

Acupuncturist

A 3-year diploma, a national exam, and a practice you build one patient at a time. Most acupuncturists are self-employed and many work part time.

TYPICAL PAY

\$33,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$33k to \$80k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

2 to 4 years

after high school

DEMAND

Moderate

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

Private clinics, physiotherapy and wellness clinics, spas, home offices

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grade 12
 Biology and English. Most programs ask for a Grade 12 diploma, some ask for a year or two of college or university first.
- 2 Acupuncture or TCM (traditional Chinese medicine) diploma** About 3 years
 About 3 years full time. Anatomy, physiology, TCM theory, point location, needling, safety, and a supervised student clinic. MacEwan in Edmonton is the only public program in Alberta. Ontario and BC have mostly private schools.
- 3 Pan-Canadian exams** After graduation
 A written exam and a practical clinical exam shared by the regulated provinces. Ontario adds a safety and jurisprudence (law) test.
- 4 Register with your province** A few months
 In Ontario that is the College of Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners and Acupuncturists of Ontario. Then buy insurance and find a clinic.

Pros and cons

- + Short, affordable training compared with other regulated health jobs
- + Calm, hands-on work with grateful patients
- + Set your own hours and be your own boss
- Half of acupuncturists earn very little; income depends on a full book
- No salary, pension or paid time off
- You compete with physiotherapists and chiropractors who also needle

Optional boosts

TCM (traditional Chinese medicine) practitioner. Doctor of TCM (traditional Chinese medicine). Cupping, moxibustion, electro-acupuncture. A second health credential.

Good to know

Thinner than a sewing needle

Acupuncture needles are solid, not hollow, and far thinner than the needles used for injections. Every needle in Canada is sterile and single-use. Most people feel a tap and then nothing.

The median is the floor

Job Bank lists the same number, \$32,867, as both the low and the median wage for acupuncturists. That is the lowest figure the census reports, which tells you how many in the field work part time or are st...

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Acupuncturist, wages (updated Nov 2025)
 College of Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners and Acupuncturists of Ontario
 College of Acupuncturists of Alberta
 MacEwan University: Acupuncture diploma

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in Canadian dollars, based on Government of Canada Job Bank wage data and published salary grids. They vary by province, employer and experience. Tuition is for domestic students. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/ca/careers/acupuncturist>



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