

AFSC 42B4\*, Staff  
 AFSC 42B3\*, Qualified  
 AFSC 42B1\*, Entry

## PHYSICAL THERAPIST (Changed 31 Oct 22)

**1. Specialty Summary.** Examines, diagnoses, treats, and manages neuromusculoskeletal disorders and injuries. Provides comprehensive, conservative neuromusculoskeletal care with a focus on injury prevention, restoration of physical function and performance optimization across the spectrum of clinical and operational environments. Directs outpatient and inpatient physical therapy, injury prevention and human performance programs. Plans, conducts, and directs research in physical therapy and related areas. Related DoD Occupational Group: 260806.

### **2. Duties and Responsibilities:**

- 2.1. Examines, diagnoses, treats and manages neuromusculoskeletal disorders, injuries, associated structures and systems that may impair movement or function. Provides services without referral. Performs, prescribes, and directs procedures that may include but are not limited to those involving exercise, electrical current, compression, taping, blood flow restriction, cold, heat, light/laser, ultrasound, soft tissue mobilization and mobilization/manipulation of the spine and peripheral joints. Orders diagnostic laboratory and imaging studies. Prescribes and administers medications such as muscle relaxants, non-narcotic analgesics, anti-inflammatories, local anesthetics, and supplements. Orders consultations and refers patients to other providers. Prescribes durable medical equipment, custom orthotics, splints, and braces. Initiates, continues, and terminates temporary profiles. Places patients on quarters. Performs and directs physical rehabilitation, injury prevention, performance optimization, ergonomic evaluation, wellness, screening, and promotion of healthy lifestyle activities. Provides concussion and acute injury management. Serves as neuromusculoskeletal consultants for other healthcare professionals. Educates patients and their families on the rehabilitation/recovery process. Those with appropriate training perform point of care diagnostic ultrasound and needle insertion procedures such as dry needling, electrodiagnostic testing, battlefield acupuncture and joint aspiration/injection.
- 2.2. Plans, coordinates, and provides oversight to all physical therapy activities across the full spectrum of practice environments. Determines requirements for physical therapy services including personnel, equipment, supplies, and continuing education. Establishes professional care standards and appraises performance levels of subordinates. Establishes and maintains liaison with civilian and governmental agencies regarding physical therapy. Develops and implements teaching programs and research activities related to physical therapy.
- 2.3. Evaluates effectiveness and efficiency of physical therapy services. Ensures quality of care through assessment and programming as needed. Participates in an ongoing, proactive peer review process.

### **3. Specialty Qualifications:**

- 3.1. Knowledge. Fulfillment of the education qualification satisfies this requirement.
- 3.2. Education. For entry into this specialty, a Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) degree from a physical therapy program accredited by the American Physical Therapy Association's Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education is mandatory.
- 3.3. Training. For award of AFSC 42B3, completion of the USAF Physical Therapy Advanced Course and the USAF PT/OT Management Course is mandatory.
- 3.4. Experience. For award of AFSC 42B3, a minimum of 24 months of experience in an Air Force physical therapy assignment is mandatory.
- 3.4.1. Board certification as an Orthopedic or Sports Clinical Specialist by the American Board of Physical Therapy Specialties fulfills 12 months of the experience requirement.
- 3.4.2. Graduation from the USAF Orthopedic Physical Therapy Residency program fulfills the full 24-month experience requirement.
- 3.5. Other.
- 3.5.1. For entry into this specialty a current, valid, active, and unrestricted license to practice physical therapy in a state, U.S. territory or District of Columbia is mandatory.
- 3.5.2. For award and retention of AFSC 42B3, a current, valid, active, and unrestricted license to practice physical therapy in a state, U.S. territory or District of Columbia is mandatory.
- 3.5.3. Must obtain and maintain clinical privileges IAW DHAPM 6025.13, Volume 4 (or be immediately eligible for said privileges if assigned to a non-clinical position.)

### **4. \*Specialty Shredouts:**

*Suffix      Portion of AFS to Which Related*

## Z Special Warfare

Performs neuromusculoskeletal physical therapy examinations, diagnosis and treatments within a designated Special Warfare (SW) unit: AFSOC Special Tactics (ST), ACC Tactical Air Control Party (TACP) or Pararescue (PJ) unit, Special Warfare Training Wing (SWTW), and/or equivalent unit at discretion of the AF/SG Physical Therapy Consultant. Supervises SW-specific human performance optimization program development and execution. Conducts research and provides education and training in the specialty area of SW physical therapy.

Award of AFSC 42B3Z requires successful completion of the USAF Tactical Sports and Orthopedic Manual Physical Therapy Fellowship or the US Army-Baylor Sports Doctoral Fellowship.