

National Physical Therapy Examination[®] (NPTE[®]) Candidate Handbook

For the Physical Therapist (PT) and Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) Exams



Promoting Safety and Competence



Contents

About the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy® (FSBPT®).....	4
Purpose of the NPTE Program	4
Exam Development.....	4
Section 2: Exam Integrity and Security	5
Protect your Reputation and Career.....	5
Exam Security on Test Day.....	6
Exam Security after Test Day	6
NPTE Security Agreement, General Terms of Use, and Arbitration Policy	6
Additional Security Information.....	7
Section 3: Eligibility Requirements	7
General Eligibility Requirements.....	7
Testing Limits	7
Section 4: Understanding the NPTE.....	7
Exam Administration.....	7
Exam Overview	8
Exam Scoring.....	8
Section 5: Preparing for the NPTE.....	9
Content Outline	9
Practice Exam and Assessment Tool.....	9
Section 6: Exam Registration and Scheduling.....	9
Your Journey Map.....	9
FSBPT Account Creation.....	10
Validating Graduation (CAPTE-Accredited Programs Only).....	10
Registering for the NPTE	10
Exam Eligibility	10
Testing Accommodations.....	11
Authorization to Test (ATT) Letter	11
Scheduling your Exam	11
Section 7: Rescheduling, Withdrawing, and No-Shows	12
Rescheduling a Prometric Appointment.....	12
Canceling a Prometric Appointment.....	12



No-Shows	13
Section 8: Test Day.....	13
Arrival and Check-In.....	13
Testing Center Environment	14
Exam Navigation	14
Note-Taking.....	14
Breaks.....	15
Disruptions to Testing	15
Section 9: After Test Day.....	15
Receiving Your Results	15
Withheld Scores	16
Completing the Licensure Process	16
Score Transfers.....	16
Need to Test Again?.....	16
Performance Feedback Report	17
Section 10: Appeal Policy	17
Candidate Appeals	17
Jurisdiction Appeals	17
Contact Us.....	17
NPTE-PT Test Content Outline	20
NPTE-PTA Test Content Outline	21
Abbreviations	22
Sample Questions	24
Physical Therapist Examination	24
Physical Therapist Assistant Examination.....	25

Section 1: General Information



About the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy® (FSBPT®)

The mission of FSBPT is to protect the public by providing service and leadership that promote safe and competent physical therapy practice.

FSBPT's vision is that state licensing boards and FSBPT will achieve a high level of public protection based upon a strong foundation of laws and regulatory standards in physical therapy, effective tools and systems to assess entry-level and continuing competence, and public and professional awareness of resources for public protection.

FSBPT develops, maintains, and administers the National Physical Therapy Examination® (NPTE®) for physical therapists (PTs) and physical therapist assistants (PTAs).

Purpose of the NPTE Program

The PT and PTA exams are designed to assess a candidate's basic entry-level competence after graduation from a PT or PTA program accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE) or from an equivalent non-accredited program. The exams have two main purposes:

1. To help ensure that only those individuals who have the requisite knowledge of physical therapy are licensed in the physical therapy field
2. To help regulatory authorities evaluate candidates and provide standards that are comparable from jurisdiction to jurisdiction

The national exams are only one part of the evaluation process used by licensing authorities. In some jurisdictions, the national exam is supplemented by other means of assessing candidates' ability to practice physical therapy. For more information on each jurisdiction's licensure requirements, see the [Licensing Authorities Contact Information](#) page on FSBPT's website.

Exam Development

Questions (also known as items) appearing on the NPTE are developed by volunteer item writers. These volunteers are PTs and PTAs who represent a broad range of practice settings from across the country. Item writers attend workshops and receive instruction to enable them to write high-quality, job-related examination items.

Once items have been developed and submitted to FSBPT, the Exam Development Committee (EDC) reviews the items and determines if the item is entry-level, tests current content, and contains only one correct answer. The EDC also reviews entire test forms to ensure each item does not overlap content or cue the answer for other items on the examination form. These items will later become pre-test questions on exams to determine fairness before appearing on the NPTE as actual scored items. There are fifty pretest items on each level of examination.

Examinations are built based on an examination outline or blueprint. This outline identifies the content areas that must be on the examination and the number of questions to be included from each content



area. The outline is developed from a job analysis, which identifies the activities and tasks that comprise the entry-level practice of physical therapy. The job analysis is based on survey data and expert judgments.

The involvement of a representative group of practicing physical therapists, physical therapist assistants, and other professionals during examination development ensures that the examinations are relevant to the current practice of physical therapy. Additionally, staff and technical advisors work to maintain the examinations and ensure compliance with established testing standards.

Section 2: Exam Integrity and Security

Protect your Reputation and Career

Passing the NPTE is a big step toward receiving your license to practice physical therapy. Understandably, you want to take advantage of all available resources when preparing for this important examination. In the past, when you prepared for examinations in school, you may have considered fellow students to be good resources for learning about questions that were on those tests. This should not be the case when preparing for the NPTE.

The NPTE is the property of FSBPT and is protected by contract, trade secret, and federal copyright laws. It is a violation of these laws, and thus illegal, to share any information whatsoever about any NPTE question. In particular, sharing information about a question recalled from memory or asking someone who has taken the NPTE to share such information is illegal.

Soliciting recalled questions from candidates who have previously taken the exam is deeply unethical for several reasons. The first is obvious: you are expected to pass the test based on your own merit and without assistance. The members of the public who will entrust you with their well-being expect that you are a trustworthy and competent individual. By asking previous test takers to share questions with you, you are committing an illegal act and are undermining the very purpose of the exam. Also, by soliciting questions from previous test takers, you are encouraging others to commit illegal acts.

FSBPT aggressively protects the integrity of the NPTE. This protection is important to safeguarding the public from persons who do not have the requisite knowledge of physical therapy and therefore are not qualified to practice physical therapy. Any person for whom FSBPT has a reasonable suspicion of sharing or soliciting information about any NPTE question may be prohibited from sitting for the NPTE until a full investigation has determined that the person did not share or solicit such information.

FSBPT has prosecuted and will continue to prosecute individuals who share or solicit others to share any information whatsoever about any NPTE question. FSBPT will also report any incidents of candidates requesting questions or sharing questions to their licensing jurisdictions.



The bottom line: Items from the NPTE are not to be shared or solicited for any reason, and candidates who are determined to be guilty of soliciting or sharing questions will severely damage their chances of ever being licensed in *any* jurisdiction and are subject to prosecution and civil action.

Exam Security on Test Day

Candidates are required to provide two currently valid forms of identification to be able to sit for the examination. Before entering the testing room, a Prometric staff member will take your photograph, scan you with a metal detector wand, and take a digital image of your fingerprint. You will need to give a fingerprint scan each time you enter or leave the testing room. Additionally, Prometric records all testing sessions on video.

You can review Prometric's Testing Center Regulations and view a video outlining what to expect on test day on Prometric's website, www.prometric.com.

If you give or receive assistance during the examination or if you violate any other security policy, you may be required to stop testing immediately and leave the room. Your examination will not be scored. Prometric and FSBPT monitor all candidates and will statistically analyze scores for the purposes of detecting and verifying cheating. If FSBPT determines that your score is unable to be validated due to an unlikely response pattern, we will cancel your score and notify your licensing authority.

Exam Security after Test Day

FSBPT conducts additional validation and screening analyses following testing. In some cases, examination records are selected for additional validation analyses. Reasons we may hold scores include:

- A mismatch between registration data and data received from Prometric,
- Response patterns that suggest a very narrow range of studying,
- An incident at a test center that requires investigation,
- The score is very low (near guessing),
- Very large score gains.

Candidates whose examinations are held for additional validation will be contacted through email by FSBPT staff. Candidates will be required to provide additional information about how they prepared for the NPTE. FSBPT will not release these candidates' scores until they complete this additional investigation or if the candidates provide inaccurate information. Candidates who do not complete the investigation within sixty days of testing are subject to having their scores canceled.

NPTE Security Agreement, General Terms of Use, and Arbitration Policy

For purposes of examination security, each candidate who wishes to take the NPTE is required to enter into an agreement as part of the registration and examination-taking process. The full NPTE Security Agreement, General Terms of Use, and Arbitration Policy can be found at <https://www.fsbpt.org/Secondary-Pages/Exam-Candidates/NPTE-Security-Agreement>.



Additional Security Information

If you have questions about examination security, or if you know of a person or people who have violated FSBPT's exam security policies, it is your responsibility to email security@fsbpt.org.

Section 3: Eligibility Requirements

General Eligibility Requirements

In order to sit for the NPTE, you must meet the following eligibility requirements:

1. You must be at least eighteen years old.
2. You must have a degree appropriate for the exam level from a CAPTE-accredited institution. Candidates who did not graduate from a CAPTE-accredited institution should see the additional requirements outlined below.
3. You cannot have an open security investigation or sanctions that have not been completed.

Additional Requirements: Non-CAPTE Accredited Institutions

Licensing authorities set additional eligibility requirements for candidates who graduated from a non-CAPTE institution. Make sure you have thoroughly reviewed your jurisdiction's licensure requirements before you register for the NPTE. You will not be able to schedule an appointment until your licensing authority has reviewed your registration and made you eligible to sit for the NPTE.

Testing Limits

The following testing limits apply to all candidates taking the NPTE:

1. You cannot test more than three consecutive times. If you have tested three consecutive times, you must skip the next exam date.
2. You cannot test more than six times in your lifetime at either exam level. You may test up to six times at both the PT and PTA level if you are otherwise qualified to test at both levels.
3. You cannot test if you previously took the exam twice and received two very low scores, defined as any scaled score below 400.

Section 4: Understanding the NPTE

Exam Administration

The PT and PTA exams are computer-based and administered at Prometric testing centers throughout the United States. Exams are administered on set dates four times per year in January, April, July, and October. Because of the time between exams, it is extremely important to carefully review and fully understand the registration deadlines associated with an exam date, as any candidate who does not meet a deadline must wait until the next scheduled exam date to test.



Candidates may test at any Prometric testing center that is offering the NPTE, regardless of where they are seeking licensure. For example, a candidate who is seeking licensure in Virginia may test at a Prometric testing center in Maryland; the scores will be sent to Virginia once they are released.

Exam Overview

Both the PT and PTA exams are administered in sections, with fifty multiple-choice questions in each exam section. A scheduled fifteen-minute break is offered following the second section of both exams. Candidates may also take unscheduled breaks following the other sections of the exam, but time taken for unscheduled breaks will be deducted from the overall exam time.

The exam time for both the PT and PTA exams is presented as a block of overall exam time, which candidates may use as they wish as they complete the exam. The exam will terminate after the testing time has elapsed.

Exam Level	Sections	Total Questions	Testing Time	Total Appointment Time*
Physical Therapist (PT)	5	250	5 Hours	5 Hours, 30 minutes
Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA)	4	200	4 Hours	4 Hours, 30 minutes

*Includes scheduled break time, pre-exam tutorial and post-exam survey.

Exam Scoring

The NPTE is a multiple-choice exam with one correct answer for each question. Scores are determined by the number of questions you answer correctly, with no penalty for choosing incorrectly. Thus it is in your interest to answer every question, even if you are unsure of the answer.

The NPTE uses sophisticated procedures to ensure test forms (versions) are equally difficult across administrations. Scaled scores are an important part of making sure test scores are comparable.

As forms of the NPTE may vary slightly in their level of difficulty, raw scores (the number of questions a candidate answers correctly) are converted to scaled scores. The scaled scores represent equivalent levels of achievement regardless of the examination form taken, ensuring that scores on all forms of the examination are comparable. The NPTE scaled score is a mathematical conversion of raw scores to a scale that ranges from 200 to 800. Because of the conversion, a score of 800 does not equal a perfect score—it is only the highest score that FSBPT reports.

All jurisdiction licensing authorities have adopted the same criterion-referenced passing standard for the NPTE. Although FSBPT reports scores ranging from 200 to 800, the NPTE is a pass/fail examination. The examination is not designed to distinguish between many levels of competence, only to distinguish whether a candidate has at least the minimum level of competence required to practice as an entry-level PT or PTA. The passing standard is a scaled score of 600; therefore, any score of 600 or higher is a



passing score, and any score below 600 is a failing score. The number of questions that have to be answered correctly to achieve a score of 600 can change from form to form, but is generally within a one to two question range.

If a form of the examination is slightly easier than the form on which the passing score was set, a candidate would have to answer more questions correctly to obtain a scale score of 600. If the form of the examination is slightly harder, a candidate would have to answer fewer questions correctly to pass the examination. This process ensures that we apply the same standard of difficulty regardless of whether the items are a little easier or a little harder than those on another form.

Section 5: Preparing for the NPTE

Content Outline

The first and most crucial step to passing the NPTE is understanding and reviewing the content presented in the exam. Both the PT and PTA exams consist of objective, multiple-choice questions covering the major areas of physical therapy. Abridged content outlines are included in Appendix A of this Handbook. Complete content outlines are posted on the [FSBPT website](#).

Practice Exam and Assessment Tool

The Practice Exam and Assessment Tool (PEAT) is a timed, computer-based, multiple-choice practice exam presented in the same format as the NPTE that can help to identify your strengths and weaknesses prior to taking the actual exam. PEAT has several benefits:

- The same format and type of questions as the actual NPTE
- Immediate and automatic scoring
- A detailed performance report by content area and system
- Explanations and rationales behind correct answers
- References to help you increase your knowledge

Your PEAT purchase includes two timed exams for your exam level (PT or PTA). Each set consists of a retired NPTE form and a practice form. The fee for PEAT is \$99 for sixty days' access.

For more detailed information, please see the [PEAT FAQs](#).

Section 6: Exam Registration and Scheduling

Your Journey Map

This section details the major milestones you will come across when you register to take the NPTE, but your steps through the NPTE registration process may differ depending on your educational background and jurisdiction. To help you navigate the process, FSBPT has created a tool that allows you to generate



your own, [customized journey map](#) based on your PT/PTA program and the state you want to practice in.

FSBPT Account Creation

If you are graduating from a CAPTE-accredited program, your school will create your FSBPT profile for you. You will receive an email confirming your account creation and requesting that you complete your FSBPT profile. You must complete your profile before you will be able to access FSBPT exams and services.

If you graduated from a program that is not accredited by CAPTE, you will need to request that an FSBPT profile be created on your behalf. To do so, visit <https://pt.fsbpt.net/account/login> and complete the survey linked on the right side of the page. If you do not have a Social Security Number, an Alternate ID number will be assigned to you after you complete the survey. Allow three business days for creation of your account.

Validating Graduation (CAPTE-Accredited Programs Only)

Your school will validate your graduation prior to your graduation date. You will not be able to register for the NPTE prior to having your graduation validated by your school. FSBPT allows candidates to sit for the NPTE up to ninety days prior to their validated graduation date; however, jurisdictions may have more restrictive policies. For more information, contact your jurisdiction directly. You can also consult FSBPT's [Licensure Reference Guide](#).

Registering for the NPTE

Register for the NPTE by logging in to [your FSBPT profile](#) and clicking the "NPTE" button in the green "Services" area of the screen. Carefully read the information on each screen before continuing. On the final screen, you will be asked to pay the \$485 registration fee using a Visa, MasterCard, or Discover credit or debit card.

When registering for the NPTE, pay close attention to all applicable registration deadlines, which are firm. You must register and pay the exam fee in full no later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on the day of the registration deadline, or you will not be permitted to register for that exam. Deadlines are [posted on the FSBPT website](#).

Exam Eligibility

Once you register for the NPTE, your jurisdiction will need to make you eligible for the exam. This process differs by state, so it is important to understand your jurisdiction's policies and licensing requirements. Jurisdictions often require a licensure application, supporting academic records, an application fee, or other documentation before they make their candidates eligible for the NPTE. It is your responsibility to ensure that your jurisdiction has all necessary information to make you eligible for the exam.



You must be made eligible for the exam prior to the Jurisdiction Approval Deadline, which is seven days after the registration and payment deadline. If you are not made eligible by this deadline, your registration will be closed and your exam fee will be refunded minus a \$50 processing fee. Deadlines are posted on the NPTE website.

Important Note: If you have registered for the NPTE but have not yet been made eligible for the exam, contact your jurisdiction directly to determine what additional information is necessary to be made eligible.

Testing Accommodations

FSBPT offers reasonable testing accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to candidates who have a recognized disability or impairment and who demonstrate that accommodations are necessary to access the NPTE. To request testing accommodations, make sure to indicate that you have a disability covered by the ADA when you register for the NPTE.

The process for submitting an application for testing accommodations depends on where you are seeking licensure. For more information on applying for accommodations, see the FSBPT Testing Accommodations website.

Authorization to Test (ATT) Letter

Once you have been made eligible for the NPTE and your request for accommodations has been reviewed (if applicable), you will receive an Authorization to Test (ATT) letter via email. You can also access this letter within your FSBPT account by clicking on the “Status of my Request” link in the Services menu.

When you receive your ATT letter, take a few minutes to review it carefully. The ATT letter includes instructions on how to schedule your testing appointment, the exam fee you will pay to Prometric, and your name as it exists in Prometric’s registration system. Make sure your first and last names exactly match your name on the ID you will be presenting on test day. If the names do not match, update your name in your FSBPT profile. If you have any doubts about the information contained in your ATT letter, contact FSBPT Exam Services well in advance of test day.

Scheduling your Exam

You can schedule your exam appointment with Prometric online or over the phone. Both the website and phone number can be found on your ATT letter. Prometric’s exam fees are due when you schedule your appointment and are payable with a Visa or MasterCard or by direct debit to a checking account.

Prometric testing centers fill up quickly, so it is critical to schedule as soon as possible after receiving your ATT letter. If your preferred testing center is not available on your exam date, you may need to schedule your exam at a different location. You can continue to check Prometric’s real-time seating availability using their website in case a seat in a more convenient location becomes available, but there is no guarantee this will be the case.



In very rare instances, candidates may not be able to find a seat within 250 miles of their location. If you are unable to find a seat within this radius, please contact FSBPT Exam Services for additional assistance. If an Exam Services agent cannot find you a seat within this radius and you decide to withdraw from your exam, FSBPT will waive the standard processing fee. (See [Section 7](#) for more information on withdrawing from an exam.)

Section 7: Rescheduling, Withdrawing, and No-Shows

Rescheduling a Prometric Appointment

Once you have scheduled a testing appointment with Prometric, you can change your exam location, depending on availability, by contacting Prometric. You can only reschedule your exam appointment within the same testing window. Rescheduling fees apply and are calculated based on how far in advance of the exam date you are requesting to reschedule:

Days before Cancellation/Rescheduling	Fee
30+ days before scheduled exam	No Charge
5–29 days before scheduled exam	\$50
Less than 5 days before scheduled exam	Full Sitting Fee

Canceling a Prometric Appointment

If you no longer wish to test in a specific testing window, you have the option to cancel your appointment with Prometric. It is not possible to reschedule from one testing window to a future testing window. All cancellations must be done with Prometric. You may be eligible for a refund of some or all of your scheduling fee (see the Prometric fee schedule above).

Canceling your testing appointment with Prometric does not automatically cancel your exam registration in FSBPT’s system. You must take the additional step of withdrawing from the exam (see below) no later than the end of the exam window exam date. **If you do not withdraw from the exam, you will forfeit your full registration fee.**

Withdrawing from an Exam

You can withdraw from an exam from within your FSBPT account by clicking on “Withdraw from an Exam” in the Services menu. You will be given the option to request a refund or to apply the exam fee to a future exam registration. Regardless of your decision, a processing fee will apply as shown below:

If you withdraw from an exam...	The processing fee is...
30 days or more before exam day	\$50
Fewer than 30 days before exam day	\$120



You can withdraw from an exam up until the end of the testing window. After that date, you will no longer be able to withdraw from the exam, and you will forfeit all of your exam fees.

No-Shows

If you do not appear for your scheduled exam appointment, or if you are not allowed to test due to lack of qualifying ID, you will be marked as a “no-show” in Prometric’s system and no scores will be generated. You will forfeit all of the exam fees paid to Prometric; however, you are able to withdraw from the exam and secure a partial refund of your registration fee as long as you withdraw by the end of the testing window (see above).

No-shows do not count against your annual or lifetime testing limits.

Section 8: Test Day

Arrival and Check-In

Arrive at your testing center thirty minutes before the scheduled start time to allow for an efficient check-in process. Upon arrival, you will be greeted by a Test Center Administrator (TCA) and asked to store any personal belongings in an assigned locker. You may only bring your ID documents, locker key, and a pair of foam earplugs in an unopened container to the check-in station. Turn off all electronic devices when storing them in your locker.

During the check-in process, the TCA will do the following:

- Ask you to present qualifying identification (see next section for more information).
- Scan your primary ID document.
- Take a digital photograph.
- Ask you to sign the exam logbook and verify your signature.
- Take your fingerprint digitally.
- Scan you with a metal-detecting wand.

Qualifying Identification

All candidates are required to present two forms of qualifying identification to be granted admission to the testing room. The documents must both exactly match the first and last name(s) in your Authorization to Test letter. If the names on your ID do not exactly match your registration, you will not be permitted to test, and you will be considered a no-show.

You must present one primary ID, such as a driver’s license or a passport, and one secondary ID that includes your name and signature, such as a credit card.



Your Primary ID **must** [meet the following criteria](#):

- Be government issued
- Include a photo that can be used to positively identify you
- Be pre-printed with your name and include your signature
- Be unexpired and not clipped, stamped “void,” or otherwise marked as an invalid ID

Your Secondary ID **must** meet the following criteria:

- Be current
- Include your pre-printed name and your signature

If you have any questions about your IDs or the name on your registration, [contact FSBPT Exam Services](#) well in advance of your scheduled test date.

Testing Center Environment

Testing rooms at Prometric testing centers are carefully controlled to allow for a testing experience that is comfortable and secure and with minimal distraction. All candidates are provided with an individual computer workstation that includes dividers to minimize visual distraction. Candidates are also provided with noise-reducing headsets and are permitted to bring foam earplugs to further reduce any unwanted noise. Earplugs must be in an unopened container and will be inspected by testing center staff.

Temperature is controlled in Prometric testing centers at a level that is intended to be comfortable for all candidates; however, this temperature can vary between testing centers, and individuals often have different preferences when it comes to temperature. It is a good idea to dress in layers so you are prepared for varying temperatures. Security policies prohibit wearing heavy jackets in the testing room.

Exam Navigation

All candidates are presented with an exam tutorial prior to beginning the exam. This tutorial will explain the functionality of the exam and allow you to practice with the exam features for a few minutes before the start of the actual exam. Time spent in the tutorial does not count against the overall exam time.

You can navigate freely through the questions in a particular section of the exam and return to any you wish to review further. You may also mark questions to help you remember which questions to return to later. However, once you end a section you will not be able to return to any questions in that section.

Note-Taking

All candidates are provided with an erasable note board for note-taking. You may take notes during any of the timed sections of the exam.



The note board must remain at your desk during testing and must be returned to the testing center staff at the conclusion of the exam. Removing or attempting to remove the note board from the testing center is a breach of exam security and may result in an investigation.

Breaks

All candidates are offered a break after each fifty-question section. The fifteen-minute break after the second section is considered a “scheduled” break, as the break time is not counted against the overall exam timer. The other breaks are “unscheduled,” and any time spent on these optional breaks will be deducted from the overall exam time. You are only permitted to take a break when your exam is displaying the break screen.

When taking a break, you will be asked to sign out of the testing room and provide a digital fingerprint. You may open your assigned locker only to access a snack, a drink, or medication. Accessing study materials or electronic devices is strictly prohibited and will be investigated as a violation of FSBPT’s security policies.

Make sure to account for any check-in and check-out time when taking a break. If your scheduled break exceeds the allotted fifteen minutes, your exam timer will begin to run again.

Disruptions to Testing

Prometric takes great care to provide an environment conducive to test-taking. However, on rare occasions unexpected events that impact the testing environment can occur. If you experience any issues while you test, your first step should be to notify a Prometric staff member who can provide guidance and make every effort to address the problem.

If the disruption you experience is resolved within one hour, you will be expected to resume and complete your exam. However, if the resolution of the issue takes longer than an hour, or if the issue cannot be resolved on test day, you have the option to reschedule your exam for another date as soon as possible. A Prometric agent will contact you to schedule a new exam appointment.

If you feel that your testing environment impacted your ability to complete the exam, notify FSBPT immediately. FSBPT staff will review your concern and respond with the results of their investigation.

Section 9: After Test Day

Receiving Your Results

Your pass/fail results will be posted to your online account approximately five business days after your eligibility period ends. The results will be sent to your jurisdiction at the same time; no further action is required to send your scores to the jurisdiction you selected when you registered for the exam.



Your free score report, which includes your numerical scaled score, will be posted to your online account ten business days following your exam date. This report can be accessed for free for thirty days. After thirty days, you can access your score report by purchasing an Individual Score Report on your online dashboard.

The free score report posted to your dashboard includes only your scaled score and pass/fail status. If you would like additional diagnostic feedback on your exam performance, you may purchase a Performance Feedback Report (see below).

Withheld Scores

All scores are subject to review and validation prior to their release, and FSBPT has the sole authority to determine whether a score will be released to any party. On any given exam date, some candidates will have their scores withheld for a number of reasons. Withheld exam scores will usually be released within a week of their planned released date in most cases, but this may vary with high testing volumes.

If your score is withheld, FSBPT may ask you to provide additional information before your scores are released. Responding promptly and accurately to this request will help to facilitate the release of your exam scores.

If you have any additional questions about withheld scores, [see the FSBPT website](#).

Completing the Licensure Process

If you passed your exam, congratulations! Your score will be sent automatically and electronically to the jurisdiction you selected during registration. Make sure to contact your jurisdiction directly to complete the licensure process. Jurisdiction contact information is available on [the FSBPT website](#).

Score Transfers

Your scores are automatically reported to the jurisdiction you designated when you registered for the NPTE. If you need to send your scores to another jurisdiction, you can do so any time after your scores are released by logging in to your online account and clicking on "Score Transfer to State." Score transfers are electronic and immediate, though it may take some time for the jurisdiction to access your score. A \$90 fee applies to all score transfer requests.

Need to Test Again?

As long as you have not reached a testing attempt limit, you will be able to register for another exam approximately fifteen days following your unsuccessful attempt. All standard registration policies, deadlines, and fees apply to your next registration.



Performance Feedback Report

To help you understand your areas of strength and weakness, you may consider purchasing a [Performance Feedback Report](#). This report provides detailed diagnostics on your performance and is broken down by content area, by body system, and by section.

Performance Feedback Reports can be purchased from your online account for \$100.

Section 10: Appeal Policy

Candidate Appeals

The FSBPT Board of Directors routinely reviews the policies that govern the development and administration of the National Physical Therapy Examination. These policies are then shared with the licensing authority for each U.S. jurisdiction. Careful consideration is given when developing policies to ensure that they are in line with the Federation's mission of public protection.

If you wish to appeal a specific policy related to the National Physical Therapy Examination (excluding eligibility requirements), the first step is to discuss the issue with a Federation staff person. The staff may be able to provide a better understanding of the policy and explain how the policy relates to the Federation's mission. If you still choose to appeal a policy, you will need to submit a request in writing to the FSBPT Board of Directors. Requests for appeals must be submitted by the candidate within 60 days of his/her most recent examination. The request must include the rationale for the exception to the policy and any steps already taken to resolve this problem with FSBPT staff.

When reviewing appeals, the FSBPT Board of Directors will consider what effect granting the appeal would have on other candidates, the role of the examination in providing a measure of minimal entry-level competence, the security of the NPTE, and any impact the decision might create for the jurisdiction in which the candidate is applying or any other jurisdiction.

Jurisdiction Appeals

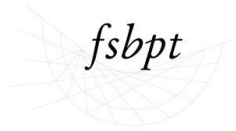
Candidates who are ineligible to take the NPTE due to the NPTE eligibility requirements must present information to a licensing authority that may then request an appeal on the candidate's behalf. Visit our website for information on this [appeal process](#).

Contact Us

Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy
124 West Street South, Third Floor
Alexandria, VA 22314

www.fsbpt.org

Open Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time



Examination Services:

Telephone: 703-739-9420

Email: <mailto:ExamRegistration@fsbpt.org>

Fax: 703-739-9421

Administrative Services:

Telephone: 703-299-3100

Fax: 703-299-3110



Content Outlines

The NPTE consists of objective, multiple-choice questions covering the major areas of physical therapy. The PT examination consists of 250 items and the PTA examination consists of 200 items. An overview of the content outlines is included in this handbook. For the complete content outlines, go to <http://www.fsbpt.org/FreeResources/NPTEDevelopment.aspx> and click “NPTE content.”

The NPTE is designed to measure whether a candidate has the requisite knowledge required of entry-level physical therapists or physical therapist assistants. The focus is on the **clinical application** of knowledge, concepts and principles necessary for the provision of **safe and effective patient care**. Provision of safe patient care includes consideration of current best evidence from clinically relevant research regarding the safety and efficacy of therapeutic, rehabilitative, and preventive physical therapy services.

Note that these blueprints cover important entry-level knowledge areas that are reasonably tested using well-constructed multiple-choice items; some important areas are excluded because they cannot be adequately assessed in a multiple-choice format, are better assessed through other elements of the licensing process, are not specific to the scope of practice of physical therapists, or assess standards that might vary substantially across situations or practice locations. In addition, some important knowledge areas that are not linked to specific body systems and are not explicitly mentioned in the content outline (e.g., communication skills, teaching and learning techniques) are encompassed by multiple knowledge areas that are included in the content outline and are represented in test content to a greater extent than is apparent from this outline.



NPTE-PT Test Content Outline

NUMBER OF ITEMS (RANGE)				
BODY SYSTEM	Physical Therapy Examination	Foundations for Evaluation, Differential Diagnosis, & Prognosis	Interventions	TOTAL PER SYSTEM
Cardiovascular & Pulmonary Systems	7-9	8-9	8-10	23-28
Musculoskeletal System	18-21	17-20	16-19	51-60
Neuromuscular & Nervous Systems	15-17	14-16	15-17	44-50
Integumentary System	3-4	3-4	3-4	9-12
Metabolic & Endocrine Systems	–	3-4	2-3	5-7
Gastrointestinal System	0-2	2-3	1-2	3-7
Genitourinary System	1-2	2-3	1-2	4-7
Lymphatic System	0-2	1-3	2-3	3-8
System Interactions	–	8-12	–	8-12
TOTAL ACROSS SYSTEMS	44-57	58-74	48-60	–
NONSYSTEM				TOTAL PER NONSYSTEM
Equipment, Devices, & Technologies				5-6
Therapeutic Modalities				6-8
Safety & Protection				5-6
Professional Responsibilities				4-5
Research & Evidence-Based Practice				3-5
TOTAL				200



NPTE-PTA Test Content Outline

NUMBER OF ITEMS (RANGE)				
BODY SYSTEM	Physical Therapy Data Collection	Diseases/Conditions that Impact Effective Treatment	Interventions	TOTAL PER SYSTEM
Cardiovascular & Pulmonary Systems	6-8	6-7	9-11	21-26
Musculoskeletal System	12-14	9-11	15-16	36-41
Neuromuscular & Nervous Systems	8-10	8-10	12-14	28-34
Integumentary System	2-3	1-3	2-4	5-10
Metabolic & Endocrine Systems	-	3-4	2-3	5-7
Gastrointestinal System	-	0-2	0-2	0-4
Genitourinary System	-	0-2	0-2	0-4
Lymphatic System	1-2	1-2	1-2	3-6
System Interactions	-	5-7	-	5-7
TOTAL ACROSS SYSTEMS	29-37	33-48	41-54	-
NONSYSTEM				TOTAL PER NONSYSTEM
Equipment, Devices, & Technologies				7-9
Therapeutic Modalities				9-11
Safety & Protection				4-6
Professional Responsibilities				3-4
Research & Evidence-Based Practice				2-3
TOTAL				150



Abbreviations

The abbreviations that follow have been approved for use on the Physical Therapist and Physical Therapist Assistant examinations. Approved abbreviations may be used in place of the term or phrase they represent.

ACE inhibitor	angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitor
ADH	antidiuretic hormone
ASIA Impairment Scale	American Spinal Injury Association Impairment Scale
BMI	body mass index
Bpm	beats per minute
C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6, C7, C8	cervical spinal column levels/nerve root positions
Cm	centimeter
CN	cranial nerve
CVA	cerebrovascular accident
Df	degrees of freedom (statistical concept)
DIP joint	distal interphalangeal joint
dL	deciliter
FEV1	forced expiratory volume in 1 second
Ft	foot
G	gram
HCO ₃ ⁻	bicarbonate
In	inch
Kg	kilogram
L	liter
L1, L2, L3, L4, L5	lumbar spinal column levels/nerve root positions
Lb	pound
M	meter
mA-min	milliampere-minute
MCP joint	metacarpophalangeal joint
METs	metabolic equivalents
mEq/L	milliequivalents per liter
mg/dL	milligrams/deciliter
MHz	megahertz
Min	minute
mL	milliliter
Mm	millimeter
mm Hg	millimeters of mercury
mmol/L	millimoles/liter
MTP	metatarsophalangeal
Oz	ounce
p value	probability value
PaCO ₂	partial pressure of arterial carbon dioxide
PaO ₂	partial pressure of arterial oxygen
PIP joint	proximal interphalangeal joint
PNF	proprioceptive neuromuscular facilitation
Pps	pulses per second
Q angle	quadriceps angle



R	correlation coefficient (statistical concept)
Rep	repetition
ROM	range of motion
S1, S2, S3, S4	first heart sound, second heart sound, third heart sound, fourth heart sound
S1, S2, S3, S4, S5	sacral spinal column levels/nerve root positions
SACH foot	solid ankle cushion heel foot
SaO2	oxygen saturation
Sec	second
SOAP note	subjective, objective, assessment, and plan note
T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7, T8, T9, T10, T11, T12	thoracic spinal column levels/nerve root positions
THR	total hip replacement
VO2 assessment	volume of oxygen assessment
W	watt

Medication Terminology Used in the NPTE

Medications referenced in both the Physical Therapist and Physical Therapist Assistant examinations follow nomenclature used in the United States. When appropriate, both generic and trade names will be given.

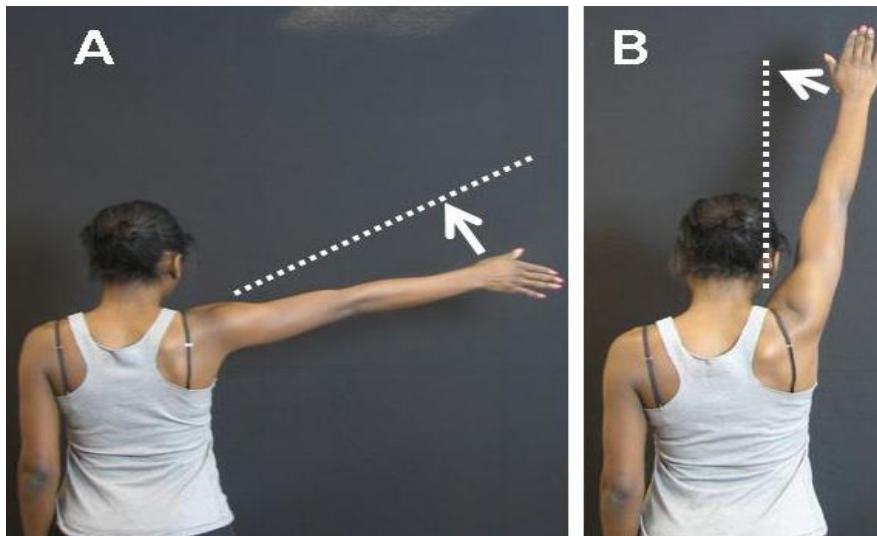


Sample Questions

The sample questions that follow are illustrative of the type found on the Physical Therapist and Physical Therapist Assistant examinations.

Physical Therapist Examination

1. After sitting at a computer station for 2-3 hours, an individual reports experiencing a sharp, localized pain in the left arm. When asked to show the location of the pain, the individual points to the area of the insertion of the deltoid. The pain disappears when the individual stands up and walks around briefly. Which of the following interventions is **MOST** likely to correct the problem?
 - a. Isometric strengthening of the deltoid
 - b. Lumbar extension exercises in prone position
 - c. Instruction in correct postural alignment in sitting position
 - d. Instruction in shoulder active range of motion exercises
2. A patient with a medullary-level vascular lesion has increased vagal nerve activity. Which of the following descriptions **BEST** represents the cardiovascular effects that occur when the patient transitions from supine to standing position?
 - a. Rise in blood pressure and no change in heart rate
 - b. Drop in blood pressure and no change in heart rate
 - c. Rise in blood pressure and an increase in heart rate
 - d. Drop in blood pressure and an increase in heart rate
3. A patient has used crutches with a partial weight-bearing toe touch gait for the past 3 months. When progressed to full weight-bearing, the patient is unable to demonstrate a heel-toe gait sequence with the involved extremity. Which of the following disorders is the **MOST** likely origin of the gait abnormality?
 - a. Plantar fasciitis
 - b. Fibular (peroneal) nerve palsy
 - c. Heel cord tightness
 - d. Hammertoe
4. While abducting the shoulder, the patient in the photograph denies pain while moving the arm through the range indicated in photograph A, but reports increasing pain severity as the arm moves into the range indicated by photograph B. Which of the following disorders is **MOST** likely present?
 - a. Acromioclavicular joint lesion
 - b. Subacromial bursitis
 - c. Infraspinatus tendinopathy
 - d. Partial tear of the supraspinatus



Answers to sample questions: 1.c; 2.b; 3.c; 4.a

Physical Therapist Assistant Examination

1. During a physical therapy evaluation, a patient with a sprain of the deltoid ligament of the ankle reported pain with palpation of the affected area and with ankle motion that stressed the ligament. To determine any change in the patient's pain level during subsequent treatment, a physical therapist assistant should palpate which of the following areas?

- Anterior to the lateral malleolus while the patient's ankle is passively plantar flexed
- Inferior to the medial malleolus while the patient's ankle is passively everted
- Over the sinus tarsi while the patient's ankle is passively inverted
- Deep to the Achilles tendon while the patient's ankle is passively dorsiflexed

2. Which of the following instructions would be **MOST** appropriate to give a patient who is learning pursed-lip breathing?

- Exhale through pursed lips while contracting abdominal muscles.
- Exhale by blowing air out forcefully between pursed lips.
- Exhale by relaxing air out through pursed lips.
- Exhale in quick short puffs through pursed lips.

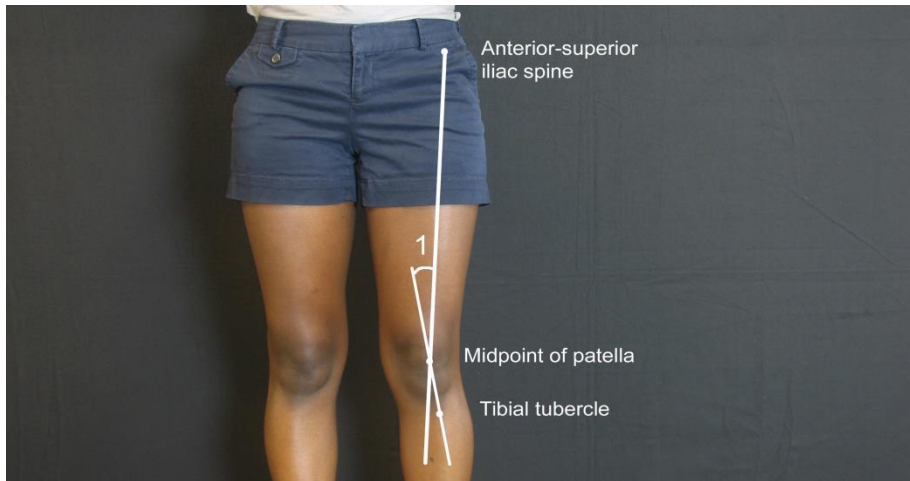
3. A patient with impaired kinesthesia who is performing active range of motion exercises of the upper extremities will **MOST** likely require which of the following supplemental interventions?

- Visual cues while performing the exercises
- Pain-relieving modalities prior to performing the exercises
- Trunk stabilization while performing the exercises
- Stretching prior to performing the exercises



4. If angle 1 in the photograph is greater than 20°, which of the following complications is the patient **MOST** likely to develop?

- a. Patellofemoral tracking disorder
- b. Genu recurvatum
- c. Lateral collateral ligament sprain
- d. Medial meniscal lesion



Answers to sample questions: 1.b; 2.c; 3.a; 4.a