

Podiatrist

A doctor of the foot and ankle. Own doctorate, own schools, own licensing exam, and only eleven colleges in the country.

TYPICAL PAY

\$160,300

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$66k to \$310k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

11 to 12 years

after high school

DEMAND

Limited

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

Private foot and ankle clinics, hospitals, veterans hospitals, surg...

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
 Biology, chemistry, physics and math. Nothing decides this now, but weak science makes the pre-medical courses brutal.
- 2 Bachelor's degree** 4 years
 At least three years of basic science courses are required, and nearly everybody finishes the full four-year degree. Most colleges ask for the MCAT (Medical College Admission Test), the same test medical school applicants take.
- 3 Podiatry school** 4 years
 A four-year curriculum ending in a DPM (Doctor of Podiatric Medicine). Two years of classroom science alongside medical students in many schools, then two years of clinical rotations.
- 4 Residency** 3 years
 A three-year hospital residency is mandatory. It covers foot and ankle surgery, wound care, trauma and general medicine.
- 5 Licensing** Spread across training
 Pass all three parts of the national licensing examination, then apply to the podiatry board in the state where you want to work.

Pros and cons

- + You operate, but you sleep at night
- + Six figures and a clear route to owning your own clinic
- + Easier admission than medical school for a doctorate-level job
- Eleven years and often \$200,000 of debt
- Only eleven colleges, so you will almost certainly move
- The field grows slowly, so location matters more than in most medicine

Good to know

A different doctorate entirely

Podiatrists hold a DPM (Doctor of Podiatric Medicine), not an MD (Doctor of Medicine). Separate colleges, separate national exam, separate state board. They still prescribe, order imaging and operate,...

Eleven schools for a whole country

The American Association of Colleges of Podiatric Medicine lists eleven accredited colleges of podiatric medicine in the United States. Compare that with well over 150 medical schools. Applying here mea...

Optional boosts

Foot and ankle surgery. Diabetic limb salvage. Sports medicine. Pediatric podiatry.

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Podiatrists, wages and tasks
 American Association of Colleges of Podiatric Medicine
 National Board of Podiatric Medical Examiners
 American Podiatric Medical Licensing Examination

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/podiatrist>



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