



WANDERINGPT

The Travel Therapy Starter Checklist

Congratulations on taking your first step toward becoming a travel therapist — whether it's to see the country, improve your finances, or enjoy the flexibility of time off between contracts, you came to the right place. Let's get started.

LICENSURE • TAX HOME • RECRUITER • THE INTERVIEW • LAND THE JOB

01 Licensure & Credentialing

- ☐ Pass the NPTE.
- ☐ Graduate from school.
- ☐ Apply for licensure in your home state.
- ☐ Apply for your NPI number at <https://nppes.cms.hhs.gov/login>.
- ☐ Create a CAQH account at <https://proview.caqh.org/Login>.
- ☐ Make sure your CPR/BLS is up to date at <https://ahasso.heart.org/login>.

Stay organized

It's a good idea to keep all of these items in one folder. Every new contract will ask for all of this information.

02 Establish a Tax Home

A tax home is your primary place of residence. For a travel therapist, your tax home is extremely important if you want to qualify for tax-free stipends. If you do not have a tax home in place, you do not qualify for tax-free stipends — one of the best perks of being a travel therapist. Here's a checklist to make sure you're covered.

- ☐ Identify your tax home — generally the location of your regular or principal place of business/employment, or, under IRS rules, your primary place of business/employment if you have more than one.
- ☐ Contribute funds to your tax home (rent, utilities).
- ☐ Contribute funds to your assignment housing.
- ☐ Keep documentation showing that you actually maintain and pay for your tax home and short-term housing.
- ☐ Keep records of your work locations and assignment dates.
- ☐ Visit your tax home regularly — a good estimate is spending 30 days out of the year there.
- ☐ Keep your driver's license, voter registration, vehicle registration, mailing address, etc. consistent with your overall circumstances where appropriate.

The “3-factor” rule

The IRS looks at three factors when determining whether you have a tax home: (1) you perform business in your current area and maintain a residence elsewhere; (2) you have living expenses at your residence that you duplicate because your business requires you to be away; and (3) you haven't abandoned the area of your historical place of lodging, family, or economic ties.

The 12-month rule

This is especially important for travel therapists. If you expect to work at the same location for more than one year, that location can become your tax home for purposes of the temporary-work rules — even if you initially intended the assignment to be temporary. Before extending a contract, ask: “If I continue this assignment, could I reasonably expect to be working in this same general area for more than one year?” Don't simply assume that taking another 13-week extension resets the clock.

Not tax advice

Tax-home rules are federal tax rules, and getting tax-free stipends when you don't actually qualify can result in those payments being treated as taxable income. For a first-time traveler — or someone changing their permanent residence — it's worth having a CPA or tax professional who understands travel healthcare compensation review your specific situation. Questions about your own tax home? Visit [traveltax.com](https://www.traveltax.com).

03 Finding a Recruiter

Once you have your licensure and tax home squared away, the next step is finding a travel therapy recruiter — someone who will tell you what jobs are currently out there.

- ☐ Start with 2–3 recruiters from different agencies so you can get the whole spectrum of job opportunities currently out there.
- ☐ Ask a friend who is currently traveling whether they like their recruiter.
- ☐ Try [wanderingpt.com](https://www.wanderingpt.com) → Connect with a Recruiter → fill out your profession, location preference, and setting preference to get in touch with one.
- ☐ Expect your recruiter to set up a phone call to discuss how the job process works, your wants and needs, and the best approach for kickstarting your travel therapy career.

04 The Interview

After your recruiter finds a position you're interested in, they'll ask if you'd like to set up an interview. Here are the questions worth asking to set yourself up for success on assignment.

- ☐ Is the 40 hours guaranteed?
- ☐ What does the ramp-up time look like?
- ☐ What is the patient-to-therapist ratio in the clinic?
- ☐ What specific location would I be working at? Would I be hopping between two clinics?
- ☐ What support staff are available (PTAs, techs, front desk, managers)?
- ☐ Are there any full-time staff members I can ask questions to?
- ☐ What are the productivity expectations?
- ☐ Why is this position being filled?
- ☐ Do I need to work weekends?
- ☐ Are there opportunities to extend the contract?
- ☐ Which EMR system will be used?

These should be enough to get you started. I'd recommend setting your own criteria for these questions — if they're not met, you don't take the job. For me, that looks like:

My personal criteria

- No more than 2 patients/hour
- No less than 45-minute evals
- There needs to be other staff at the facility
- I need the 40 hours guaranteed — most places have this, but I don't want to be sent home due to a low census
- Ramp-up time of at least 1 week. For new grads, I'd ask for 2–3 weeks to ease the transition into the travel world.

05 Land the Job

Congrats on taking your first travel therapy assignment!

For any further questions about starting travel therapy as a new grad, I take 1:1 consultations at wanderingpt.com/book-online to make sure you have the smoothest possible transition from student to travel therapy life.

Follow @WanderingPT for more on making the jump from student to traveler.