

Occupational therapy

Helping people to live life their way

Occupational therapists are health and social care professionals who help people of all ages – babies, children, adults and older people – to carry out activities (or occupations) they need, want, or are expected to do, but are prevented from doing so as a result of physical or mental illness, disability, or as a result of changes in their lives as they get older.

Occupational therapists can suggest alternative ways of doing activities, providing advice on learning new approaches, helping people to get the most from life. For example, an occupational therapist can help people with the following activities:

Self-care	Getting dressed or preparing and eating meals.
Productivity	Going to or remaining in work, volunteering, studying, or caring for others.
Leisure	Playing sports, shopping, or doing hobbies.

How to find an occupational therapist

Ask your GP, nurse, social worker or other health or social care professional to refer you to an occupational therapist.

You can self-refer to a social services occupational therapist by contacting your local council* to arrange an appointment.

Some places of work have an HR department or occupational health department. You can ask either of these to refer you to an occupational therapist.

To arrange a private consultation with an independent occupational therapist, who will charge you a fee, please visit www.cotss-ip.org.uk to find a local independent occupational therapist.

*Social Care and Health Department of your local council in Scotland
*Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety in Northern Ireland

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For more information about occupational therapy, visit the College of Occupational Therapists website.

College of Occupational Therapists Limited
The professional body for occupational therapy staff

106–114 Borough High Street, London SE1 1LB
Tel: 020 7357 6480

www.COT.org.uk

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Occupational therapy and **WORK RELATED STRESS**

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Occupational therapy advice on overcoming work-related stress

If you are experiencing work-related stress, an occupational therapist can assist you by showing you techniques that will enable you to feel more positive at work and in control of your role and responsibilities.

What is occupational therapy?

Occupational therapy enables people to participate in daily life to improve their health and wellbeing. Daily life is made up of many activities (or occupations). Occupations may include self-care (getting ready to go out or eating a meal), being productive (going to work or volunteering), and leisure (socialising or enjoying your pastimes).

Occupational therapists can help you cope with your work-related stress

An occupational therapist will enable you to break down your everyday tasks at work into targets that you feel you can achieve. They will review your workload and suggest techniques and approaches that will reduce your feelings of being overwhelmed in your job.

Managing your time

An occupational therapist will show you how to organise your tasks and prioritise your work responsibilities. They will enable you to focus on what you need to do to be

effective and make a positive contribution within your organisation. This will help you feel a valued member of your team.

Remaining in control

An occupational therapist will provide advice on setting parameters for your work, for example, showing you how to factor in regular breaks and time to reflect on your job. An occupational therapist will help you feel motivated in your role by identifying and enjoying your successes.

Asking for support

An occupational therapist will help you to constructively articulate your feelings when you are feeling overwhelmed, so that you can ask for support from your work colleagues and manager. They will also demonstrate how you can say 'no' to colleagues without causing offence or making you feel you are letting down your team.

Focussing on work-life balance

An occupational therapist can show you how to pace yourself and factor in leisure and family time. An occupational therapist will review your eating and resting habits and demonstrate how an effective work-life balance can positively impact on your work performance.



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