document.
- Take a digital photograph.
- Ask you to sign the exam logbook and verify your signature.
- Take your fingerprint digitally.
- Scan you with a metal-detecting wand.

### **What types of identification should I bring?**

All candidates are required to present two forms of qualifying identification to be granted admission to the testing room. The documents must both exactly match the first and last name(s) in your ATT letter. If the names on your ID do not exactly match your registration, you will not be permitted to test, and you will be considered a no-show.

You must present one primary ID, such as a driver's license or a passport, and one secondary ID that includes your name and signature, such as a credit card.

Your primary ID **must** [meet the following criteria](#):

- Be government issued,
- Include a photo that can be used to positively identify you,
- Be pre-printed with your name and include your signature, and
- Be unexpired and not clipped, stamped "void," or otherwise marked as an invalid ID.

Your secondary ID **must** meet the following criteria:

- Be current (if there is an expiration date, it must be unexpired), and
- Include your pre-printed name and your signature.

If you have any questions about your IDs or the name on your registration, [contact FSBPT Exam Services](#) well in advance of your scheduled test date.



## What can I bring into the test room?

**Ear plugs** - You may bring soft ear plugs to use at the test site. The ear plugs will be inspected by Prometric staff prior to entering the testing room. The Prometric testing center will also supply headphones to help dampen noise. Candidates should expect that there will be some background noise during their examination. There may be candidates in surrounding cubicles taking typing-intensive examinations. There may be other candidates entering and leaving the testing room during the course of your examination. The headphones will help to dampen noise that you may find distracting.

**Water** - You may bring water into the test room with the following conditions:

- Water must be in a clear or transparent container with a lid or cap.
- All labels must be removed.
- You will need to remove the lid/cap for visual inspection by the test center staff.

Should the container not meet the requirements outlined above, you will be required to put it in your locker and will not be allowed to take it into the test room.

## What are the testing rooms like?

Testing rooms at Prometric testing centers are carefully controlled to allow for a testing experience that is comfortable, secure, and has minimal distraction. All candidates are provided with an individual computer workstation that includes dividers to minimize visual distraction.

Temperature is controlled in Prometric testing centers at a level that is intended to be comfortable for all candidates; however, this temperature can vary between testing centers, and individuals often have different temperature preferences. It is a good idea to dress in layers, so you are prepared for varying temperatures. Security policies prohibit wearing heavy jackets in the testing room.

## How do I navigate the exam?

All candidates are presented with an exam tutorial prior to beginning the exam. This timed tutorial will explain the functionality of the exam and allow you to practice with the exam features for a few minutes before the start of the actual exam. Time spent in the tutorial does not count against the overall exam time.

You can navigate freely through the questions in a particular section of the exam and return to any you wish to review further. You may also mark questions to help you remember which questions to return to later. However, once you end a section you will not be able to return to any questions in that section.

It is important that you read the instructions and alerts presented during the exam. If you inadvertently skip a section of the exam and do not achieve a passing score, your score will not count towards the lifetime limit. You will have to register and pay again to retake the exam during a future scheduled administration. We strongly recommend practicing exam navigation using the [demonstration examination](#).

## Can I take notes during the exam?

All candidates are provided with an erasable note board and markers for notetaking. You may only take notes during the timed sections of the exam. The note board must remain at your desk during testing and must be returned to the testing center staff at the conclusion of the exam.

## Can I take breaks during the exam?

All candidates are offered a break after each section of the exam. The fifteen-minute break after the second section is considered a “scheduled” break, as the break time is not subtracted from the overall exam timer. The other breaks are “unscheduled,” and any time spent on these optional breaks will be deducted from the



overall exam time. You are only permitted to take a break when your exam is on the break screen.

When taking a break, you will be asked to sign out of the testing room and provide a digital fingerprint. You may open your assigned locker only to access food, drink, or medication. Accessing study materials or electronic devices, including cell phones, is strictly prohibited and will be investigated as a violation of FSBPT's security policies.

Make sure to account for any check-in and check-out time when taking a break. If your scheduled break exceeds the allotted 15 minutes, your exam timer will begin to run again.

### **What if there is a disruption to testing?**

Prometric takes great care to provide an environment conducive to test-taking. However, on rare occasions, unexpected events can occur that may impact the testing environment. If you experience any issues while you test, your first step should be to notify a Prometric staff member who can provide guidance and make every effort to address the problem.

If the disruption you experience is resolved within one hour, you will be expected to resume and complete your exam. If the resolution of the issue takes longer than an hour, you have the option of rescheduling your examination for another test date as soon as possible. A Prometric agent will contact you to schedule a new exam appointment.

If you feel that your testing environment impacted your ability to complete the exam, notify FSBPT immediately. FSBPT staff will review your concern and respond with the results of their investigation.

## **Section 9: After Test Day**

### **How do I receive my exam results?**

Your pass/fail results will be posted to your FSBPT dashboard approximately five business days after your exam window ends. The results will be sent to your jurisdiction at the same time; no further action is required to send your scores to the jurisdiction you selected when you registered for the exam.

Your free score report, which includes your numerical scaled score, will be posted to your dashboard ten business days following your exam date. This report can be accessed for free for thirty days. We recommend saving this report for your records. After thirty days, you can access your score report by purchasing an Individual Score Report.

The free score report posted to your dashboard includes only your scaled score and pass/fail status. If you would like additional diagnostic feedback on your exam performance, you may purchase a [Performance Feedback Report](#). This report provides detailed diagnostics on your performance and is broken down by content area, body system, and section.

### **I passed my exam! How to complete the licensure process.**

If you passed your exam, congratulations! Your score will be sent automatically and electronically to the jurisdiction you selected during registration. Make sure to contact your jurisdiction directly to complete the licensure process. Jurisdiction contact information is available on [the FSBPT website](#).

### **What if I want to be licensed in another jurisdiction?**

Your scores are automatically reported to the jurisdiction you designated when you registered for the NPTE. If you need to send your scores to another jurisdiction, you can do so any time after your score is released by logging





in to your FSBPT dashboard and clicking on “Score Transfer to State.” Score transfers are electronic and immediate, though it may take some time for the jurisdiction to access your score. A \$90 fee applies to all score transfer requests. Please ensure that you submit a licensure application to the jurisdiction.

Another option to consider is getting a compact privilege. If your permanent residence is in an active compact state, you have a license in that state, AND the new state is also an active compact jurisdiction, you would be eligible for a compact privilege. Compact privilege holders have the same abilities as license holders but are able to take advantage of a streamlined purchase experience. Compact privileges are issued at the time they are applied for through the PT Compact Commission. Visit the [PT Compact website](#) for more information and to view the list [active compact states](#).

### **I didn’t pass. How do I test again?**

As long as you have not reached a testing attempt limit, you will be able to register for another exam approximately 15 days following your unsuccessful attempt. All standard registration policies, deadlines, and fees apply to your next registration.

## **Section 10: Appeal Policy**

### **Candidate Appeals**

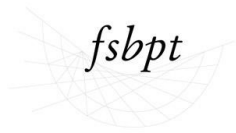
The FSBPT Board of Directors routinely reviews the policies that govern the development and administration of the National Physical Therapy Examination. These policies are then shared with the licensing authority for each U.S. jurisdiction. Careful consideration is given when developing policies to ensure that they are in line with the Federation’s mission of public protection.

If you wish to appeal a specific policy related to the National Physical Therapy Examination (excluding eligibility requirements), the first step is to discuss the issue with a Federation staff person. The staff may be able to provide a better understanding of the policy and explain how the policy relates to the Federation’s mission. If you still choose to appeal a policy, you will need to submit a request in writing to the FSBPT Board of Directors. Requests for appeals must be submitted by the candidate within 60 days of his/her most recent examination. The request must include the rationale for the exception to the policy and any steps already taken to resolve this problem with FSBPT staff.

When reviewing appeals, the FSBPT Board of Directors will consider what effect granting the appeal would have on other candidates, the role of the examination in providing a measure of minimal entry-level competence, the security of the NPTE, and any impact the decision might create for the jurisdiction in which the candidate is applying or any other jurisdiction.

### **Jurisdiction Appeals**

Candidates who are ineligible to take the NPTE due to the NPTE eligibility requirements must present information to a licensing authority that may then request an appeal on the candidate’s behalf. If approved, an appeal affords you one attempt, which must be used within 12 months. Visit our website for information on this [appeal process](#).

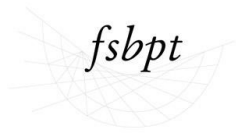


## Contact Us

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[www.fsbpt.org](http://www.fsbpt.org)

Open Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time

Exam Services:  
Telephone: 703-739-9420  
Email: [ExamRegistration@fsbpt.org](mailto:ExamRegistration@fsbpt.org)



## Content Outlines

The NPTE consists of objective, multiple-choice questions covering the major areas of physical therapy. The PT examination consists of 225 items and the PTA examination consists of 180 items. An overview of the content outlines is included in this handbook. For the complete content outlines, go to <http://www.fsbpt.org/FreeResources/NPTEDevelopment.aspx> and click “NPTE content.”



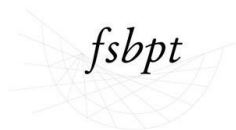
## NPTE-PT Test Content Outline

NUMBER OF ITEMS (RANGE)				
BODY SYSTEM	Physical Therapy Examination	Foundations for Evaluation, Differential Diagnosis, & Prognosis	Interventions	TOTAL PER SYSTEM
Cardiovascular & Pulmonary Systems	7-8	7-9	8-10	22-27
Musculoskeletal System	14-18	15-18	15-18	45-54
Neuromuscular & Nervous Systems	13-16	13-16	13-16	39-48
Integumentary System	2-3	3-4	3-4	8-11
Metabolic & Endocrine Systems	–	2-3	2-3	4-6
Gastrointestinal System	1-2	1-2	1-2	3-6
Genitourinary System	0-1	1-2	1-2	2-5
Lymphatic System	1-2	1-2	2-3	4-7
System Interactions	–	8-10	–	8-10
<b>TOTAL ACROSS SYSTEMS</b>	<b>38-50</b>	<b>51-66</b>	<b>45-58</b>	<b>–</b>
<b>NONSYSTEM</b>				<b>TOTAL PER NONSYSTEM</b>
Equipment, Devices, & Technologies				5-6
Therapeutic Modalities				4-6
Safety & Protection				5-7
Professional Responsibilities				4-5
Research & Evidence-Based Practice				3-5
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>180</b>



## NPTE-PTA Test Content Outline

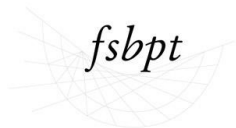
NUMBER OF ITEMS (RANGE)				
BODY SYSTEM	Physical Therapy Data Collection	Diseases/Conditions that Impact Effective Treatment	Interventions	TOTAL PER SYSTEM
Cardiovascular & Pulmonary Systems	5-8	7-9	8-10	20-27
Musculoskeletal System	9-12	10-13	12-15	31-40
Neuromuscular & Nervous Systems	8-10	9-12	10-13	27-35
Integumentary System	1-2	1-3	1-3	3-8
Metabolic & Endocrine Systems	–	2-3	2-3	4-6
Gastrointestinal System	–	0-2	0-2	0-4
Genitourinary System	–	0-2	0-2	0-4
Lymphatic System	0-2	1-2	1-2	2-6
System Interactions	–	5-7	–	5-7
<b>TOTAL ACROSS SYSTEMS</b>	<b>22-34</b>	<b>35-53</b>	<b>34-50</b>	<b>–</b>
<b>NONSYSTEM</b>				<b>TOTAL PER NONSYSTEM</b>
Equipment, Devices, & Technologies				8-10
Therapeutic Modalities				5-7
Safety & Protection				6-8
Professional Responsibilities				2-4
Research & Evidence-Based Practice				1-3
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>140</b>



## Abbreviations

The abbreviations that follow have been approved for use on the Physical Therapist and Physical Therapist Assistant examinations. Approved abbreviations may be used in place of the term or phrase they represent.

ACE inhibitor	angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitor
ADH	antidiuretic hormone
ASIA Impairment Scale	American Spinal Injury Association Impairment Scale
BMI	body mass index
Bpm	beats per minute
C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6, C7, C8	cervical spinal column levels/nerve root positions
Cm	centimeter
CN	cranial nerve
CVA	cerebrovascular accident
Df	degrees of freedom (statistical concept)
DIP joint	distal interphalangeal joint
dL	deciliter
FEV1	forced expiratory volume in 1 second
Ft	foot
G	gram
HCO <sub>3</sub> <sup>-</sup>	bicarbonate
In	inch
Kg	kilogram
L	liter
L1, L2, L3, L4, L5	lumbar spinal column levels/nerve root positions
Lb	pound
M	meter
mA-min	milliampere-minute
MCP joint	metacarpophalangeal joint
METs	metabolic equivalents
mEq/L	milliequivalents per liter
mg/dL	milligrams/deciliter
MHz	megahertz
Min	minute
mL	milliliter
Mm	millimeter
mm Hg	millimeters of mercury
mmol/L	millimoles/liter
MTP	metatarsophalangeal
Oz	ounce
p value	probability value
PaCO <sub>2</sub>	partial pressure of arterial carbon dioxide
PaO <sub>2</sub>	partial pressure of arterial oxygen
PIP joint	proximal interphalangeal joint
PNF	proprioceptive neuromuscular facilitation
Pps	pulses per second
Q angle	quadriceps angle



R	correlation coefficient (statistical concept)
Rep	repetition
ROM	range of motion
S1, S2, S3, S4	first heart sound, second heart sound, third heart sound, fourth heart sound
S1, S2, S3, S4, S5	sacral spinal column levels/nerve root positions
SACH foot	solid ankle cushion heel foot
SaO2	oxygen saturation
Sec	second
SOAP note	subjective, objective, assessment, and plan note
T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7, T8, T9, T10, T11, T12	thoracic spinal column levels/nerve root positions
THR	total hip replacement
VO2 assessment	volume of oxygen assessment
W	watt

## Medication Terminology Used in the NPTE

Medications referenced in both the Physical Therapist and Physical Therapist Assistant examinations follow nomenclature used in the United States. When appropriate, both generic and trade names will be given.



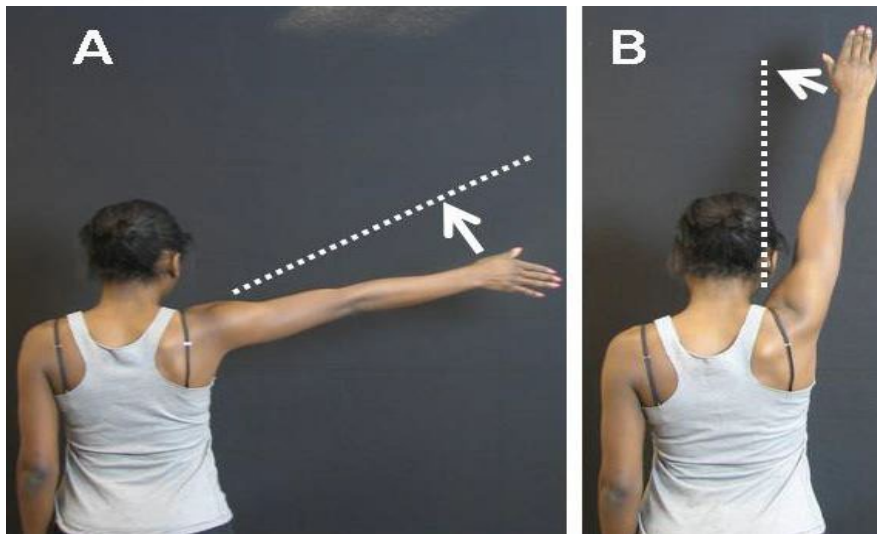
## Sample Questions

The sample questions that follow are illustrative of the type found on the Physical Therapist and Physical Therapist Assistant examinations.

### Physical Therapist Examination

1. After sitting at a computer station for 2-3 hours, an individual reports experiencing a sharp, localized pain in the left arm. When asked to show the location of the pain, the individual points to the area of the insertion of the deltoid. The pain disappears when the individual stands up and walks around briefly. Which of the following interventions is **MOST** likely to correct the problem?
  - a. Isometric strengthening of the deltoid
  - b. Lumbar extension exercises in prone position
  - c. Instruction in correct postural alignment in sitting position
  - d. Instruction in shoulder active range of motion exercises
2. A patient who a medullary-level vascular lesion has increased vagal nerve activity. Which of the following descriptions **BEST** represents the cardiovascular effects that occur when the patient transitions from supine to standing position?
  - a. Rise in blood pressure and no change in heart rate
  - b. Drop in blood pressure and no change in heart rate
  - c. Rise in blood pressure and an increase in heart rate
  - d. Drop in blood pressure and an increase in heart rate
3. A patient has used crutches with a partial weight-bearing toe touch gait for the past 3 months. When progressed to full weight-bearing, the patient is unable to demonstrate a heel-toe gait sequence with the involved extremity. Which of the following disorders is the **MOST** likely origin of the gait abnormality?
  - a. Plantar fasciitis
  - b. Fibular (peroneal) nerve palsy
  - c. Heel cord tightness
  - d. Hammertoe
4. While abducting the shoulder, the patient in the photograph denies pain while moving the arm through the range indicated in photograph A, but reports increasing pain severity as the arm moves into the range indicated by photograph B. Which of the following disorders is **MOST** likely present?
  - a. Acromioclavicular joint lesion
  - b. Subacromial bursitis
  - c. Infraspinatus tendinopathy
  - d. Partial tear of the supraspinatus





*Answers to sample questions: 1.c; 2.b; 3.c; 4.a*

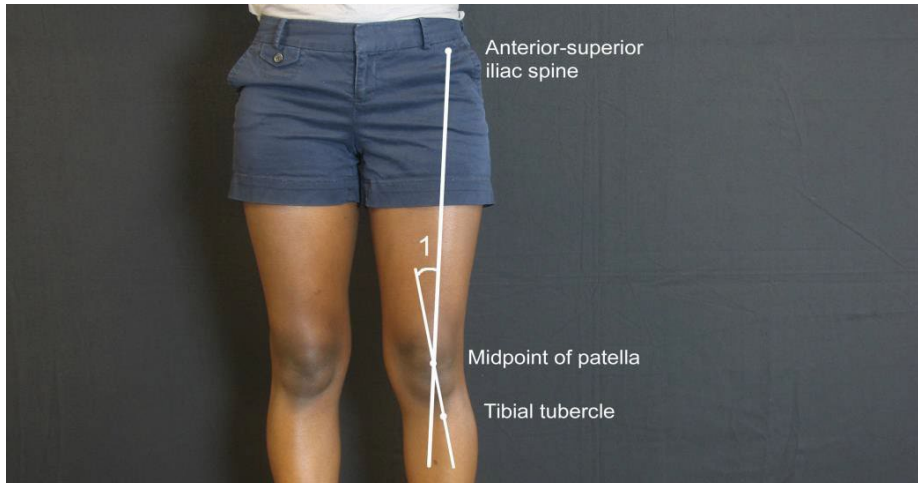


## Physical Therapist Assistant Examination

1. During a physical therapy evaluation, a patient who has a sprain of the deltoid ligament of the ankle reported pain with palpation of the affected area and with ankle motion that stressed the ligament. To determine any change in the patient's pain level during subsequent treatment, a physical therapist assistant should palpate which of the following areas?
  - a. Anterior to the lateral malleolus while the patient's ankle is passively plantar flexed
  - b. Inferior to the medial malleolus while the patient's ankle is passively everted
  - c. Over the sinus tarsi while the patient's ankle is passively inverted
  - d. Deep to the Achilles tendon while the patient's ankle is passively dorsiflexed
  
2. Which of the following instructions would be **MOST** appropriate to give a patient who is learning pursed-lip breathing?
  - a. Exhale through pursed lips while contracting abdominal muscles.
  - b. Exhale by blowing air out forcefully between pursed lips.
  - c. Exhale by relaxing air out through pursed lips.
  - d. Exhale in quick short puffs through pursed lips.
  
3. A patient who impaired kinesthesia who is performing active range of motion exercises of the upper extremities will **MOST** likely require which of the following supplemental interventions?
  - a. Visual cues while performing the exercises
  - b. Pain-relieving modalities prior to performing the exercises
  - c. Trunk stabilization while performing the exercises
  - d. Stretching prior to performing the exercises



4. If angle 1 in the photograph is greater than 20°, which of the following complications is the patient **MOST** likely to develop?
- a. Patellofemoral tracking disorder
  - b. Genu recurvatum
  - c. Lateral collateral ligament sprain
  - d. Medial meniscal lesion



*Answers to sample questions: 1.b; 2.c; 3.a; 4.a*