

- 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 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.

Education & Licensure

- 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 typically with grades of C or better.

Common Prerequisite Courses (required courses determined by each chiropractic program but similar to this list)

Requirements	Recommended	Purdue Equivalents (specific courses may vary by major)
Life Sciences Schools generally require 24 credit hours of life science including biology; general, organic & biochemistry; physics; exercise physiology; nutrition; biomechanics	Biology with labs	BIOL 11000-11100 or BIOL 13100 & BIOL 23100 & 23200 (lab) or BIOL 23000 & upper level biology (including 2 hours of lab) or BIOL 20300-20400 (BIOL 30100-30200)
	General Chemistry with labs	CHM 11500-11600 or CHM 12500-12600 or CHM 12300-12400 or CHM 12901 (recommend taking CHM 11500 credit exam) or CHM 13600
	Organic Chemistry with labs	CHM 25500-25600 or CHM 26100-26200 or CHM 26505-26605 or MCMP 20400-20500 or CHM 25700 (with lab and a biochem course) (often need 6 hours of organic and/or biochemistry)
	Biochemistry	BCHM 30700 or 56100 or CHM 33900 or CHM 43300 or MCMP 20800 (CHM 33300, CHM 53300)
	Physics with labs	PHYS 22000-22100 or PHYS 23300-23400 or PHYS 17200-27200 or PHYS 17200 & 24100 & 25200 (lab) or ENGR 16100-16200* (at least 1 semester of physics and biomechanics, kinesiology, or exercise physiology)
	Biomechanics, Kinesiology, Exercise Physiology	HK 26100 (need BIOL 20400 or BIOL 30200 as prereq)
Social Science & Humanities	Psychology	PSY 12000
	Social Sciences & Humanities	At least 12 credit hours in addition to psychology and English requirements
	English Composition (6 credit hours)	ENGL 10600 or 10800 or SCLA 10100*; plus an upper level course
Additional Courses		Business management, entrepreneurship, accounting, statistics, interpersonal communications, Spanish, upper level biology (such as microbiology, anatomy & physiology, genetics), nutrition, biomedical ethics,
Optional	Pre-Med Planning Seminar	BIOL 39600-0 credit 10 week class covering how to apply to medical school and other health professions programs
*Ask individual chiropractic schools if they will accept these courses toward requirements. Courses no longer offered.		

Student Organizations: Caduceus Club

Program Information

- [Association of Chiropractic Colleges Find a School](https://www.chirocolleges.org/students/study-chiropractic/) <https://www.chirocolleges.org/students/study-chiropractic/>

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. You will have the most flexibility by applying early.

Fee Assistance

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

Employment Outlook

- According to the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/chiropractors.htm), the job outlook for chiropractors is expected to increase by 10% through 2031. <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/chiropractors.htm>
- 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 \$75,000 in 2021 but many chiropractors in private practice make over \$100,000. In a survey by [Glassdoor](https://www.glassdoor.com/Salaries/chiropractic-physician-salary-SRCH_K00,22.htm), the average salary was \$155,574. https://www.glassdoor.com/Salaries/chiropractic-physician-salary-SRCH_K00,22.htm.

Diversity Matters

The chiropractic profession needs professionals who look just like you, and who share your life experiences. Race or ethnicity, LGBTQ+ identity, disability, age, geographic region, socioeconomic status, social and cultural identity, and nationality all add to a richer experience for all students in the chiropractic classroom, contribute to the chiropractic profession, and ultimately lead to better outcomes for patients.

Programs in the Region

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

More Information

- [Association of Chiropractic Colleges](https://www.chirocolleges.org/) (ACC) <https://www.chirocolleges.org/>
- [American Chiropractic Association](https://www.acatoday.org/) (ACA) <https://www.acatoday.org/>
- [Council on Chiropractic Education](https://www.cce-usa.org/) (CCE) <https://www.cce-usa.org/>

Other Fields to Consider

Podiatry · Physical Therapy · Naturopathic Medicine

Preparing for your Giant Leap

purdue.edu/preprofessional