

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, acupuncture, acupressure, and heat therapy.
- 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 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 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.
- 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)

Requirements	Recommended	Purdue Equivalents (specific courses may vary by major)
Life Sciences <i>Schools generally require 24 credit hours of life science including biology; general, organic & biochemistry; physics; exercise physiology; nutrition; biomechanics</i>	Biology with labs	BIOL 11000-11100 or BIOL 13100 & BIOL 23100 & 23200 (lab) or BIOL 20300-20400
	Inorganic Chemistry with labs	CHM 11500-11600 or 12500-12600 or 12300-12400 or 12901
	Organic Chemistry with labs	CHM 25500-25600 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 33300 or 33900 or 53300 or MCMP 20800
	Physics with labs	PHYS 22000-22100 or at least 1 semester of physics and biomechanics, kinesiology, or exercise physiology
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, plus an upper level course
Recommended courses include		Business management, entrepreneurship, accounting, statistics, interpersonal communications, Spanish, & upper level biology courses such as microbiology, anatomy & physiology, genetics, & nutrition
Optional	Pre-Med Planning Seminar	BIOL 39600-0 credit 10 week class covering how to apply to medical school and other health professions programs

Student Organization: Pre-Chiropractic Club, Caduceus Club

Research Programs

- [Association of Chiropractic Colleges Find a School](http://www.chirocolleges.org/prospective-students/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 \$68,640 in 2017 but many chiropractors in private practice make around \$90,000.

Programs in the Region

- [Palmer College of Chiropractic](http://www.palmer.edu) Davenport, IA <http://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](http://www.logan.edu/) Chesterfield, MO <http://www.logan.edu/>

More Information

- [Association of Chiropractic Colleges](http://www.chirocolleges.org/) <http://www.chirocolleges.org/>
- [American Chiropractic Association](http://www.acatoday.org/) <http://www.acatoday.org/>
- [Council on Chiropractic Education](http://www.cce-usa.org/) <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/) <https://explorehealthcareers.org/field/chiropractic-medicine/> and the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](http://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/chiropractors.htm) <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/chiropractors.htm>

