

## **News Release about Occupational Therapy Month**

*You can send a news release like the one below to the editor of your local newspaper to announce that April is Occupational Therapy Month. Be sure to provide "contact information" (your name, address, and telephone number) so someone can reach you if more information is needed.*

*Often, a news release like this one will not be printed verbatim, but it will generate interest on the part of the media outlet to assign a reporter to produce a story about some aspect of occupational therapy. For example, they may want to profile a patient who has improved because of the treatment they received from an occupational therapist.*

*For other examples, see AOTA's Press Center at [www.aota.org/nonmembers/area6/index.asp](http://www.aota.org/nonmembers/area6/index.asp).*

### **Sample News Release**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE [**Current Date**]

CONTACT: **JANE DOE**

DAY: **123-456-7890** EVENING: **321-654-0987**

### **APRIL IS NATIONAL OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY MONTH**

**[Your town & state]** – April 2004 has been designated as National Occupational Therapy Month by the American Occupational Therapy Association, and by occupational therapy practitioners in **[your town or state]**.

Occupational therapy is the allied health profession that focuses on maximizing a person's ability to participate in life independently. People who can benefit from occupational therapy range from the tiniest of newborn infants to senior citizens, and every age in between.

More than one fourth of the occupational therapy practitioners in the United States work in school systems, where they help children pursue the "occupations" of learning, playing, and growing. A leading reason for referring a child to occupational therapy is for help in mastering handwriting, a skill necessary for the "job" of student. But occupational therapy also helps children with conditions such as autism, cerebral palsy, Down's syndrome, mental retardation, spina bifida, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and other health and psychosocial conditions.

Premature infants often benefit from occupational therapy. A baby's "occupations" are to eat and grow, but if developmental complications cause feeding problems, a pediatric occupational therapist can often provide treatments that improve the baby's ability to take in nourishment.

In industry, occupational therapy helps injured workers return to the job, and also can teach healthy employees how to prevent injuries at work. Some common work-related conditions that can benefit from occupational therapy are hand and wrist problems such as carpal tunnel syndrome and tendonitis.

Older persons also benefit from occupational therapy. It not only helps in recovery from illness, surgery, or stroke, it can also improve overall well being. Occupational therapists help seniors maintain their independence and age in place by working to improve their mobility, ensure safety

in the home, and maintain access to their community. **This year, older driver safety and community mobility are the spotlight issues for Occupational Therapy Month.**

The historical roots of occupational therapy in America date back to the early twentieth century, when it was found that "purposeful occupations" such as crafts helped patients recover more swiftly from injuries and illness, both physical and mental. Thus it was that occupational therapy derived its name.

Today, there are more than 100,000 occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants practicing in the United States, helping people master the "skills for the job of living!"

The occupational therapy practitioners at **[your employer's name]** will be engaged in a number of activities throughout April in observation of Occupational Therapy Month, and invite the public to attend an open house to learn more on **[date & time if you are holding such an event]**.

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*Occupational therapy is the health and rehabilitation profession that focuses on maximizing a person's ability to participate in life independently. With occupational therapy, children and adults facing physical, cognitive, or psychosocial challenges can improve skills that help them perform daily tasks at home, at school, at work, and at play.*

*The American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA), founded in 1917, represents nearly 40,000 occupational therapists, occupational therapy assistants, and student of occupational therapy. As the sole organization for the profession, AOTA promotes optimum practice through standards of education, publications, continuing education, advocacy, and professional communication. For more information on occupational therapy, visit [www.aota.org](http://www.aota.org).*