

Occupational Therapists and Developmental Coordination Disorder



What is an occupational therapist?

An Occupational Therapist is an allied health professional who specialise in supporting and empowering people to participate in activities of everyday life.

What role might an occupational therapist play in DCD diagnosis?

An OT may support a paediatrician with a diagnosis by identifying key concerns and difficulties a child is having with their motor skills in their daily activities. This can be through formal and informal assessments as involves the therapist providing information on the severity of the motor difficulties and the impact of the motor coordination disorder on the child's daily functioning.

What role can an occupational therapist play in intervention for DCD?

Occupational therapists have a wonderful holistic view on healthcare, taking the person, the activity and the environment all into consideration when working with a client. OT interventions can focus not only on goal setting, education and skill acquisition but also looking at the broader picture of what the client needs to or wants to do. Occupational Therapists are also trained in sensory integration and can use a multi-sensory approach when working with a client who has DCD. Finally, OTs are great at finding the 'just right' fit for a client where they are challenged but still empowered by interventions.

How do you find an occupational therapist?

You can ask your GP or paediatrician for local OT recommendations in your area. Alternatively, have a look at <https://otaus.com.au/find-an-ot> to find an OT near you.

An OT who specialises in paediatric conditions would be preferred for a child with DCD.

What to ask when looking for an occupational therapist.

When contacting an OT, check that they are confident in working with a client who has DCD and that they are aware of the challenges an individual with DCD may have.