

# Resumes for Physical Therapists



Resume Assessment, Diagnosis and Treatment



Lommasson Center 154  
[www.umt.edu/career](http://www.umt.edu/career) (406) 243-2022

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# Resumes

## Convincing employers you can do the job

The resume is your primary marketing tool. Its purpose is to get you in the door. As an increasing number of job seekers enter the Physical Therapy field, competition for the most desirable jobs will heat up. If you follow these three steps, you will be on your way to creating a resume that will maximize your calls for job interviews.

### Step 1: Research

The first step in preparing a winning resume is research. After all, you're selling a product (you) to a buyer (the employer), so find out what the buyer wants. You probably have enough information about yourself to write a novella, but given the limited space on a resume, you must highlight your strongest, most relevant qualifications.

If you're preparing your resume for a specific employer, visit its web site to learn about its services, goals, mission and corporate culture. Take notes about how you would fit in and add value to the operation. If you're not targeting a specific opportunity, search for jobs on physical therapy association websites, like the American Physical Therapy Association at <http://www.apta.org> and study ads that interest you. Review the job descriptions and requirements to find out what's important to hiring managers. Once you have a clear idea of what employers want, you can start developing a compelling resume.

### Step 2: Write

Pretend you're a director of marketing writing a dynamic description of a new product just hitting the market. You've done your research, so you know what your buyer wants. The following are a list of suggested headings that will help you organize your credentials. It is not necessary to use all of them, and you may have other headings to add, depending on your qualifications.

**Qualifications Summary:** It is becoming common to provide a narrative statement at the beginning of a professional resume to highlight your qualifications. This section is usually at the beginning of the resume underneath your name and contact information and can be called: **Professional Qualifications, Profile**, etc. Here's an example:

Licensed physical therapist in Montana with a DPT degree and recent experience in an outpatient rehabilitative setting. Team player with a reputation for excellent patient communication skills.

**Education:** List education, training and licensure, and consider adding academic honors, scholarships and extracurricular activities to this section if you choose not to place them under a separate heading.

New graduates should place the Education section before the Experience section while people who have worked after completing their degree may want to put their experience first, as many employers weigh work experience more heavily. New graduates can also mention their degree in the qualifications section to highlight the credential (see sample resume.)

**Related Experience:** We recommend separating related experience from other non-related work or volunteer experience sections, providing a **reverse chronology** of physical therapy experiences, including internships and clerkships. Describe your job duties as well as accomplishments, showing how you went above and beyond your responsibilities to help your employer or department. Emphasize your responsibilities and key contributions so employers can quickly grasp the depth and breadth of your experience. Include details such as:

- Patient success stories.
- Work setting (e.g., acute care, small medical group, outpatient).
- Caseloads you managed.
- Types of rehabilitative treatments/modalities you administered.
- Technology/equipment you used.
- Contributions you made toward PT program improvement.
- Recognition you received for outstanding work performance.

**Key Skills:** Create a list of your most relevant skills. Your resume should include physical therapy-related keywords to ensure it is found in an electronic applicant search. Examples of keywords include job titles, degrees, certifications, professional organizations and skills/areas of specialty (e.g., patient assessment, muscle reeducation, geriatrics). If a keyword has a widely used acronym, include both the abbreviated and spelled-out forms somewhere in your resume since an employer may use either during a search.

**Miscellaneous Headings:** Other headings depend on your background. You might include published articles, public-speaking engagements, technical skills, community activities, professional organizations and, for new grads, honors and awards or extracurricular activities. Proficiency in other languages may also find its way onto your resume, especially if you are seeking work in a labor market where a predominant number of people speak that language.

### **Step 3: Refine**

Think of your resume as a work in progress. Before distributing it, solicit feedback from academic advisors, **Career Services** counselors, colleagues and hiring managers to learn ways to improve your presentation. Keep in mind that everyone will have suggestions for improving your resume, so decide what will work for you and make appropriate changes.

When you're finished modifying your document, set it free into the job marketplace. After taking the time to research, write and refine, you should have a resume that generates calls for interviews.

### **Make Tracks to Career Services:**

The Office of Career Services is located in the Lommasson Center 154. Be sure to go online at [www.umt.edu/career](http://www.umt.edu/career) to see other **Career Resource Handouts** under the **A-Z index**.

The general **Resume Handout** has additional information on resume trends, references and resume styles and includes two pages of active verb tenses so you can find the right words to describe your experiences. In addition, other handouts include information on **Cover Letter Writing, Interviewing, Job Seeking, Curriculum Vitas** and more.

Portions of this reference guide were adapted from *Three Steps to a Winning Resume* by Kim Isaacs

# Sample Resume

## JENNIFER CHRISTENSEN

890 W. 15<sup>th</sup> Street

Missoula, MT 59801

406-123-4567

jchristensen@griz.net

### Professional Qualifications

Licensed physical therapist in Montana with a DPT degree and recent experience in an outpatient rehabilitative setting. Team player with a reputation for excellent patient communication skills.

### Education

#### Doctor of Physical Therapy

The University of Montana

Dean's List: 20XX-present

Immunization Certification: Fall 20XX

Expected graduation May 20XX

Missoula, MT

GPA: 3.8

### Physical Therapy Experience

#### Physical Therapy Intern

Missoula Sports Medicine Clinic

Spring 20XX

Missoula, MT

- Worked with recovering sports injury patients on a daily basis by administering physician-prescribed treatments, including exercise regimens, muscle stretching/relaxation and whirlpool therapy
- Trained in and administered electrotherapy and thermal therapy
- Updated charts to reflect procedures performed and patient progress

#### Physical Therapy Intern

St. Patrick Hospital

Summer 20XX

Missoula, MT

- Participated in evaluation, plan of care and individual treatment in an acute care setting
- Participated in multi-disciplinary patient conferences for diverse patient populations

#### Physical Therapy Assistant

Western Montana Medical Center

June 20XX-January 20XX

Missoula, MT

- Maintained premium patient care at all times and earned highest possible rating of "exemplary" on performance review
- Documented patients' progress and completed discharge summaries, home program treatment plans and other required forms

### Additional Experience

Peer Advisor

The University of Montana

Fall 20XX- present

Missoula, MT

- Provided one-on-one academic advise to freshman students majoring in general studies
- Trained new advisors on process for advising undecided students

### Honors/Awards

- National Institutes of Health Scholarship, 20XX
- National AMBUCS Scholarship, 20XX
- Member of Mortar Board, 20XX-20XX

### Memberships

American Physical Therapy Association

American College of Sports Medicine

Physical Therapy Student Association

20XX-present

20XX-present

20XX-present