

## Residency Programs in Arizona

Physical Therapists who want to specialize in a particular practice area, such as orthopedics or neurology, may choose to pursue residency after finishing PT school. Residencies are designed to provide clinicians with the experience and knowledge required to sit for a specialist certification. There are currently eight accredited residency programs, two candidate programs, and one developing program in Arizona. These programs are accredited through the American Board of Physical Therapy Residency and Fellowship Education (ABPTRFE).

Here are some quick facts about the programs:

<b>Geriatric</b>					
	Participant positions	Program format	Program length	% Salary to a comparable PT	Tuition/fees
<b>Mayo Clinic School of Health Sciences</b> Phoenix (Accredited)	1	Full-time	12 months	70%	\$0

<b>Neurology</b>					
	Participant positions	Program format	Program length	% Salary to a comparable PT	Tuition/fees
<b>A.T. Still University</b> Mesa (Accredited)	6	Full-time	12 months	n/a	\$8,000
<b>Barrow Neurologic Institute</b> Phoenix (Developing)	2	Full-time	12 months	85%	\$5,250
<b>HonorHealth and Northern Arizona University</b> Scottsdale (Accredited)	3	Full-time	12 months	75%	\$0

<b>Orthopaedics</b>					
	Participant positions	Program format	Program length	% Salary to a comparable PT	Tuition/fees
<b>A.T. Still University</b> Mesa (Accredited)	6	Full-time	12 months	n/a	\$8,248
<b>BodyCentral</b> Tucson (Candidate)	1	Full-time	15 months	80%	\$0
<b>Foothills Sports Medicine</b> Phoenix (Accredited)	3	Full-time	12 months	75%	\$0
<b>HonorHealth</b> Scottsdale (Accredited)	3	Full-time	12 months	75%	\$0
<b>International Academy of Orthopedic Medicine</b> Tucson (Candidate)	21	Full-time	12 months	n/a	\$13,000

<b>Sports</b>					
	Participant positions	Program format	Program length	% Salary to a comparable PT	Tuition/fees
<b>BodyCentral</b> Tucson (Accredited)	2	Full-time	15 months	75%	\$0

<b>Women's Health</b>					
	Participant positions	Program format	Program length	% Salary to a comparable PT	Tuition/fees
<b>BodyCentral</b> Tucson (Accredited)	1	Full-time	15 months	75%	\$0

It can be a challenging decision to choose which residency program is the best fit, and it helps to ask someone who has been through the process. We interviewed a few former residents from programs in Arizona to see how they chose their program and what they thought of it.

## Meet The Residents

**Kirsten Lightfoot** completed the Orthopaedic Residency with HonorHealth in 2019. She currently works for HonorHealth at the Spine Center in Scottsdale.

**Hannah Karstetter** completed the Neurologic Residency with HonorHealth in 2017. She currently works for Mayo Clinic in acute care in Phoenix.

**Julie Sigler** completed the Geriatric Residency with the Mayo Clinic School of Health Sciences in 2018. She currently works for Mayo Clinic in acute care in Phoenix.

**Kelsey Majerus** completed the Sports Residency at BodyCentral in 2018. She currently works in outpatient orthopedics in Phoenix.

**Matthew Tejido** completed the Orthopaedic Residency with A.T. Still University in 2019. He currently works for Rock Valley Physical Therapy in Illinois and is completing his Fellowship in Orthopedic Manual Physical Therapy through Evidence in Motion.

### What aspects of a program did you take into consideration when choosing a residency?

**Kirsten:** In general, I was looking for a residency program that was going to "fill in the missing pieces" in terms of my strengths and weaknesses as an entry level physical therapist. When considering the HonorHealth residency, I was most attracted to both the caliber and skillset of the mentor clinicians involved in the residency program with training ranging from manual therapy fellows to therapists specializing in vestibular and hand therapy. In addition, I was intrigued by the MSI methodology that is integrated into both the lecture material and practice of mentors who graduated from the Washington University physical therapy program or attended specific MSI training courses. I recognized that I was not well-versed in the Movement System Impairment diagnosis/classification system and felt I would benefit greatly from training under this lens as a novice clinician.

**Hannah:** I wanted a multi-setting residency program to fully understand the scope of practice as well as have a better understanding of the patient's journey and needs through various practice settings.

**Julie:** I took into consideration one on one mentoring hours, course work (if it was all up front or throughout the program), and locations of clinical hours. It was more important for me to have education and mentor hours throughout the year versus being quarterly or beginning the year. It was also important for me to have exposure to four different clinical experiences that the residency I completed had to maximize experience and exposure to different clinical settings.

**Kelsey:** The residency at Bodycentral was actually the only one that I applied for. It was newly accredited and I was weighing my options out of PT school of either taking a job somewhere or doing the residency, ultimately, the residency was the best option because it allowed me to work with athletes, get hours in the training room and on field, and sit for my SCS at the end of it.

**Matthew:** Primarily the degree of variability of the program. Since the residency was orthopedic, I wanted to make sure the program was not married to a single school of thought within physical therapy. Some residencies I had interviewed with were very heavy on the Sahrman Model or the McKenzie model and had a very narrowed view of treating patients only within that model. However, A. T. Still University exposed us to all types of clinicians from each of those schools of thought. We had the opportunity to learn the differences and similarities between Maitland, Kaltenborn, Cyriax, Parrish etc. models and then we were taught how to treat our patient's with consideration of each of those models in mind. This kept us open minded in our treatment approach and allowed us to have a larger view of the patient's clinician.

### **What unique opportunities did you have during your residency?**

**Kirsten:** To name a few, all HonorHealth residents are registered for the Clinical Instructor credentialing course in preparation to take on a physical therapy student (ranging from 1st-3rd years) for 6-10 week clinicals. In addition, residents have the option to work as a teaching assistant at local physical therapy programs if they choose to do so. We also had unique opportunities including shadowing an orofacial pain management specialist for a day and attending a renowned pain science continuing education course.

**Hannah:** I was able to attend USC NeuroConsortium in California. This was an onsite educational program where we went for 2 full weekends to have didactic and hands on learning experiences with professors from all over the country. We also had the opportunity to teach in the classroom setting with students at NAU assisting with lecture, labs and practicals.

**Julie:** My residency program offered many opportunities to get involved within this establishment and community. On campus, I was given the chance to attend medical grand rounds, transplant selection rounds, LVAD rounds and trainings, and viewed surgeries. Off campus, I aided in laboratory classes for a DPT program locally, taught community-based fall prevention classes to geriatric attendees, and aided in a community-based exercise class for people with Parkinson's Disease. I had the opportunity to attend a state and national conference with associated networking events. I found that my residency director was very supportive of all opportunities that arose throughout the residency to take advantage of progressing my professionalism.

**Kelsey:** Some unique opportunities that I enjoyed during residency was probably the community events we would do. I was able to get my name out there working with some baseball and soccer clubs and see quite a few kids from that.

**Matthew:** A.T. Still's Orthopedic Residency was very heavy on continuing education. There are several expert level clinicians in the Phoenix area and we were able to meet all of them during the residency. Many weekend intensive courses were offered during the residency where we met some of the top physical therapists from around the world. On top of that the residency supplied us with coursework to acquire a dry needling certification. Basically anything I wanted to do on top of my education, the director of the program was willing to help get me access to. At one point I became more interested in physical therapy for temporomandibular dysfunction and the director of the program put me in contact with a craniofacial physical therapist who brought me to a large hospital setting to help her evaluate children and teenagers born with craniofacial dysfunctions. We then had to report our findings to a board of plastic surgeons, dentists, child psychologists, geneticists, etc to discuss the interprofessional plan of care for those children. Opportunities such as that were available to me during the residency so long as I just brought up my interests to the program director.

## **What did you enjoy the most about residency?**

**Kirsten:** I both enjoyed and gained the most from the mentorship hours that were integrated into our schedules as residents. The variety of skill sets that each mentor provided allowed for a one-of-a-kind, enriching experience that had a substantial impact on the way that I continue to practice as a therapist. These master clinicians have set the tone for the evidence-based clinical practice that continues to keep me hungry as a Board Certified Orthopaedic Specialist in providing the best care possible to my patients.

**Hannah:** The ability to collaborate and lean on my fellow residents in my cohort. They have stayed good friends and allow me someone to call on to bounce ideas off of and gain different clinical perspectives.

**Julie:** I enjoyed the mentoring hours in variable settings the most. Having such knowledgeable mentors by my side for 4 hours per week really meant the difference in experience and learning for me as much of the residency year was a new experience.

**Kelsey:** Structured mentoring hours was probably what I enjoyed most.

**Matthew:** I would say the flexibility of the program. Once accepted into the program I was given a long list of potential mentors in or near phoenix Arizona that I could choose as my residency mentor. After finding a mentor to work with, I had weekly mentoring sessions, weekly residency webinars, weekly in-person skills sessions on Fridays after work, and I also had several weekend intensive courses to attend. If I couldn't attend some of these, the residency program supplied additional coursework I could do as remediation (so I did not miss out on learning opportunities). Had covid-19 taken place during my residency, the program would have adapted extremely well to the conditions because of how well it could just mold itself to unexpected conditions without me needing to stay in the program longer than necessary.

## **What was the most challenging aspect of residency?**

**Kirsten:** Personally, I found the most challenging aspect of the residency was developing my skills as a resident in coordination with providing guidance to a physical therapy student as a Clinical Instructor. This being said, I also feel I, myself grew tremendously as a clinician during my 3rd year student's 10 week clinical. Providing instruction and mentorship to a student while simultaneously engaging in residency mentorship hours with my mentors proved to be a uniquely humbling and gratifying experience that continues to shape how I practice today.

**Hannah:** The most challenging was managing a full time working case load while also managing education, projects, and live practical.

**Julie:** Initially it was challenging to balance the change from being a student to now a licensed physical therapist that still has a mentor. I found the balance of work and educational materials challenging at time. The educational portion was challenging in different periods of the year with assessments and projects with a high expectation of materials produced.

**Kelsey:** The most challenging aspect of this specific residency was that it was very new, and I struggled with differing opinions on how things should be structured for the residents. The other challenging part of this residency for me personally was that I learned my core values did not exactly align with the company, so I really struggled to complete it from that aspect.

**Matthew:** Once every 2 weeks a faculty member within the residency or physical therapy program with A.T. Still University would come to the clinic I worked in and they would sit in on my treatment sessions and patient evaluations for most of the day. At the end of the day the faculty member/professor would discuss with me everything I need to improve upon as well as everything I did well. This was one of the best learning experiences as well as one of the most intense moments in my program. I needed to defend each treatment I performed with best evidence and also be willing to accept any criticism on my part.

### **What are some qualities that make someone successful in a residency?**

**Kirsten:** Two qualities that I believe to be vital in making one successful in a residency are humility and passion. By accepting your role as a resident, you are agreeing to train with an open mind and a willingness to learn from expert therapists who are willing to share their own knowledge and experiences. Also, you are taking advantage of an opportunity to further ignite your passion for the profession and area of interest you are specializing in to improve the human experience.

**Hannah:** Need to be self-driven, passionate for the neuro population, and willing to be pushed outside of their comfort zone.

**Julie:** I found it very important to be a self-starter and driven toward goals to maintain motivation throughout the year. I also feel like a person should be inquisitive and outspoken with educational needs to get the most of the experience while all the resources are in place.

**Kelsey:** I think some qualities that make someone successful in a residency is the willingness to learn things outside of your philosophy, to work hard and to have a clear goal in mind on why you are completing it/what is it going to do for your career long term.

**Matthew:** One huge quality makes you successful in residency and that is the ability to accept constructive criticism. In my opinion, there have been two types of residents: those who want to become better clinicians, and those who want letters after their name. A good residency helps separate those two people out. Jeff Moore is a physical therapist who came to speak to our residency and Jeff said “we want to be the clinician our patient deserves.” That is what this is all about. You join a residency because you know that you have deficits. The residency will expose these deficits and provide you with the tools to turn them into strengths. The thing to remember is that you will be exposed to your own weaknesses as a clinician, and being able to handle constructive criticism is one of the qualities necessary to move forward from it.

### **Want additional information on residency programs?**

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