



# ABOUT OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY & AGED CARE

## Aged Care and Occupational Therapy



Occupational therapists play a key role in providing aged care services to older people, both in the community and in residential aged care facilities.

Occupational therapists work with older people with age-related conditions such as poor balance and coordination, memory loss and confusion, and vision and hearing loss, which lead to changes in their ability to participate in the meaningful activities of everyday life.

Occupational therapists can help older people to maintain participation in the occupations of everyday life by working with them to:

- Prevent falls
- Achieve a safer, more accessible home that enables participation in the activities of everyday life
- Use equipment that can assist with mobility and everyday living (eg. shower rails, wheelchairs)
- Improve mobility and function by prescribing a range of adaptive strategies, such as joint protection techniques and work/rest routines for daily living
- Plan for the change of life role that comes with retirement, or 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 age-specific illnesses such as dementia
- Participate in leisure activities and reengage in social activities

The demand for aged care workers from various disciplines will inevitably increase in the coming years as a result of Australia's ageing population.

Occupational therapists work across a range of practice areas in aged care. These include:

### Community care

Services include reablement/prevention of functional decline, assessment and intervention to maintain participation in the usual and meaningful activities of life, assessments for home modifications, falls prevention strategies, assistive technology/equipment prescription, public transport assessment and intervention, driving assessments, and functional assessments of daily activities (eg. kitchen tasks) with interventions aimed at maintaining independence in these activities.

Acute care (hospitals and rehabilitation centres)

Services include assessment of current abilities and intervention plans aimed at maintaining optimum function and independence in everyday activities, discharge planning and referral for services.

### Residential care

Services include assessment of current abilities and intervention plans aimed at maintaining optimum function and independence in everyday activities, strategies to maintain a meaningful daily routine, falls prevention, management of the environment to reduce challenging behaviours, palliative care interventions, pain management, pressure care management, relaxation therapy, sleep assessment and strategies, continence management and upper limb assessment.

## How do I access aged care services?

My Aged Care (MAC) is the main entry point to the aged care system in Australia. It was introduced on 1 July 2013 and consists of a website and contact centre. My Aged Care provides information about aged care services to consumers, family members and carers, as well as service providers and health professionals.

For more information about the services available, and to find out if you are eligible for funding, visit [www.myagedcare.gov.au](http://www.myagedcare.gov.au) or call 1800 200 422.