

Certified Physical Therapy Aide

First Semester: Foundations and Terminology (August - December)

Focus: This semester is dedicated to building the foundational knowledge required for the CPTA role. Students will master the core professional, ethical, and scientific principles before moving on to practical skills.

Duration: Approximately 18 calendar weeks (August 13, 2025 - December 19, 2025), accounting for school breaks and non-student days.

- **Week 1 (August 11-15, 2025):** (Classes begin August 13)
 - **Student Acclimation & Ice Breakers:**
 - Welcome and Introductions (student & instructor)
 - Course Syllabus Review, Classroom Expectations, and Safety Procedures
 - **Ice Breaker Lab 1: "Vital Signs Scavenger Hunt"** - Students work in small groups to find and identify basic vital signs equipment (thermometer, stethoscope, BP cuff) in the classroom/lab, and discuss their uses.
 - Team-building activities
- **Week 2 (August 18-22, 2025):**
 - **Continued Acclimation & Ice Breakers:**
 - Introduction to Health Science careers (brief overview, student interests)
 - **Ice Breaker Lab 2: "Medical Terminology Charades/Pictionary"** - Teams act out or draw simple medical terms to encourage engagement and early exposure.
 - Discussion on "What is Healthcare?" and "Why is it important?"
- **September: Medical Terminology** (No School September 1, Labor Day)
 - **Weeks 3-6:** Understanding prefixes, suffixes, and root words related to physical therapy and the human body. Introduce common medical abbreviations. This is a critical building block.
- **October: Human Anatomy and Physiology** (October 16- Early Release; October 17, 20 Non-Contract Day) (October 10 - End 1st Quarter)
 - **Weeks 7-10:** A deeper dive into the skeletal, muscular, cardiovascular, and nervous systems, with a focus on their function and relevance to physical therapy. This will reinforce their previous A&P knowledge.
- **November: Functional Movement and Kinesiology** (No School November 24-28)
 - **Weeks 11-14:** Applying A&P knowledge to how the body moves. Cover basic kinesiology and the mechanics of movement. Introduce common injuries and conditions.
- **December: Review and Mid-term Exam** (December 19 - End 2nd Quarter & Semester)

- **Weeks 15-16:** Comprehensive review of all first-semester topics. Administer a mid-term exam to assess understanding before the winter break.
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Second Semester: Practical Skills and Certification Prep (January - May)

Focus: This semester shifts from theoretical knowledge to practical application. Students will learn the hands-on skills and administrative tasks necessary for an aide, culminating in a final review for their certification exam.

Module Breakdown:

- **January: Patient Care and Safety** (January 5 - Begin 3rd Quarter)(No School January 19 MLK Day)
 - **Weeks 17-20:** Infection control, safety procedures, and proper body mechanics. This is a critical hands-on module.
 - **Practical skills:** Practice patient transfers, positioning, and using assistive devices like walkers and canes.
- **February: Therapeutic Procedures and Modalities** (No School February 16 Presidents Day)
 - **Weeks 21-24:** Assisting with therapeutic exercises (e.g., setting up equipment, counting repetitions).
 - **Practical skills:** Learn how to prepare equipment for various modalities (hot/cold packs, ultrasound) as directed by a PT/PTA.
- **March: Administrative and Clinical Skills** (Spring Break March 23-27)(March 13 - End 3rd Quarter, March 16 Begin 4th Quarter, March 19 - P/T Conf Night Early Release, March 20 Non Contract Day)
 - **Weeks 25-28:** The non-clinical side of the job. Cover scheduling, patient documentation (non-clinical notes), and maintaining treatment areas.
- **April: Comprehensive Review and Practice Tests** (April 17 - Exchange Day)
 - **Weeks 29-32:** Begin an intensive review of all course material. Use AMCA-provided study guides and practice tests to familiarize students with the exam format and question types.
- **May: Certification Exam Preparation & Final Exam** (May 22 - End 4th Quarter & Semester 2 / Last Student Day)
 - **Weeks 33-35:** Finalize review and hold a final comprehensive exam that simulates the CPTA certification test. This will be the last week of classes before the official exam.
 - **Post-Exam:** A discussion on career paths, interview skills, and how to use the CPTA certification.