

Chiropractor

Treat back, neck and joint pain with your hands. Four years of doctoral school, then usually your own clinic.

TYPICAL PAY

\$79,200

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$43k to \$146k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

7 to 8 years

after high school

DEMAND

Good

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

Solo clinics, group practices, sports teams, some hospitals

How you get there

- 1 High school diploma** Grade 12
 Biology, chemistry, physics and anatomy if your school offers it.
- 2 Undergraduate science credits** 3 to 4 years
 Chiropractic colleges require a minimum block of college credit heavy in biology, chemistry and physics. Most applicants now arrive with a full bachelor's degree.
- 3 Doctor of Chiropractic program** About 4 years
 About four years, usually run in trimesters so there is no long summer off. Anatomy, diagnosis, imaging, then a year in the teaching clinic on real patients.
- 4 National board exams** Spread over the degree
 The National Board of Chiropractic Examiners runs Parts 1, 2, 3 and 4 plus a physiotherapy exam. You take them at set points during and after the doctorate.
- 5 State license** A few months
 Apply to the board in the state you want to practice in. Some states add a law exam of their own.

Pros and cons

- + You own your schedule once you own the clinic
- + Patients often feel better the same day, which is rare in health care
- + No hospital shift work, nights or on-call
- Expensive private school and heavy student debt
- Income depends on marketing, not just skill
- Hands, wrists and lower back take a beating over a career

Optional boosts

Sports chiropractic. Pediatric and pregnancy care. Rehabilitation and exercise. Radiology.

Good to know

It started in a single office in Iowa

Daniel David Palmer performed the first chiropractic adjustment in Davenport, Iowa in 1895. The school he founded there, Palmer College of Chiropractic, is still running on the same street more than 125 year...

The whole profession trains at under 20 schools

The Council on Chiropractic Education accredits fewer than 20 chiropractic programs in the United States. Compare that with well over 200 medical and osteopathic schools. If you want this career, e...

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Chiropractors (29-1011.00)
 Council on Chiropractic Education: accredited programs
 National Board of Chiropractic Examiners
 Palmer College of Chiropractic

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in United States dollars, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics wage data and published pay scales. They vary by state, employer and experience. Tuition is for in-state students at public schools unless the card says otherwise. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/us/careers/chiropractor>



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