

# Health and wellness job market to surge in coming years

*Chiropractic, acupuncture and massage therapy see especially high growth*



Are you looking for a fulfilling career that offers the opportunity to do well by doing good?

The health and wellness field is booming with meaningful jobs with good pay, flexible schedules and a career that gives you the daily satisfaction of knowing you're helping others feel their best.

## Healthy jobs, healthy growth

The U.S. Department of Labor projects [healthcare employment to grow by 18 percent](#) from 2016 to 2026, much faster than the average for all occupations, adding about 2.4 million new jobs. Plus, [9 of the top 10 jobs](#) on U.S. News & World Report's list of "The 100 Best Jobs" are focused on health and wellness.

As the population ages and healthcare costs increase, complementary and integrative forms of medicine are [surging in popularity](#). In addition, many patients prefer natural and integrative care to surgery and prescription drugs--they see value in treatment that considers the whole person.

Let's look at three health and wellness careers that are projected to be in particularly high demand for the next eight years.

**"Healthcare occupations are projected to add more jobs than any of the other occupational groups."**

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## 1. Chiropractor

### Overview

Millions of Americans are discovering that simple and regular spinal adjustments can dramatically improve their comfort and quality of life. Members of the aging Baby-Boom generation in particular are living longer, more active lives. As many start to develop neuromusculoskeletal and joint problems, they are turning to chiropractors for relief.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), [60 percent of chiropractic patients](#) have health plans that cover treatments, and more people are insured now than ever. That means referrals. Lots of them. Which helps to explain why chiropractors have [one of the lowest unemployment rates in the nation](#) at a scant 0.8 percent.

### Job market outlook

Chiropractors: [12% growth](#)  
 National average, all jobs 7% growth  
 (U.S. Department of Labor)

### Salary

Median: [\\$68,520](#)  
 Top 10%: [\\$141,030](#)  
 (U.S. Department of Labor)

### By the numbers

Four in five people experience low back pain  
 U.S. chiropractors receive 190 million patient visits every year  
 More than 40 percent of all chiropractors own their own practices  
 (Association of Chiropractic Colleges)



*"I ask my patients, 'Do you want to be healthy, or just not sick? Do you want to feel good, or just not bad?' It's leading toward the positive, then you guide them step by step."*

Dr. Juneau Robbins, graduate and owner of Cultural Chiropractic

## 2. Acupuncturist

### Overview

It's amazing to think that a 5,000-year-old practice is the fastest-growing field in medicine (World Health Organization). But a growing body of research shows that Chinese medicine helps alleviate common ailments such as migraines, allergies, arthritis, asthma, digestive disorders, insomnia, respiratory problems, various forms of pain, even infertility--without expensive artificial drugs or side effects.

Acupuncturists instead rely on natural remedies such as plants, minerals and human touch, believing the key to freeing patients from disease is *harmonizing* with nature rather than conquering it.

### Job Market Outlook

Acupuncturists: [10-14% growth](#)  
 National average, all jobs 7% growth  
 (U.S. Department of Labor)

### Salary

Median: [\\$74,530](#)  
 Top 10%: \$135,950  
 (U.S. Department of Labor)

### By the numbers

Acupuncture is shown to help alleviate 128 common ailments (WHO)  
 Acupuncturists typically charge between \$65 and \$120 per session (The New York Times)  
 The use of acupuncture among U.S. adults rose 36% from 2002 to 2012 (CDC)



*"When people see what a simple herbal formula can do and they get relief after years of other treatments, it really validates what we do."*

Chris Volesky, graduate and practitioner at Northeast Internal and Integrative Medicine

## 3. Massage Therapist

### Overview

The best part of working in this fast-growing flexible field has to be the variety. Practitioners can learn more than 80 different types of massage treatments such as deep-tissue, acupressure, reflexology, orthopedic, Swedish and shiatsu. There's a massage art to ease anyone's pain, from athletes to the elderly, pregnant women to cancer patients, and manual laborers to desk jockeys.

Sure, massage relieves the stress we carry in our shoulders, but it's also commonly used to alleviate osteoarthritis, post-operative pain, carpal tunnel, high blood pressure, headaches, fibromyalgia, immune deficiencies and alcohol withdrawal. Keep in mind, many of those spas and fitness centers you see popping up on every street corner are looking for good massage therapists--the same goes for hospitals, retirement homes, sports teams, massage franchises, hotels, and cruise ships. Or, you can be your own boss!

### Job market outlook

Acupuncturists: [26% growth](#)  
 National average, all jobs 7% growth  
 (U.S. Department of Labor)

### Salary

Median: [\\$39,860](#)  
 Top 10%: [\\$74,870](#)  
 (U.S. Department of Labor)

### By the numbers

39.1 million U.S. adults receive massage services every year (American Massage Therapy Association)  
 Massage therapists charge an average of \$68 for a one-hour session (American Massage Therapy Association)  
 Massage therapy was a \$12.1 billion industry in the U.S. in 2015 (IBIS World Industry Report)



*"Clients will ask me how I knew that it hurt there. It's the anatomical knowledge that I acquired. There is a science to it, not just a feeling."*

Kelli Quist, graduate and former Minnesota Twins massage therapist

## Other growing healthcare fields

### Dentist

Median salary: \$159,770  
 Top 10%: \$208,000  
 Projected growth: 19%

### Registered nurse

Median salary: \$68,450  
 Top 10%: \$102,990  
 Projected growth: 15%

### Physician's assistant

Median salary: \$101,480  
 Top 10%: \$142,210  
 Projected growth: 37%

### Physical therapist

Median salary: \$85,400  
 Top 10%: \$122,130  
 Projected growth: 28%

### Medical lab technician

Median salary: \$50,930  
 Top 10%: \$61,720  
 Projected growth: 13%

### Nutritionists and dieticians

Median salary: \$58,920  
 Top 10%: \$82,410  
 Projected growth: 15%

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