What does a chiropractor do?

- Chiropractors, also known as Doctors of Chiropractic Medicine, help patients maintain overall health by emphasizing the inherent power of the body to heal itself without the use of drugs or surgery.
- The emphasis is on the relationship between the body’s structure (primarily the spine) and function as coordinated by the nervous system.
- Chiropractic doctors diagnose and treat patients with health problems associated with the muscular, nervous, and skeletal systems.
- One common technique they employ is hands-on adjustment of imbalances in the patient’s skeletal system which may be causing pain, impairment of function, and lower resistance to disease.
- Chiropractors are holistic in their approach to health and stress many factors with patients including exercise, nutrition, and rest.
- Chiropractors take detailed histories; conduct physical, neurological, and orthopedic examinations; order laboratory tests; and interpret X-rays and other diagnostic images.
- Some chiropractors also use water, light, massage, ultrasound, acupuncture, acupressure, and heat therapy.
- They do not, however, prescribe medications or perform surgery.
- Some chiropractors specialize in orthopedics, neurology, sports injuries, nutrition, rehabilitation, radiology, industrial consulting, family practice, or pediatrics by completing additional training and taking a specialty exam by that chiropractic association.

What prerequisite courses do I need?

- Although chiropractic programs may differ slightly in their requirements, they generally require the minimal requirements listed below.

How do I become a chiropractor?

- To attend one of the accredited chiropractic programs in the United States, you will generally need a bachelor’s degree with any major of your choice and a set of the prerequisite courses (see below).
- Chiropractic school is a 4 year professional school program that follows your undergraduate degree, the degree earned will be a Doctor of Chiropractic (D.C.).

### Prerequisite Course Equivalencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Purdue Equivalent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biology with labs</td>
<td>BIOL 11000/11100 OR BIOL 13100 &amp; BIOL 23100/23200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inorganic Chemistry</td>
<td>CHM 11500/11600 (the full year is recommended but only CHM 11500 required. Must have 12 hours chemistry total)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organic Chemistry</td>
<td>CHM 25500 &amp; 25501 or CHM 25700 &amp; 25701 (often need 6 hours of organic &amp;/or biochemistry)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Biochemistry</td>
<td>CHM 33300 or CHM 53300 or BCHM 56100 or BCHM 30700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>PHYS 22000 &amp; 22100 (often need 6 hours total with at least 1 course in physics or 1 semester of physics with lab &amp; 1 semester of biomechanics, kinesiology, statistics, or exercise physiology)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>PSY 12000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Sciences &amp; Humanities</td>
<td>15 semester hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Composition</td>
<td>ENGL 10600 or 10800, plus an upper level course (generally need 6 semester hours)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recommended courses include</td>
<td>Business management, entrepreneurship, accounting, statistics, interpersonal communications, Spanish, &amp; upper level biology courses such as microbiology, anatomy &amp; physiology, genetics, &amp; nutrition</td>
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</table>

Chiropractic schools have different requirements; the list above is a general guide to course requirements.
How do I become a chiropractor?

- Some chiropractic programs will allow students to enter without a bachelor’s degree as long as they have completed 90 semester hours of undergraduate study, but a bachelor’s degree is recommended.
- An increasing number of state licensing boards, however, are requiring a bachelor’s degree.
- After graduating from a chiropractic school, a national and sometimes a state licensing examination is required.

What is the job outlook?

- According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the job outlook for chiropractors is expected to increase faster than average because of consumer demand for alternative health care.
- Chiropractors emphasize healthy lifestyle so chiropractic care is appealing to many health-conscious people.
- Demand for care depends, at least in part, on the ability to pay. Thus coverage of services by health insurance is critical and many plans now cover such services though the extent of coverage varies.
- Approximately 58 percent of chiropractors are self-employed in a solo practice.
- Others work in group practices, teach, conduct research, or work in hospitals and clinics.
- According to Chiropractic Economics magazine, the average salary in 2012 was $82,500 with a total compensation being $107,000.

What else do I need to do before I apply?

- Shadow a chiropractor to make sure this is the right field for you and that you truly understand what it means to be a Doctor of Chiropractic Medicine.
- Chiropractic schools will also want to see that you could handle a heavy course load while being active in extracurricular activities, providing community service, and gaining chiropractic experience.

How do I apply?

- You apply to most programs through an online application called ChiroCAS.
- Typically you would submit an application about 1 year before you intend to begin your studies (often this would mean the fall of your senior year).
- Some schools, though not all, require an interview.
- Early application is recommended.

Where can I get more information?

- American Chiropractic Association
  http://www.acatoday.org
- Council on Chiropractic Education
  http://www.cce-usa.org
- ChiroCAS
  https://portal.chirocas.org
- Programs in Region
  Palmer College of Chiropractic (Iowa)
  http://www.palmer.edu
  National University of Health Science (Illinois)
  http://www.nuhs.edu

For more information about Chiropractic programs or your interests in the health professions, contact the Center for Pre-Professional Advising, at 765-496-2690 or preprofessional@purdue.edu.

Information for this career guide came from the above websites, www.explorehealthcareers.org and the Bureau of Labor Statistics