

Physical Therapy Providers and the Military

Frequently Asked Questions

What training is required of a military PT?

To be a physical therapist in the military you must have graduated from a CAPTE accredited program, taken the PT exam, and hold a license in any jurisdiction. There is really no difference between the preparation of the military PT and the civilian PT.

The military has one Physical Therapist education program. The Army-Baylor University Doctoral Program in Physical Therapy is an accredited, entry-level and tri-service (Army, Navy, Air Force) physical therapist educational program located at the Army Medical Department Center and School on Joint Base San Antonio-Ft Sam Houston, TX. Students attend this CAPTE accredited entry-level DPT program and follow-on with a 54 month active duty service commitment working as a military physical therapist.

Military PTs must have passed the NPTE and have at least one active physical therapist license from a jurisdiction of the United States. If working solely for the Department of Defense, the PT only needs one license; a license is not required in the state in which the physical therapist is located.

Does the military have physical therapist assistants?

The military does not use the title physical therapist assistant. The various services have different titles for the similar positions and different educational program lengths.



US Air Force

AFSC: Physical Medicine Apprentice
Program Length: 626 hours
Iterations per year: 3



US Army

MOS: Physical Therapy Specialist
Program Length: 1042 hours
Iterations per year: 3



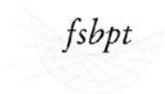
US Navy

NEC: Physical Therapy Technician
Program Length: 962 hours
Iterations per year: 3

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What training is required of a military PTA?

The PTA military education program is an intensive didactic education program at the Military Education & Training Campus at Fort Sam Houston, TX plus clinical affiliation performed at military and/or civilian facilities. The Air Force, Army, and Navy educate PTAs at the same location, in the same consolidated didactic program. The education is physical therapy focused only, there is no general education. Prior to



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January 2012, all PT techs were medics first, however after that date full medic training is no longer prior to the PTA education.

Military PTAs are not required to take the NPTE and are not required to be licensed.

Are any military education PT or PTA programs accredited by CAPTE?

The Army-Baylor Physical Therapist education program is accredited by CAPTE.

There are no military PTA education programs accredited by CAPTE. In April 2017, Air University chose to withdraw from CAPTE accredited status in response to CAPTE's Notice of Probationary status correspondence in late 2016. The program at Fort Sam Houston is not accredited by CAPTE.

Is there a way to determine if the military's PTA education is substantially equivalent to CAPTE graduates?

A credentials review conducted by the Board or an outside agency, using the appropriate PTA Tool, may be an appropriate solution for the military member to demonstrate equivalence to CAPTE PTA education.

What are military PTAs allowed to do in military treatment facilities?

In a very narrow scope military PTAs have a much more expansive scope of work than civilian PTAs. They do history taking, exercise instruction and progression, clinical decision making, joint mobilization to some degree however they have minimal to no training in special populations such as geriatrics and pediatrics or in areas such as cardiopulmonary and neurology.

What does a military PT or PTA need to do to provider services in the civilian sector?

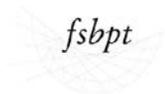
For a military member to provide services outside of the military treatment facility, he/she must be licensed in that state; there's no difference between him/her and any civilian PT or PTA in the state.

Who should an individual contact to file a complaint against a PT who is in the military?

If this is a member of the military that was providing services in a civilian setting, the complainant should follow the typical procedure for filing a complaint with the appropriate state board where the services were provided.

If the military member was providing services in a military setting, the complainant can go through the channels there. These channels include a very clear chain of command. That PT will report to someone higher up the command chain, they can receive a complaint and investigate. The nature of the complaint will determine if the issue must be escalated higher up the chain. Military treatment facilities are laid out very much like civilian hospitals, clinics, etc.; there will be administration where a complaint can be lodged or escalated.

The military worldwide also has a system in place called ICE. <https://ice.disa.mil/>. This survey system allows feedback to be given regarding services received in military facilities including healthcare. The ICE survey results are taken seriously and are used to grade military services.



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An individual additionally could find out where the member is licensed and complain through that Board. It may be found that they have no jurisdiction, but it's still an avenue.

The biggest issue is in the discipline process. In researching, there does not seem to be anything to compel the military to share disciplinary actions taken with any state board; much like there is no mechanism for Boards to report to the military. Discipline in the military would fall under the military code of conduct, standards expected, and Uniform Code of Military Justice. The first line of discipline is always with the Commander, who has the authority to demote, withhold pay, reprimand, officially warn, etc.

If the person providing the services is a civilian, it's much stickier. Obviously, the administration of the facility will become involved but there is no chain of command. As the person may or may not be licensed in the state where services are provided, the discipline is internal. The complaint/outcome may or may not be reported to the Board that licensed the individual.

What is the difference between a military member and a veteran?

“Active Duty Military” means full-time duty status in the active uniformed service of the United States, including members of the National Guard and Reserve on active duty orders pursuant to 10 U.S.C. Section 1209 and 1211.

Under federal law, a veteran is any person who served honorably on active duty in the armed forces of the United States. Any military member that separates from the service and thus becomes a “veteran” is no longer in the military. A veteran is a former member of the Armed Forces of the United States (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard) who served on active duty and was discharged under conditions, which were other than dishonorable.

Is the cost of the NPTE covered by any government agency?

The NPTE is one of the licensing and/or certification tests that may be reimbursable by Veterans Administration through GI Bill Reimbursement. There is no limit to the number of tests you may take, or number of times you may take the same test. The VA will pay for tests even if the outcome is a failing score. VA pays only the test costs, or up to \$2,000 for each test. Fees connected with obtaining a license or certification are not reimbursable. Payment is issued after you submit proof of payment to VA. http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/licensing_certification.asp.

ⁱ <https://www.metc.mil/academics/PT/> Accessed November 2017