

Prosthetic/Orthotic Assistant and Technician

■ Job Description

The prosthetic/orthotic assistant works under the direct supervision of the prosthetist/orthotist and shares the responsibilities. The assistant may also be assigned repair and maintenance work. The prosthetic/orthotic technician is involved mainly in the fabrication of components and devices and does not have direct contact with patients.

■ Job Settings

Privately owned facilities, hospital laboratories, rehabilitation centers, and government agencies such as the Veterans' Administration. In small organizations, the same person may fabricate and fit both limbs and braces. In larger facilities, a skilled prosthetist or orthotist may employ one or more assistants and technicians to do the actual construction work under supervision. The prosthetist/orthotist then specializes chiefly in adjustment and fitting.

■ Projected Need

Faster than average growth in the employment of prosthetic and orthotic technicians is expected nationwide.

The growing and aging population will continue to drive demand for these services, which in turn will increase the need for people skilled in prosthetics/orthotics. In addition, research and development in new technologies and materials will result in more people with disabilities wanting new appliances.

■ Salaries

Average wage for registered technicians with up to two years of work experience is \$14.50 per hour, according to a survey conducted by the American Orthotic and Prosthetic Association. Those with more than five years of experience made an average wage of \$19.78 per hour.

■ Related Careers

The student with mechanical ability might also consider biomedical equipment technology, dental lab technology, and optical technology. Students not so

mechanically inclined could consider other rehabilitative therapies.

■ Differences in Training

Currently, there are only five technician programs offered in the United States that are NCOPE-accredited. For a listing of these schools, visit the NCOPE web site at <www.ncope.org>.

■ Related Educational Programs

The programs of study listed below are the recommended areas of study to pursue for this occupation. Clicking on these will lead to files that show in-state and national schools that offer these programs.

The following link(s) will take you to CIS for more information. CIS requires an ID and password that can be obtained at <http://cis.ilworkinfo.com/loginhelp/>. You must log into CIS prior to clicking on the links below.

[Orthotic and Prosthetic Therapies](#)

■ Credentials

Candidates for registration from the American Board for Certification in Orthotics and Prosthetics (ABC) must have a high school diploma and must complete either the two-year supervised on-the-job training program or a one- or two-year program accredited by the National Commission on Orthotic and Prosthetic Education (NCOPE). In addition, all candidates must pass an exam administered by ABC.

■ Advanced Training

Continuing education programs and seminars are offered locally and nationally.

■ Resources

American Board for Certification in Orthotics and Prosthetics (ABCOP)
National Commission on Orthotic and Prosthetic Education (NCOPE)
330 John Carlyle Street, Suite 210
Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone: 703.836.7114
<http://www.abcop.org>
<http://www.ncope.org>

American Academy of Orthotists and Prosthetists
526 King Street, Suite 201
Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone: 703.836.0788
<http://www.oandp.com>

The Orthotic and Prosthetic Education and Development Fund of the AAOP offers three scholarships for students enrolled in an accredited orthotics and prosthetics program. Applicants must demonstrate financial need.

American Orthotic & Prosthetic Association
330 John Carlyle Street, Suite 200
Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone: 571.431.0876
E-mail: info@aopanet.org
<http://www.aopanet.org>
Click on "O & P Career Center."