

## Prosthetist/Orthotist

### ■ Job Description

The prosthetist and orthotist work closely with the physician, surgeon, and therapist to provide total rehabilitation services for patients with disabling conditions. They are responsible for taking measures or molds, designing the appliance, selecting materials, fabricating, and fitting. Their goal is maximum patient comfort and function. At least one preliminary fitting enables the prosthetist or orthotist to make needed changes before finishing the prosthesis (artificial limb) or orthosis (brace). The final step is an evaluation of the patient's appliance by the prosthetist/orthotist and other rehabilitation specialists. The physical therapist and occupational therapist help the patient learn to use this new equipment.

### ■ Projected Need

In Illinois, employment of orthotic and prosthetic specialists is expected to increase more slowly than average through 2010. Nationally, the number of jobs for orthotic and prosthetic specialists is expected to grow as fast as average.

As the population grows and more insurance companies cover orthotic and prosthetic appliances, demand for these workers should grow. In addition, research and development in new technologies and materials will result in more people with disabilities wanting new appliances. Interest in sports competition by people with disabilities may also produce job growth in this occupation.

### ■ Salaries

Nationally, the median wage for orthotists and prosthetists is \$22.65 per hour. Half of all orthotists and prosthetists earn between \$15.28 and \$31.77 per hour.

In Illinois, the median wage for these workers is \$18.70 per hour.

Wages vary with the worker's experience and level of responsibility. They also vary with the size and type of employer. Technicians in training earn about half the wage of orthotists and prosthetists.

### ■ Differences in Training

Only three schools offer baccalaureate programs in prosthetics and orthotics: California State University, University of Texas and University of Washington. Certificate programs are offered at an additional five institutions including Northwestern University Medical School in Chicago.

### ■ 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](#)