

Becoming a Physician: Your Path to Success

Step 1: High School

- Focus on science and math courses: biology, chemistry, physics, advanced math
- Participate in extracurricular activities, especially science clubs, volunteering, or healthcare-related opportunities.
- Shadow healthcare professionals to learn about the field.
- Build strong study habits and time management skills.

Step 2: College

- Choose a major that interests you (not all doctors major in biology).
- Complete prerequisite courses: biology, chemistry (organic and inorganic), physics, and math.
- Maintain a strong GPA (ideally 3.5 or higher).
- Join pre-med clubs, volunteer in healthcare settings, and seek leadership opportunities.
- Prepare for and take the MCAT (Medical College Admission Test).
- Apply to medical schools through the American Medical College Application Service (AMCAS) or the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine Application Service (AACOMAS).

Step 3: Medical School

- Complete a 4-year program:
- 2 years of basic sciences (classroom-based learning).
- 2 years of clinical rotations (hands-on experience in hospitals and clinics).
- Take the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) Steps 1 and 2 or Comprehensive Osteopathic Medical Licensing Exam (COMLEX) Levels 1 and 2.

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Step 4: Residency

- Apply for and match into a residency program (3-7 years, depending on the specialty).
- Gain intensive, hands-on training in your chosen field.
- Pass the USMLE Step 3 or COMLEX Level 3 for full licensing privileges.
- Become board certified in your specialty.

Step 5: Practice as a Physician

- Obtain a medical license to practice in your state.
- Continue learning through continuing medical education (CME).
- Explore career opportunities: private practice, hospital work, academic medicine, or research.

Tips for Success

- Stay organized and keep long-term goals in mind.
- Build a support network of mentors, friends, and family.
- Prioritize self-care to avoid burnout.
- Never stop asking questions or exploring your passions in medicine!

Resources

- American Medical College Application Service (AMCAS)
 - <https://www.aamc.org/>
- American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine Application Service
 - <https://www.aacom.org/>

Types of Physicians in the United States

Allopathic Physicians (MD)

- **Degree:** Doctor of Medicine (MD).
- **Focus:** Conventional or "Western" medicine.
- **Training:** Emphasis on diagnosing and treating diseases using medications, surgeries, and other standard therapies.
- **Education Path:**
 - 4 years of medical school.
 - Residency training (3-7 years).
- **Licensure:** Take the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE).
- **Practice Settings:** Hospitals, clinics, private practices, academic institutions, and research.

Osteopathic Physicians (DO)

- **Degree:** Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO).
- **Focus:** Holistic approach to care, emphasizing the relationship between body systems and overall health, in addition to conventional medicine.
- **Unique Feature:** Training in Osteopathic Manipulative Treatment (OMT), a hands-on method to diagnose and treat conditions.
- **Education Path:**
 - 4 years of osteopathic medical school.
 - Residency training (3-7 years).
- **Licensure:** Take the Comprehensive Osteopathic Medical Licensing Examination (COMLEX-USA)
- **Practice Settings:** Same as MDs; can specialize in any field of medicine.

Medical Schools

Medical Schools in Kentucky

- **University of Kentucky College of Medicine**
 - <https://medicine.uky.edu/>
 - Main campus in Lexington
 - Rural campus in Morehead
 - Remote campuses in Bowling Green and Northern Kentucky
- **University of Louisville School of Medicine**
 - <https://louisville.edu/medicine>
 - Main campus in Louisville
 - Rural campus in Madisonville
- **University of Pikeville Kentucky College of Osteopathic Medicine**
 - <https://www.upike.edu/osteopathic-medicine/>
 - Campus in Pikeville

Regional Medical Schools

- **Allopathic Medical Schools**
 - Indiana University School of Medicine
 - Marshall University School of Medicine; Huntington, WV
 - University of Cincinnati College of Medicine
 - Vanderbilt University School of Medicine and Belmont University School of Medicine; Nashville, TN
- **Osteopathic Medical Schools**
 - Lincoln Memorial University- Debusk College of Osteopathic Medicine; campuses in Harrogate, TN and Knoxville, TN
 - Marian University College of Osteopathic Medicine; Indianapolis, IN
 - Xavier University College of Osteopathic Medicine (2027); Cincinnati, OH

Osteopathic Medicine

Osteopathic Philosophy

- **Osteopathic medicine is a distinct branch of medical practice in the United States at focuses on holistic patient care and emphasizes the body's natural ability to heal itself.**
- **Tenets of Osteopathic Medicine**
 - **The body is a unit; the person is a unit of body, mind, and spirit.**
 - **The body is capable of self-regulation, self-healing, and health maintenance.**
 - **Structure and function are reciprocally interrelated.**
 - **Rational treatment is based upon an understanding of the basic principles of body unity, self-regulation, and the interrelationship of structure and function.**

Brief History and Facts

- **Founded in 1874 by Andrew Taylor Still, MD, DO after observing the limitations of 19th century medical treatments**
 - **He conducted an in-depth study of anatomy in order to develop the principles of osteopathic medicine**
- **American School of Osteopathy was established in 1892 in Kirksville, Missouri**
 - **First class included 6 women**
 - **Today, more than half of those entering osteopathic medical schools are women**
- **Today 25% of all medical students are in osteopathic medical schools**
 - **There are 42 colleges of osteopathic medicine with 67 teaching campuses**

Osteopathic Manipulative Treatment

What is OMT?

Osteopathic Manipulative Treatment (OMT) is a hands-on, patient-centered approach to healthcare used by Doctors of Osteopathic Medicine (DOs). It involves using the hands to diagnose, treat, and prevent illness or injury by addressing the body's structure and function.

- **Techniques:** DOs use techniques such as stretching, gentle pressure, and resistance to improve mobility, relieve tension, and enhance circulation.
- **Focus:** The goal is to support the body's natural ability to heal itself by improving alignment and function.
- **Holistic Care:** OMT considers the interconnectedness of the body's systems—musculoskeletal, nervous, and circulatory—ensuring a comprehensive approach to treatment.

Benefits of OMT

OMT is a versatile treatment approach suitable for people of all ages, from infants to seniors, offering benefits such as:

- Reducing pain (e.g., back pain, neck pain, migraines).
- Improving mobility and function in patients with conditions like arthritis or sports injuries.
- Enhancing recovery after surgeries or injuries.
- Helping manage chronic conditions such as asthma or irritable bowel syndrome.

In practice, OMT can be used as a stand-alone treatment or as a complement to other medical treatments, including medication and/or surgery.

OMT exemplifies the osteopathic philosophy of treating the whole person, not just the symptoms, making it a powerful tool for enhancing health and wellness.