

PODIATRIST

Please Note: BYU has Podiatry advisement is for students that are interested in becoming Doctors of Podiatric Medicine (DPM): <https://ppa.byu.edu/podiatry>.

Podiatrists are healthcare professionals who have been trained to diagnose and treat abnormal conditions of the feet and lower limbs. They can also treat and alleviate day-to-day foot problems, including: toenail problems, such as thickened toenails, fungal nail infections or ingrown toenails, corns and calluses. Podiatrists can also help with more complex foot problems, including preventing, diagnosing and treating injuries related to sports and exercise.³

JOB REQUIREMENTS

What is the exact job title?

- Podiatrist
- Chiropracist
- Foot and Ankle Surgeon

How do I become one?

- Complete a Bachelor's degree with courses in the sciences.⁴
- Complete a Doctor of Podiatric Medicine (DPM) program and podiatric medicine residency (usually 2-4 years).⁴
 - There are 9 accredited podiatry colleges in the U.S.⁴
- Pass a state licensure exam or certification exam from a national organization (e.g. American Board of Podiatric Orthopedics and Primary Podiatric Medicine).⁴
- Meet continuing education requirements.⁴

What qualities do I need?

- Compassion: Since podiatrists provide care for patients who may be in pain, they must treat patients with compassion and understanding.¹
- Critical-thinking skills: Podiatrists must have a sharp, analytical mind to correctly diagnose a patient and determine the best course of treatment.¹
- Detail oriented: To provide safe, effective healthcare, a podiatrist should be detail oriented. For example, a podiatrist must pay attention to a patient's medical history as well as current conditions when diagnosing a problem.¹
- Interpersonal skills: Because podiatrists spend much of their time interacting with patients, they should listen well and communicate effectively. For example, they should be able to tell a patient who is slated to undergo surgery what to expect and calm his or her fears.¹

TYPICAL WORK DAY

What do they do?

- Podiatrists provide medical and surgical care for people with foot, ankle, and lower leg problems. They diagnose illnesses, treat injuries, and perform surgery involving the lower extremities.¹
- Assess the condition of a patient's feet, ankles, or lower legs by reviewing the patient's medical history, listening to his or her concerns, and performing a physical examination.¹

1<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/podiatrists.htm>

2<https://www.payscale.com/research/US/Job=Podiatrist/Salary>

3<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/foot-problems-and-the-podiatrist/>

4https://learn.org/articles/Podiatrist_Education_Requirements_Frequently_Asked_Questions.html

- Diagnose foot, ankle, and lower leg problems through physical exams, x rays, medical laboratory tests, and other methods.¹
- Provide treatment for foot, ankle, and lower leg ailments, such as prescribing special shoe inserts (orthotics) to improve a patient's mobility.¹
- Perform foot and ankle surgeries, such as removing bone spurs, fracture repairs, and correcting other foot and ankle deformities.¹
- Advise and instruct patients on foot and ankle care and on general wellness techniques
- Prescribe medications.¹
- Coordinate patient care with other physicians.¹
- Refer patients to other physicians or specialists if they detect larger health problems, such as diabetes or vascular disease.¹
- Conduct research, read journals, and attend conferences to keep up with advances in podiatric medicine and surgery.¹

Where do they normally work?

- Most podiatrists work in offices of podiatry, either on their own or with other podiatrists. Some work in group practices with other physicians or specialists. Others work in private and public hospitals, in outpatient care centers, or for the government.¹

What hours do they work?

- Most podiatrists work full time. Podiatrists' offices may be open in the evenings or on weekends to accommodate patients. Self-employed podiatrists or those who own their practice may set their own hours. In hospitals, podiatrists may have to work occasional nights or weekends, or may be on call.¹

BENEFITS

What is a typical salary in this field?

- BLS: In May, 2018 median pay was \$62.28/hour or \$129,550/year.¹
- Payscale: \$126,883/year.²

Does this job come with any benefits? (vision, dental, 401k, PTO, etc.)

- Medical: 74%²
- Vision: 38%²
- Dental: 47%²
- None: 26%²

GROWTH

What is the projected job growth?

- Between 2018 - 2028, job growth is projected to be 6%.¹

Last Updated: October 2019

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