Chiropractic Medicine (DC)

Career Description
- 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.
- As holistic healers, they stress many facets of a healthy life including exercise, nutrition, and rest. They do not, however, prescribe medications or perform surgery.
- Chiropractic doctors diagnose and treat patients with health problems associated with the muscular, nervous, and skeletal systems.
- Chiropractors take detailed histories; conduct physical, neurological, and orthopedic examinations; order laboratory tests; and interpret X-rays and other diagnostic images.
- Besides employing hands-on adjustments of imbalances in the patient’s skeletal system, chiropractors may use water, light, massage, ultrasound, and heat therapy as well as acupuncture and acupressure (if specially trained).
- Specialties in orthopedics, neurology, sports injuries, nutrition, rehabilitation, radiology, industrial consulting, family practice, or pediatrics are available by completing additional training and taking a specialty exam by that chiropractic association.

Becoming a Chiropractor
- To attend one of the accredited chiropractic medical programs in the United States, generally a bachelor’s degree in any major is needed (must have completed at least 90 credit hours) along with prerequisite coursework (see below).
- Some state licensing boards require a completed bachelor’s degree for licensure.
- Chiropractic school is a 3-4 year professional school program following an undergraduate degree; the degree earned will be a Doctor of Chiropractic (D.C.).
- Chiropractic students receive a minimum of 4200 hours of classroom, laboratory, and clinical experience during their training.

Preparation
- Observe a chiropractor to make sure this is the right field for you.
- Chiropractic programs do not have a standard set of requirements, although many similarities exist. The initial courses are similar to other professional health care fields.
- Individual programs vary in the courses they require; a broad academic background is encouraged including completion of the following courses with grades of C or better.

Common Prerequisite Courses (pre-reqs set by each chiropractic program but similar to this list)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirements</th>
<th>Recommended</th>
<th>Purdue Equivalents (specific courses may vary by major)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Life Sciences Schools</td>
<td>Biology with labs</td>
<td>BIOL 11000-11100 or BIOL 13100 &amp; BIOL 23100 &amp; 23200 (lab) or BIOL 23000 &amp; upper level biology (including 2 hours of lab) or BIOL 20300-20400 or BIOL 30100-30200</td>
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<tr>
<td>generally require 24</td>
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<tr>
<td>credit hours of life</td>
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<tr>
<td>science including</td>
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<td>biology; general, organic &amp; biochemistry; physics; exercise physiology; nutrition; biomechanics</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Chemistry with</td>
<td>CHM 11500-11600 or CHM 12500-12600 or CHM 12300-12400 or CHM 12901</td>
<td>(recommend taking CHM 11500 credit exam) or CHM 13600</td>
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<tr>
<td>labs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organic Chemistry with</td>
<td>CHM 25500-25600 or CHM 26100-26200 or CHM 26505-26605 or MCMP 20400-20500 or CHM 25700 (with lab and a biochem course)</td>
<td>(often need 6 hours of organic and/or biochemistry)</td>
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<tr>
<td>labs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Biochemistry</td>
<td>BCHM 30700 or 56100 or CHM 33300 or 33900 or 53300 or MCMP 20800</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physics with labs</td>
<td>PHYS 22000-22100 or PHYS 23300-23400 or PHYS 17200-27200 or PHYS 17200 &amp; 24100 &amp; 25200 (lab) or ENGR 16100-16200* (at least 1 semester of physics and biomechanics, kinesiology, or exercise physiology)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Biomechanics, Kinesiology, Exercise Physiology</td>
<td>HK 26100 (need BIOL 20400 or BIOL 30200 as prereq)</td>
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<td>Social Science &amp;</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>PSY 12000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Sciences &amp;</td>
<td>At least 12 credit hours in addition to psychology and English requirements</td>
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<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
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<tr>
<td>English Composition</td>
<td>ENGL 10600 or 10800 or SCLA 10100*; plus an upper level course</td>
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<td>(6 credit hours)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Additional Courses</td>
<td>Business management, entrepreneurship, accounting, statistics, interpersonal communications, Spanish, upper level biology (such as microbiology, anatomy &amp; physiology, genetics), nutrition, biomedical ethics,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>Pre-Med Planning Seminar</td>
<td>BIOL 39600-0 credit 10 week class covering how to apply to medical school and other health professions programs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Ask individual chiropractic schools if they will accept these courses toward requirements.
**Student Organizations:** Pre-Chiropractic Club, Caduceus Club

**Research Programs**

- [Association of Chiropractic Colleges Find a School](http://www.chirocolleges.org/prospective-students/find-a-school/)

**Applying**

- Apply directly to individual schools.
- Some schools, though not all, require an interview.
- Competitive applicants have:
  - Strong academic performance including a grade point average of 3.2 or better
  - Leadership, teamwork, and communication skills
  - Undergraduate research experience is viewed positively but not required
  - Volunteer and shadowing/observation experiences
  - Strong positive letters of recommendation (mostly from faculty and chiropractors)
- Early application is recommended. Chiropractic programs often have more than one start date each year.

**Fee Assistance**

- Visit specific school websites to learn if fee assistance is available.

**Employment Outlook**

- According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the job outlook for chiropractors is expected to increase by 12% through 2026.
- 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. Coverage of services by health insurance is critical and many plans now cover such services.
- 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.
- The Bureau of Labor Statistics states the median salary was $71,410 in 2018 but many chiropractors in private practice make $90,000 or more.

**Programs in the Region**

- [Palmer College of Chiropractic](http://www.palmer.edu) Davenport, IA
- [National University of Health Science](https://www.nuhs.edu/admissions/chiropractic-medicine/) Lombard, IL
- [Logan University](https://www.logan.edu/) Chesterfield, MO

**More Information**

- [Association of Chiropractic Colleges](http://www.chirocolleges.org/)
- [American Chiropractic Association](https://www.acatoday.org/)
- [Council on Chiropractic Education](http://www.cce-usa.org/)

**Other Fields to Consider**

- Podiatry
- Physical Therapy
- Naturopathic Medicine

Information for this career guide came from the above websites, [Explore Health Careers](https://explorehealthcareers.org/field/chiropractic-medicine/) and the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](http://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/chiropractors.htm)