

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, preparing and eating meals.
Productivity	Going to or remaining in work, volunteering, studying, or caring for others.
Leisure	Playing sports, shopping with friends, 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.

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

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

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For leisure, learning, living or working
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Occupational therapy Helping people to live with dementia

Living life with dementia

Dementia is a progressive condition but you can live well with dementia. An occupational therapist can help by supporting you to remain active. Taking part in activities (or occupations) gives you control and choice. What you do shapes your identity, your feelings of self-worth and connects you with other people.

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 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 with friends or doing hobbies).

Occupational therapy can help you to live with dementia:

Retaining independence

An occupational therapist will encourage you to remain as independent as possible. They might suggest strategies or changes to the home to aid your memory or offer advice on technology and equipment.

Staying safe

Many people with dementia become less steady on their feet. An occupational therapist can suggest ways of reducing the risk of having a slip, trip or fall. They can also advise on simple-to-use safety devices and alarms.

Communicating and sharing memories

Reminiscence and life stories connect people with families and friends and these stories can be used to help health and social care staff to get to know you. An occupational therapist can help you communicate your stories so people around you can understand what is important to you.



Advising carers

An occupational therapist can advise carers on how best to help you maintain skills, your roles and routines. Carers will also be coached into not doing everything for you, so that you can retain your independence and feel self-reliant.



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