I want to start my career as a...  
**Respiratory Therapist**

**What will I do?**  
Respiratory Therapists care for patients who have trouble with their lungs and breathing. The patients range from premature infants with undeveloped lungs to elderly patients who have diseased lungs.

**What are the important facts?**

**Job Growth**
There will always be a need for Respiratory Therapists due to the constant need of respiratory care in patients.

In California, Respiratory Therapists are projected to have 600 new job openings, meaning there is a 17% employment increase between 2014 and 2024 in the state-- this level of employment increase means there will be plenty of new job openings in the field. 600 new job openings might not seem like a lot, but because Respiratory Therapy is so specialized this is a large number of new jobs.

**Wage/Salary**
Average hourly wage in San Jose begins at $44.52, with an annual salary of $92,610. In Silicon Valley, the living wage for a single person is $16.00 an hour.

**Required Training**
Respiratory Therapists are required to have 2-3 years of training at a Community College.

The route to get the necessary training to become a Respiratory Therapist is through any Community College that offers the program. In Santa Clara County that College is Foothill College.

**What are typical tasks?**
- Provide emergency care for patients with respiratory failure or complications.
- Provide emergency care such as external cardiac massage and respiration.
- Set up and operate devices such as ventilators and oxygen masks.
- Measure patient’s vital signs, arterial blood gases, or blood chemistry.

**What would make this career a great fit for me?**
- Able to maintain calm during high stress situations.
- Have a passion for working with vulnerable populations, such as premature infants and seniors.
- Able to work on a team of other medical staff.
- Attention to detail is important for this job and being able to document information correctly.

**Where can I get the training I need?**
- Foothill College
I want to start my career as a Respiratory Therapist.

**Step 1**
Learn the skills employers say you need. Begin your education.

**Education & Training:** Respiratory Therapist

**Community College:**
*Individuals can receive training through Foothill College. The Respiratory Therapy program is a 2 year program, meaning it is full-time Monday-Friday. The program includes classroom and clinical hours.*

- Foothill College

**Career Pathways for Respiratory Therapist**

Respiratory Therapists can begin working in a hospital once they complete their 22 month training program through Foothill College. Respiratory Therapists are not required to pass a state board exam before they can begin working. Individuals are required to receive their Associates Degree in Respiratory Therapy, which means on top of the 22 month training program, they also need to complete GE requirements.

Before applying to the program, there are pre-requisite classes that are required. Examples of these classes are Anatomy, Physiology, Microbiology, Medical Terminology and Chemistry. In these classes individuals need at least a C grade, BUT this is a highly competitive field—higher the grades, the higher chances of being accepted.

**Employers:**
- Kaiser Permanente
- O’Conner Hospital
- Santa Clara Medical Center

**Labor Market Information:**
- Average hourly wage in San Jose is $44.52, with an annual salary of $92,610.
What are the Skills Employers look for in Respiratory Therapists?

Employers are looking for someone who:

• Has their Associate's Degree in Respiratory Therapy.
• Has a strong knowledge of human anatomy, physiology, microbiology, and cardio pulmonary resuscitation (CPR). These are the foundational classes and skills individuals need to know while on the job.
• Has strong oral and written communication skills.
• Has patience and able to handle stressful situations.
• Has a passion for working with prenatal and elderly individuals.
• Has strong science and math skills. This is important because respiratory therapists need to know how to calculate the correct dose of a patient's medication.
• Understands how to recognize the needs and concerns of patients.
• Can do some heavy lifting if patients need to be moved from one location to another in the hospital.
• Is able to work over night and sometimes work 10-12 hour shifts in the hospitals.

Employers may also refer to me as:

• Registered Respiratory therapist
• Respiratory Care Practitioner
• Respiratory Technician