

Podiatrists

SOC: 29-1081 • Career Profile Report

■ Key Facts

\$152,800 Median Salary	9,700 Employment	+2.0% Growth Rate
-----------------------------------	----------------------------	-----------------------------

■ Requirements & Salary Range

Education: Doctoral

■ Automation Risk Assessment

Low Risk - 8.0% probability of being automated in the next 10-20 years.
This job is relatively safe from automation due to its creative, social, or complex problem-solving requirements.

■ Work-Life Balance

6.5/10 - Good work-life balance

■ Personality Fit (RIASEC)

Higher scores indicate better personality fit for this career type.

Realistic	5.4/10	Investigative	8.6/10
Artistic	4.8/10	Social	9.0/10
Enterprising	5.4/10	Conventional	6.2/10

■ Top Skills Required

Communication skills, Compassion, Critical-thinking skills, Detail oriented, Interpersonal skills

✓ Strengths

- High Demand
- Flexible Work
- Continuous Learning

■ Challenges

- Burnout Risk
- Rapid Technological Change

■ What They Do

Podiatrists are medical specialists who diagnose, treat, and help prevent **conditions affecting the feet, ankles, and lower extremities**. They care for patients of all ages, addressing issues that range from common foot pain and sports injuries to complex conditions related to diabetes, circulation, and nerve disorders. Their work improves mobility, reduces pain, and helps patients maintain independence and quality of life.

This career is well suited for individuals who want a focused medical specialty that combines hands-on care, long-term patient relationships, and meaningful impact on daily function.

What Do Podiatrists Do?

Podiatrists provide comprehensive medical and surgical care for foot and ankle conditions. Their responsibilities blend clinical evaluation, treatment, and patient education.

Common responsibilities include:

- Examining feet and lower limbs to diagnose conditions
- Treating injuries, infections, and deformities
- Managing chronic conditions such as diabetes-related foot problems
- Prescribing medications, orthotics, or physical therapy
- Performing in-office procedures or surgery when needed
- Educating patients on foot care, injury prevention, and mobility
- Maintaining detailed medical records and treatment plans

Areas of Specialization

Many podiatrists focus on specific patient populations or conditions:

- Sports Podiatry: Treat athletic injuries and performance-related foot issues.
- Diabetic Foot Care: Prevent and manage ulcers, infections, and complications.
- Pediatric Podiatry: Address congenital or developmental foot conditions in children.
- Geriatric Podiatry: Support mobility and foot health in older adults.
- Surgical Podiatry: Perform corrective and reconstructive foot and ankle surgery.
- Orthopedic and Biomechanics Focus: Treat alignment, gait, and structural issues.

Skills and Abilities Needed

Podiatrists combine medical knowledge with precision and patient-centered care.

Core Professional Skills

Personal Qualities That Matter

Education and Licensure Pathway

Becoming a podiatrist requires extensive medical education and training:

- Bachelor's Degree: Pre-med or science-focused undergraduate education
- Doctor of Podiatric Medicine (DPM): Four-year podiatric medical program
- Residency Training: Multi-year supervised clinical and surgical training
- State Licensure: Required to practice
- Board Certification (optional but common): Specialty certification through professional boards
- Continuing Education: Ongoing learning to maintain licensure and skills

Where Do Podiatrists Work?

Podiatrists practice in a variety of healthcare settings:

- Private or Group Medical Practices
- Hospitals and Surgical Centers
- Orthopedic or Multispecialty Clinics
- Sports Medicine Facilities
- Long-Term Care and Rehabilitation Centers
- Academic or Research Institutions

Work environments often combine office visits with clinical or surgical care.

How Much Do Podiatrists Earn?

Earnings vary based on experience, specialization, and practice setting:

- Early-Career Podiatrists: Typically earn strong professional salaries
- Experienced or Surgical Podiatrists: Often earn higher pay with specialization
- Practice Owners or Partners: Income may increase with business ownership

Compensation can also include bonuses, profit-sharing, or partnership arrangements.

Is This Career Difficult?

Podiatry is academically and clinically demanding. Training includes rigorous medical education and hands-on surgical experience. The challenge lies in mastering complex anatomy, making precise clinical decisions, and managing long-term patient conditions—balanced by the reward of significantly improving mobility and comfort.

Who Should Consider Becoming a Podiatrist?

This career may be a strong fit if you:

- Want a medical career with a focused specialty
- Enjoy hands-on clinical and procedural work
- Are interested in musculoskeletal health and mobility
- Value long-term patient relationships
- Prefer a balance of office-based and surgical care

How to Prepare Early

- Take advanced courses in biology, chemistry, and anatomy
- Gain healthcare exposure through volunteering or shadowing
- Develop strong study habits and attention to detail
- Build communication and patient-interaction skills
- Research accredited podiatric medical schools and residency programs

Podiatrists play a vital role in healthcare by protecting mobility, relieving pain, and helping patients stay active and independent—one step at a time.