Occupational Therapy Australia

Occupational therapy and older people



Occupational therapy is key to enabling older Australians to remain at home longer

Occupational therapists work with the older person, their family or carers and other health professionals to address the physical, emotional, cognitive, and environmental factors impacting wellbeing, quality of life and participation in meaningful daily activities.

What is occupational therapy?

Occupational therapy is a healthcare profession that helps people across the lifespan to do the activities they find meaningful, including the things they want or need to do in their daily life.

Occupational therapists working with Older People can:

- Prevent falls by addressing physical, cognitive and environmental factors
- Support better access around the home to enable participation in activities of everyday life
- Use equipment to assist with mobility, personal care, domestic activities or community and social activities
- Improve mobility and function by prescribing a range of adaptive strategies or exercises
- Support life transitions and changing roles that people may experience with age
- Assess and advise on changes to the workplace that may enable people to remain in work for longer
- Provide education and advice to cope with cognitive changes such as dementia
- Provide assessment and advice on driving or consider other options to support ongoing community access
- Facilitate ongoing engagement in leisure activities or re-engage in social activities to support social and emotional wellbeing and prevent isolation
- Provide focused psychological strategies to support people living with mental health challenges

Where do occupational therapist support Older People?

Older people can receive the support of an occupational therapist in a range of places including:

- Public and private hospitals
- Community health services and centres
- Private practice
- Housing and social welfare services
- Residential aged care facilities
- Transition Care Programs
- Rehabilitation and restorative care programs
- Cognitive and memory clinics
- Movement disorder clinics

Some occupational therapists are able to visit people in their homes and communities.

To access an occupational therapist, contact **My Aged Care 1800 200 422** or **speak to your GP** to obtain a referral under Medicare or DVA.

To find a local occupational therapist working with older people in OTA's 'Find an OT' directory, **scan the QR code** or visit **otaus.com.au/find-an-ot**

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