Imagine if an accident, injury, disease, or condition made it difficult for you to participate in your daily activities. A wrist injury means that getting dressed in the morning is painful. Arthritis makes driving challenging. Autism may hinder a child from interacting effectively with classmates. A traumatic brain injury keeps a wounded warrior out of active duty because of difficulties with memory and organizational skills. Or a small change in your activities or the environment could prevent a future condition (such as using ergonomics at work to avoid injury).

Occupational therapy allows people across the lifespan to do the activities they want and need to do. An occupational therapist will evaluate your situation and, with input from you (and perhaps your family, care provider, or friend), develop individualized goals that allow you to resume or pursue your valued occupations. After you develop goals with your occupational therapist, you will work together on a specific intervention plan to help improve or maintain your ability to perform daily activities and reach your goals getting back to your life.

Occupational therapy practitioners can widen their focus to groups or communities too, developing and implementing programs that promote healthy behaviors, or address particular issues such as elder driving, community transitions for returning soldiers, homelessness, troubled youth, mental health, and addictions.
WHO ARE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY PRACTITIONERS?

Occupational therapy practitioners are either occupational therapists or occupational therapy assistants. They are skilled health care professionals who use research and scientific evidence to ensure their interventions are effective. With strong knowledge of a person’s psychological, physical, emotional, and social makeup, occupational therapy practitioners can evaluate how your condition (or risk for one) is affecting your body and mind, using a holistic perspective.

For more information, visit www.aota.org.

WHAT IS OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY?

Answering the six Qs—what, why, who, when, where, and how—about occupational therapy.

WHERE CAN I GET OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY?

Occupational therapy practitioners work in a variety of settings—including hospitals, schools, clinics, skilled nursing facilities, community centers, and health care facilities, and they can even come to your home.

HOW DO I SCHEDULE AN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY VISIT?

Ask your physician about a referral for occupational therapy services or look for a private practice in your community. Talk to your child’s teacher about occupational therapy services at school.

Get more information about occupational therapy at www.aota.org.