

Working in

# • complementary therapy

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studies covering:

- Hands-on treatment
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Health Care

## What is this booklet about?

It is one of over 40 in a series covering many work sectors, subjects and careers. Each book contains a number of case studies showing people in a variety of jobs. All telling you how it is – including the good things and the bad.

Each job shows you what qualifications you will need, what training you can get and how much you might be paid. Also, you will see which route each person took in getting that job.

## How can I find out more?

Look on the website [www.connexions-direct.com/jobs4u](http://www.connexions-direct.com/jobs4u) which contains background information on these featured jobs plus many more. You can talk to your Connexions personal adviser who will help you research more details. Or you can contact one of the organisations listed at the back of the book.

## How can I contact Connexions?

In person through a Connexions personal adviser who might be based at your school, college or reached at your local Connexions centre. By telephone, text, webchat or e-mail through Connexions Direct. Open seven days a week, between 8 a.m. and 2 a.m.

Check out [www.connexions-direct.com](http://www.connexions-direct.com) or look in the telephone book to find your local centre. Or ring 080 800 13219 or text on 07766 413219 for Connexions Direct.

**Other formats of this booklet are available – for details see back cover.**

## Key to salary icons

-  up to £12,000
-  £12,001 to £17,000
-  over £17,000

This represents the typical starting salary for the job featured in the case study.

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## Hands-on treatment

- Acupuncturist
- Aromatherapist
- Osteopath
- Chiropractor
- Reflexologist
- Masseur

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## Consulting and teaching

- Homeopath
- Yoga teacher
- Herbalist (Chinese herbal medicine)
- Naturopath
- Hypnotherapist
- Nutritional therapist

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## Promoting

- Sales assistant (Health shop assistant)
- Receptionist

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## Further information

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## Useful addresses

# So you want to work in complementary therapy?

**Complementary therapists are committed to improving the health and well-being of their clients. As we become more interested in complementary medicine, the demand for therapists increases. Working in conjunction with conventional medicine, they practise medical traditions that are thousands of years old.**

## What are complementary therapies?

Complementary therapies use natural methods to restore the balance of the body and stimulate its own healing powers. Therapists take a holistic approach to the treatment of illness, which means they identify and treat the underlying cause of the illness rather than simply treating the symptoms.

## Who employs complementary therapists?

Most complementary therapists are self-employed, although a small number are employed by organisations like complementary therapy centres, health clubs, gyms and beauty therapy salons. There are around 50,000 complementary therapists practising in the UK.

## What sort of working environment can I expect?

Working environments are clean and comfortable. You could spend most of your working day sitting talking to clients, but if you give Hands-on therapy like massage, teach a discipline like yoga or pilates, or work in a shop, you will be much more active.

## Do I have the right personality?

Most of the people interviewed in this book stress how important it is to be genuinely interested in helping others. Good communication skills are essential. People have health problems for all kinds of reasons, so you shouldn't be judgemental. You need to empathise with clients without becoming personally involved in their problems.

## What skills/qualifications will I need?

There are opportunities at all levels. While some therapists have degrees and postgraduate qualifications, some jobs and training courses have no formal entry requirements.

Anyone who is self-employed needs business skills to attract clients, manage the finances and keep up to date with paperwork. Many professional training courses include some modules on running and building a business.

## How do I choose a course?

Short introductory leisure courses in many complementary therapies are offered by colleges and training providers throughout the UK. They will give you enough skills to practise on family and friends and help you to decide whether you would like to study the subject in more depth.

## Do I need a qualification?

To work as a professional therapist, you must study an accredited course. The professional bodies which represent complementary therapists are working with the government on plans to regulate therapists in the same way that mainstream healthcare professionals are regulated. This involves registering with a recognised professional body before being allowed to practise. Accredited courses will enable you to qualify for registration. The organisations listed in the *Further information* section, (p20) will advise you.

## Is there anything else to think about?

If you are self-employed, your income is likely to vary from month to month, depending on the number of patients you see. Overheads like rent, transport and marketing costs will affect the amount you earn.

Most therapists set their own working hours, but it is important to be available when clients can see you. This could mean working in the evening or at weekends.



These therapies involve varying degrees of touch. The acupuncturist needs a gentle touch to insert the needles while stamina and strength is necessary for osteopaths and chiropractors. Anyone considering a Hands-on treatment therapy as a career needs to be fit and in excellent health.

# Acupuncturist

jobs4u Acupuncturist

**Louise Kesterton** has her own acupuncture practice in Sutton Coldfield. She first became interested in the therapy when she was given acupuncture to relieve the pain of a back injury. It worked so well that she investigated further and decided to make acupuncture her career.



### What is acupuncture?

Acupuncturists believe that energy flows through the body along lines called meridians. If the energy is disturbed in any way, illness can result. Acupuncturists use needles to tap into points along the meridians, rebalancing the flow of energy.

### Who do you help?

Acupuncture can help with all sorts of problems including arthritis, stress, insomnia, skin problems and high blood pressure. It is also useful for pain control.

### What happens when a patient comes to see you?

Initially I undertake a detailed consultation, lasting around 45 minutes to an hour. I ask the patient about their current and previous health problems, lifestyle, diet, stress levels and emotional wellbeing. I also take the patient's pulse and look at their tongue – any swellings, coating or colour changes on the tongue can indicate where the flow of energy in the body might be disrupted. I note everything on the patient's record card.

After deciding on the best approach, I explain the treatment to the patient and warn them that it could make them feel drowsy – this is particularly important if they will be driving after the session.

### Can you describe the treatment?

I ask the patient to remove clothing from the area that I am going to treat. They lie on the couch, and I put needles into points on their body according to the diagnosis I made during the consultation.

The needles are very fine and don't really hurt – the patient may feel a slight tingling sensation. The needles stay in position for about 25 minutes. I usually leave the patient to relax and listen to gentle music. At the end of the session I give the patient advice on changes in diet and lifestyle which could improve their condition.



### Louise's route

- BA in English Literature.
- Combined travel with various short-term jobs.
- Worked in a bookshop.
- Three-year part-time Diploma in Acupuncture.



### Louise's tip

- A basic massage course will help you to learn about anatomy and physiology.

### Is health and safety important?

It's vital. I buy needles in sterile packs. Once I have used them, I dispose of them instantly in a special bin. I must make sure the room, couch and any other equipment I use are scrupulously clean.

### What hours do you work?

For two days a week, I work 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. However, as a lot of patients work full time, I stay open late on the other three days, and work on either Saturday or Sunday morning.

### How did you train?

I did a three-year part-time course which was very demanding as it involved lots of written work as well as practical clinical experience. I learned anatomy and physiology and various models of Chinese diagnosis.

### What qualities make a good acupuncturist?

You have to be confident and focused when inserting the needles. If you are nervous you won't do it properly. You must be able to make patients feel relaxed and comfortable. Good questioning and listening skills are essential to make an accurate diagnosis.

### What do you like most about your work?

I love the variety – every day is different. I also enjoy the detective work involved in getting to the bottom of people's problems.

### Is there anything you dislike?

The work can be tiring and draining, and I sometimes feel exhausted at the end of a session.

### What ambitions do you have?

I'm working towards my degree in acupuncture and hope to complete it in two years' time. I'm also considering taking a counselling course so I can offer more services to patients.



# Aromatherapist

jobs4u **Aromatherapist**

## Related jobs

Chiropractor  
Homeopath  
Naturopath  
Nurse  
Osteopath  
Physiotherapist  
Reflexologist

## Salary information

Most acupuncturists are self-employed and salaries can vary. A new entrant would receive about £10,000 a year. Experienced acupuncturists can earn up to £18,000 a year. Acupuncturists working in large practices can earn up to £30,000 a year.

## Getting in

- To be eligible for membership of the British Acupuncture Council (BACC), you must have at least three years' extensive training (or part-time equivalent) in traditional acupuncture diagnosis and treatment.
- Eight institutions in the UK offer courses that lead to automatic eligibility for membership of the BACC. You can find a list at [www.acupuncture.org.uk](http://www.acupuncture.org.uk)
- Entry requirements are usually at least five GCSEs/S grades (A-C/1-3) and two or three A levels/four H grades, with science subjects being the most useful. Equivalent qualifications may be accepted.
- The minimum starting age varies between 18 and 21.

**Laraba Friedman** has her own aromatherapy practice in London. Aromatherapy helped her to recover from an illness. She was so impressed that she decided to train as an aromatherapist to help other people in the same way.



## How does aromatherapy work?

It uses essential oils which are obtained from different parts of plants. Each oil has unique healing properties. Oils are massaged into the skin to promote physical, emotional or psychological healing. Massage loosens tight muscles and unblocks congested tissue. It also triggers the release of endorphins – the body's pain-relieving hormones.

## Laraba's route

- Three highs.
- BSc in Clothing.
- MA in Book Arts.
- Worked in a range of fundraising and business development jobs.
- Diploma in Aromatherapy.
- Started her own practice.

## Laraba's tips

- Human biology is a useful subject.
- Try an aromatherapy treatment or go on an introductory course.
- A business course will help you to run your own practice.

## Can you describe a consultation?

When I see a new client I start by completing a full health questionnaire. I then give them a body examination. Many people ask for help with a particular problem – indigestion or insomnia, for example – but during the consultation I may discover that these are symptoms of another condition, like stress.

I decide on the three most important conditions to treat and which essential oils will be most helpful. Because clients are individuals with different needs, every treatment is unique. I can use up to four oils in a treatment and normally blend a few drops of each one into a carrier oil to use in massage.

## What happens next?

The client signs a consultation form to confirm that they understand the treatment. Then they lie on the massage couch completely covered in towels. I only expose the part of the body that I am massaging so the client doesn't get embarrassed.





After the massage, I allow the client to relax while I make notes about how they responded to the treatment. I sometimes give clients a treatment to use at home – essential oils can be used in many ways including inhalation, lotions, creams and compresses.

### What hours do you work?

I usually start at around 11.00 a.m. and can work until about 9.00 p.m. I usually work six days a week. The first time I see a client the session lasts about 90 minutes. Subsequent sessions last 60 minutes.

### How did you train?

I did a diploma in aromatherapy which took 18 months part time. There were five week-long courses and a lot of work to complete in my own time. About half of the course was written work, the rest was practical experience.

When I qualified, I took additional specialist courses in pregnancy massage and using aromatherapy on pregnant women, babies and children.

### What do you like about your job?

There's a lot of variety – I see so many different people with different conditions. I really enjoy helping people and it's great to see the effects of my treatment. I also like being able to set my own hours.

### Is there anything you dislike?

Because I'm self-employed I have to do all the tasks associated with running a business, like keeping receipts and records for tax. My income can vary because it depends on the number of clients I see.

### What qualities do you need?

You must have good listening skills and empathy with clients. You need to be interested in healthcare because you will have to do a lot of research into medical conditions. Business skills are also important.

### Related jobs

Chiropractor  
Herbalist  
Homeopath  
Masseur/masseuse  
Naturopath  
Nurse  
Osteopath  
Physiotherapist

### Salary information

Most aromatherapists are self-employed, so income varies according to the number of patients they treat and the amount they charge for each session. A new entrant will earn about £12,000 a year. With experience this could increase to £25,000. An aromatherapist with a large established practice could earn around £40,000 a year.

### Getting in

- If you want to practise aromatherapy professionally you should make sure the course you take is benchmarked to the National Occupational Standards (NOS) for aromatherapy.
- Diploma courses usually last two years part time. Some courses do not have formal entry requirements, but you need to be able to cope with the biology and chemistry included in the course. Other courses ask for GCSEs/S grades, or equivalent. Biology, anatomy, physiology and pathology are useful subjects.
- Single and joint honours degree courses, which include the NOS requirements for aromatherapy as well as many other modules, are available. Thames Valley University offers a two-year foundation degree in Aromatherapy and Reflexology.

**Stephen Makinde** is an osteopath who works for three different osteopathic practices. Two of them are based in gyms. He first discovered the therapy through one of his friends who had a bad back – osteopathy helped him when other treatments failed.

### What is osteopathy?

It is a system of healthcare based on the idea that abnormalities in the structure of the body and the way it functions cause many common illnesses.

### Who do you help?

I treat people of all ages, from tiny babies to the elderly. Osteopathy can help with all kinds of problems including back pain, arthritis, migraine, repetitive strain injury and sports injuries. A lot of people come to me with spinal pain and back complaints. Because I practise in gyms I also see a lot of sports people.

### What happens during a treatment?

The initial consultation usually lasts between 30 minutes and an hour. I ask the patient about all aspects of their life, including their physical and emotional health and their diet. Next, I ask the patient to undress down to their underwear to examine the painful areas of their body. I can then decide whether osteopathic treatment will help them.

I explain everything carefully to the patient, giving them an idea of what they will feel during treatment and how long it should take for their condition to improve. It's essential to get their consent before I start to treat them.

# Osteopath

jobs4u Osteopath



## What happens next?

Sometimes I give treatment during the initial consultation, but I may wait until the second visit. Treatment involves using my hands in a range of different techniques.

A common technique is manipulation where I give high velocity thrusts to help increase the mobility in a joint. Other techniques include stretching and massage. I sometimes give patients exercises to do at home and advise them on lifestyle changes.

### Stephen's route

- GCSEs.
- A levels in psychology, biology and physical education.
- Took a year out coaching and playing tennis.
- BSc Osteopathic Medicine.

### Stephen's tips

- Contact a local osteopath and ask to talk to them about their work.
- Having an osteopathic treatment may help you to decide whether you would like to find out more about the therapy.
- Science A levels, particularly biology, are useful. Some colleges also ask for chemistry.

## What about the next visit?

The second visit usually lasts 30 minutes. At the end of the session I examine the patient again and ask some more questions to check that there has been an improvement. Some patients need just one or two treatments, but others need between four and six.

## Do you ever refer patients to their doctor?

Osteopaths and doctors often work closely together. Part of my training involved learning which conditions osteopaths should not treat. If I suspect someone is suffering from one of those conditions, I send them to their doctor.

## Can you describe your training?

I did a four-year degree course. It covered subjects like anatomy, physiology, osteopathic technique, pathology and the diagnosis of disease. In the third and fourth years I did supervised sessions with patients in the clinic attached to the college.

## What do you like about the job?

I really enjoy being able to relieve people's pain. I also like the fact that I meet so many people in the course of my work. Everyone has an interesting story to tell! I enjoy being self-employed too, because the harder I work the more I can earn.

## What qualities make a good osteopath?

Communication and listening skills are really important – it's essential to build relationships with patients and gain their trust. You must also be good with your hands. The training is demanding, so you do need a genuine interest in health, as well as motivation and dedication.



## Related jobs

Chiropractor  
General practitioner  
Naturopath  
Nurse  
Physiotherapist  
Reflexologist  
Sports physiotherapist

## £ Salary information

Most osteopaths are self-employed, so income varies according to the number of patients they treat and the amount they charge for each session. A new entrant building up a practice could earn £12,000 a year. With experience this could increase to £25,000. Osteopaths with well established practices could earn around £50,000.

## Getting in

- All osteopaths must be registered with the General Osteopathic Council before they are allowed to practise. Candidates must have a recognised qualification in osteopathy from an accredited osteopathic school. Contact the Osteopathic Information Service (see *Further information*, p20) for a list of accredited courses.
- Minimum entry requirements for a degree in osteopathy are usually at least two A levels/four H grades (A-C/1-3) in science subjects, including biology and chemistry, and at least five GCSEs/S grades (A-C/1-3).
- Postgraduate degrees in osteopathy and short courses for qualified medical doctors are also available.

# Chiropractor

jobs4u Chiropractor



**Prab Chandhok** is a chiropractor who works in a multi-disciplinary practice in Middlesex. Meeting a chiropractor at a school careers evening encouraged him to begin chiropractic training.



## What is chiropractic?

Chiropractors diagnose and treat problems with joints, bones and muscles and the effects they have on the nervous system, without drugs or surgery. They work with all the joints of the body, concentrating particularly on the spine. They use their hands to make gentle adjustments to improve the efficiency of the nervous system, releasing the body's natural healing ability.

## Who can you help?

All kinds of people can benefit from chiropractic treatment, including babies, children, adults, pregnant women and the elderly. I modify my techniques to suit the specific needs of each patient.



### Prab's route

- A levels.
- Degree in Human Sciences.
- Masters in Chiropractic.
- Doctor of Chiropractic (DC) after one year in practice.
- Continuing professional development including a certification in chiropractic paediatrics.



### Prab's tip

- Any work experience in a healthcare environment is relevant.

## What happens when a patient comes to see you?

We start by discussing the patient's main reason for seeking care, as well as other aspects of their lifestyle and general health. I ask questions to help identify the possible causes of the problem, and decide if chiropractic may help.

I also do a physical examination of the patient, which includes a thorough check-up of the spine and other parts of the body.

## What about treatment?

I use a range of different techniques. The main emphasis is on gentle manipulation of the joints, but I also use other techniques including soft tissue massage and dry needling (using needles similar to those used in acupuncture for the release of tight muscles). I also teach exercise techniques that can help to prevent some conditions returning.

The first appointment lasts between 30 and 90 minutes. Subsequent visits last 15 to 20 minutes.

## How do you market your business?

Most new patients come to me through word of mouth. In this field you can build a strong reputation simply by doing a good job. I also talk to GPs about what I do and they often refer patients to me. I give talks about chiropractic to local groups, which is another useful way of finding patients.

## What hours do you work?

I currently work 35 to 40 hours a week in my main practice, but occasionally I also cover for other chiropractors in local clinics in my spare time. Being self-employed means I can set my own hours.

## How did you train?

I did a five-year degree in human sciences and a masters in chiropractic. Core subjects included anatomy, physiology, biochemistry, neurology, pathology and diagnosis. In my last year I worked under supervision at the college's student clinic.

## What do you enjoy most about your job?

It is very rewarding to help someone in pain, and chiropractic can have an immediate effect on some conditions. Some patients arrive very distressed, but leave smiling!

Every patient I see is different, so each day is interesting and varied. There are opportunities to develop my career as I could specialise in a particular field – like working with pregnant women or children, sports professionals or the elderly.

## What qualities make a good chiropractor?

You need to be good with your hands – good co-ordination is helpful. Problem-solving skills, maturity and the ability to empathise with people are also important.



### What attracted you to study and practise chiropractic?

At school I was involved in looking after people who had arthritis. I heard that chiropractors helped them to cope and manage their problems. I met a chiropractor at a school careers evening and was invited to see his clinic. I was amazed how much he could help people, using only natural techniques without medicines or surgery.

### Related jobs

Acupuncturist  
General Practitioner  
Occupational Therapist  
Osteopath  
Physiotherapist  
Reflexologist

### Salary information

Most chiropractors are self-employed and incomes vary. A new entrant can earn around £18,000 a year. An experienced chiropractor can earn at least £40,000 a year. Chiropractors working in large practices can earn up to £70,000 a year.

### Getting in

- To work as a chiropractor you must complete a degree course recognised by the General Chiropractic Council (GCC) and register with them.
- Entry to chiropractic degree courses usually requires at least three A levels/four H grades, normally including biology and chemistry. There are preliminary chiropractic courses for applicants who do not have the usual entry qualifications.
- The minimum age to start training is 18.

# Reflexologist

## jobs4u Reflexologist

**Lorna Hill** is a reflexologist who practises in Glasgow. Reflexology is a form of foot massage which is based on the theory that the body is divided into ten zones through which energy flows.



### Lorna's route

- Law degree.
- Post-graduate certificate in journalism.
- Diploma in Reflexology.
- Studied Indian head massage and therapeutic massage to offer more services to clients.
- Currently studying for a certificate in counselling skills.

### Lorna's tips

- Have a reflexology treatment to find out if you like it. It will also help you to understand what the client is feeling and experiencing.
- Train in other complementary health subjects so that you can offer a variety of treatments.

### How does reflexology work?

Reflex points on the feet and hands relate to every part of the body. During treatment I apply mild pressure to specific areas of the foot. If an area feels tender or gritty it may indicate an imbalance or problem in the corresponding area of the body. Reflexology works to restore balance and relieve any symptoms.

### Who can you help?

I treat men and women of all ages, with all kinds of problems. I have treated men in their 50s who suffer from work-related stress and women in their 20s who have migraines or hormonal problems.

### What happens when the client arrives for their first treatment?

I take notes of the patient's details and ask about their general health, going through a check-list of conditions which might prevent me from treating them without their doctor's consent. When I am happy the client is suitable for a reflexology session, I ask them to remove their socks and shoes and clean their feet with a wipe. They then sit on the reclining reflexology chair.

### What happens next?

I begin the session, using talcum powder on my hands which helps me to hold the feet firmly. The session normally takes 45 minutes. Some clients find it so relaxing they fall asleep; others want to chat.

After the treatment, I make a note of which reflex zones felt gritty or tender during the session, so I can build up a picture of possible problem areas over the coming weeks.



### How many times do you see each client?

I usually recommend weekly sessions for four to six weeks, but I leave the client to decide on how often they want to come.

### Do you work a normal five-day week?

No. It's important to work outside regular working hours, as most people want to have treatment after work or at weekends. Usually, I work late on one or two evenings a week, and I work on Saturdays.

### How did you train?

My course was spread over several weekends and took just under a year to complete. It involved around 100 teaching hours. Usually we would study theory in the morning, including anatomy and physiology, and do practical work in the afternoon.

I also had to complete about 86 hours of case studies which were continually assessed throughout the training. This involved spending a lot of my own time practising on friends and relatives.

### What do you like about the job?

I enjoy meeting people and seeing the difference I can make to their health and well-being. It is fulfilling to see how relaxed people can be after a session, particularly if they have arrived feeling stressed after a hard day at work.

### What qualities make a good reflexologist?

You have to be interested in people and their health, with strong communication skills. You need to identify which clients want to chat and which would rather be quiet during the session. It also helps to be friendly and smile – even if you are having a bad day!

### How do you market your business?

I sometimes work in an established complementary health business which means marketing is slightly easier, as clients call the clinic to make appointments. I also rent out a treatment room, and have found the best way to find new clients is by word of mouth and through friends and family.

### Related jobs

Acupuncturist  
Aromatherapist  
Chiropodist/Podiatrist  
Chiropractor  
Herbalist  
Naturopath  
Osteopath  
Physiotherapist

### Salary information

Most reflexologists are self-employed, so income varies according to the number of patients they treat and the amount they charge for each session. Someone building a practice could earn £12,000 a year. With experience this could increase to £20,000. Reflexologists with large, established practices could earn £40,000 a year.

### Getting in

- A wide variety of courses in reflexology are offered by a number of different organisations. Courses for professionals usually last one year or more.
- There are often no formal entry requirements, but applicants must be able to cope with the study of human biology as well as the written elements of reflexology courses.
- The minimum age to begin training is normally 18.



**Ed Walsh** works for Connect Physical Health Centres in Manchester. Ed enjoyed sport from an early age and was fascinated when he saw a therapist massaging an athlete. He decided to learn more about it and has made it his career.

### Who comes to you for massage?

I see a wide range of people, including a lot of sports people. Massage helps to remove the waste products like lactic acid which build up in the body during training. It also helps to relieve tension and keep the muscles toned and in good shape.

Musicians come to me if they have built up tension in their muscles due to long hours of rehearsing. Office workers might be suffering from stress or posture-related problems due to sitting at a desk all day. People like builders, decorators and plumbers could need a massage if they overuse their muscles.

### Ed's route

- Worked as a lifeguard.
- HND Biology.
- HND Physiology and Health Science.
- BSc Sports Rehabilitation.
- Worked in a gym and did voluntary work with a basketball team while studying.
- Present job.

### Ed's tips

- Contact a masseur and ask if you can watch them working.
- Biology is a useful school subject.

# Masseur

jobs4u Masseur/Masseuse



## How does each session start?

I go through a full health questionnaire with new clients and ask them specific questions about the problem, when and how it started and how it restricts their activities. I make sure that they are suitable for treatment, as people with certain conditions should not have massage.

I explain the treatment to new clients, then leave them for a few moments while they remove clothing from the area to be treated, cover themselves with towels and lie on the couch.

## What happens next?

I make sure that the client is warm and comfortable. Next, I warm my hands and apply oil. I start the massage by moving my hands in circling, fanning or T-shaped movements across the client's skin. The aim is to help them relax as well as spread the oil, increasing blood flow and warming the tissues.

Then I use techniques like rolling and kneading which relieve tension, promote good muscle tone, stimulate the nervous system and remove waste products from the muscles. The third stage involves percussion – controlled slapping of the muscle using my fingers and the side of my hand.

## Do you do anything else?

If there is an area of scar tissue from a pulled muscle or torn ligament I use my thumb, tip of finger, base of hand or elbow to apply controlled force across the direction of the muscle line. This creates heat, improving the blood flow which removes waste and brings healthy nutrients to the area to encourage healing.

## How did you train?

I learnt massage as part of my degree in sports rehabilitation. As well as core subjects like anatomy and physiology, I did two or three case studies each year to learn which massage techniques were best suited to which sports and types of injuries. I also had to do assessed massages throughout the course.

## What do you like about the job?

The variety and the one-to-one communication with clients. You also see results very quickly. Clients arrive in a lot of discomfort but they leave feeling much better.



## What hours do you work?

I usually do four-hour shifts which could be in the morning, afternoon or evening. I also work with a basketball team from 6.00 p.m. to 9.00 p.m. on Saturdays.

## Is there anything you dislike?

The work is physically tiring, but that is part of the job and you get used to it.

## What makes a good masseur?

You must be very confident and a good communicator. It is important to make the clients relax and learn to trust you.

## Related jobs

Aromatherapist  
Chiropractor  
Osteopath  
Physiotherapist  
Reflexologist  
Sports physiotherapist

## Salary information

A new entrant could earn £12,000. This could rise to £16,000. An established masseur with a large client list could earn £20,000 or more.

## Getting in

- There are many massage courses, but to join the General Council for Massage Therapy (GCMT) National Register of Qualified Massage Practitioners, you must have completed a course approved by them.
- Approved courses last a minimum of six months.
- There are no formal entry requirements for many courses but you must be over 18 to begin training.

Many therapies involve a consultation with the client and teaching, either on a one-to-one or class basis. Good communication skills are vital for these therapies as is the ability to concentrate and relate well to all types of people. You will need organisational skills, as well as the ability to handle groups yet remain alert to the needs of individuals at the same time.

# Homeopath Homeopath

**Manishaa Patel** is a self-employed homeopath working in Crawley, Sussex. She discovered homeopathy while travelling in India.



### What is homeopathy?

It is a type of medicine using remedies from natural sources. All the remedies are very diluted and help the body to recognise that it has a problem and heal itself. Homeopathy can help anyone, from babies to the elderly, and is used to treat a very wide range of complaints.

### Where do you practise?

I am based in a pharmacist's shop. I spend two full days a week there when anyone can ask me about homeopathic treatment. I give advice to customers with simple complaints, like colds, bruises or strains, and book appointments for those with more complicated problems.

### What does a consultation involve?

I see the patient in a private clinic room at the pharmacy. I spend about an hour with them, discussing their complaint and their symptoms. I do some physical checks, such as taking their blood pressure, checking their weight and examining their skin.

### What happens next?

I take the notes from the consultation home with me so I can spend time researching the best remedy. I consult a lot of reference books and use specialist computer software to help me decide.

I post the remedy to the patient, along with an instruction sheet describing how and when to take it. I may also include other advice such as changes in diet that could be helpful.

### Do patients need a follow-up appointment?

I usually see patients again after a month. I spend about 30 minutes with them, finding out how they are progressing. I may change the dosage of their medication or prescribe a different remedy. Most patients see me three or four times.



### Manishaa's route

- Science A levels.
- BSc Medical Biology.
- Three years' study for LcH (Licentiate in Homeopathy).
- One year pre-registration, practising and putting together a portfolio of case studies.
- Registered with the Alliance of Registered Homeopaths.



### Manishaa's tips

- Science qualifications are very helpful.
- Contact a homeopath in your area and find out about what's involved.
- Try a homeopathic treatment for a simple ailment like a cold.

### What hours do you work?

During my two full days at the pharmacy I work from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. I make appointments on other days to suit patients, including Saturdays. It's very important to be flexible when you are running this sort of business.

### How did you train?

I did a three-year full-time course. There was lots of supervised clinical practice – either watching other students treat patients or treating them myself. The final year included writing up 20 case studies.

### What do you like most about your job?

I meet a lot of people with different problems, so no two days are the same. I really enjoy helping people and seeing the difference that treatment can make to their health and well-being.

### How do you find new patients?

That is probably the hardest thing about building a business. The pharmacy puts my leaflets on display, so customers know about the practice and what I do. People chat to me informally about homeopathy, and it can give them the confidence to make an appointment for a full consultation. Some of my patients also recommend me to their friends and relatives.



# Yoga teacher

jobs4u Yoga Practitioner

## What qualities do you need?

People skills are vital. You must be patient and understanding. It's also very important to be non-judgemental – some patients have values that are very different to mine, but I must not let that affect the way I treat them.

## Related jobs

Aromatherapist  
Herbalist  
Naturopath  
Pharmacist  
Pharmacy Technician

## Salary information

Most homeopaths are self-employed and their income varies according to the number of patients they treat and the fees they charge. A new entrant, building a practice, could earn about £12,000 a year. With experience this could increase to £20,000. Homeopaths with large practices and good reputations could earn £40,000.

## Getting in

- There are many courses in homeopathy, offered by many different bodies. Contact one of the professional registering bodies (see *Further information*, p20) for advice on choosing a suitable course.
- Entry qualifications for a diploma course in homeopathy vary from no formal qualifications to two A levels or equivalent, depending on the course provider. Full-time courses last for three years. Part-time courses last for four or five years.
- Full-time and part-time BSc courses are also available. Entry normally requires two A levels/three H grades, preferably including biology, with science or chemistry studied to GCSE level.

**Kimberley Phillips** is a self-employed yoga teacher based in Manchester. She started going to yoga classes when she was 16. She enjoyed it so much and felt so many health benefits that eventually she decided to train as a yoga teacher.



## What is yoga?

It is an ancient system of living – practised in India thousands of years ago – which helps to keep the mind, body and emotions in balance. In western society we are more familiar with the physical aspect of yoga, which incorporates basic breathing exercises, posture work (known as asanas), relaxation and/or meditation.

## Kimberley's route

- 8 GCSEs and 3 A levels.
- BSc Psychology.
- Worked in social work.
- British Wheel of Yoga Teaching Diploma.
- Has been teaching yoga for two years.

## Kimberley's tips

- Find a teacher you like and start attending yoga classes. You usually need some experience before you can attend a training course in yoga teaching.
- Training is a long-term commitment. Do some research and make sure it is right for you.

## Who do you teach?

People of any age can learn yoga, so I teach a wide range. Most classes are targeted at a particular group, for example beginners, intermediate or advanced, or over 50s.

Over the past year I have run special yoga classes for nursery school children aged three to four years old. I have also completed a specialist course on teaching yoga to pregnant women.

## What happens during a class?

I usually start by introducing a simple theme based on the philosophy of yoga. We then do some gentle breathing and stretching to warm up. I spend some time guiding students through limbering the whole body, which helps to avoid possible injury, before progressing onto asanas (physical postures).

I demonstrate each posture and talk students through it. Safety is very important, so I must observe my students carefully. If they look uncomfortable or are not performing the posture correctly, I may adjust their posture or talk them into a better position.

## How do you end the class?

I finish with a relaxation session. With more experienced students I often incorporate some calming meditation techniques.



## How long is a normal class?

It depends on the style of yoga being taught but on average classes last between one and a half and two hours.

## What hours do you work?

Most classes are from 6 p.m. in the evening, when people are finishing work. Classes during the day tend to be more specialised – they could involve working with children in schools, at health centres, or with retired people. I also work at the weekends when more people are free to attend classes. Sunday mornings are increasingly popular.

## How did you train?

My course lasted about three years. I went to classes one day a month to learn about all aspects of yoga, including philosophy, anatomy and physiology, safe teaching practices and physical practice.

I also had to do a lot of work at home such as writing essays, preparing practical work, attending yoga classes (to improve my own practice) and reading. It was difficult, because I was also working full time, but very rewarding.

## What do you like about the job?

I love the fact that students seem to get so much out of the classes. They all work really hard and ask lots of questions. I enjoy helping people to increase their well-being and happiness.

## Is there anything you don't like?

Because I am self-employed I have to accept that my income can change from week to week.

## What qualities do you need?

You must have a genuine love of yoga, be a good communicator and enjoy working with people. You should have a flexible approach to work and be able to adapt class content quickly if it doesn't meet the needs of individual students and the class as a whole.



## Related jobs

Aerobics teacher  
Alexander technique practitioner  
Chiropractor  
Health and fitness instructor  
Naturopath  
Osteopath



## Salary information

Most yoga practitioners are self-employed, and incomes vary considerably. A new entrant would receive about £10,000 a year. With some experience this could increase to £20,000. An experienced yoga practitioner could earn £30,000 a year.



## Getting in

- There are many courses in yoga, but to qualify to join the Register of Exercise Professionals, you must have completed a British Wheel of Yoga (BWY) Teaching Diploma.
- The diploma course lasts between two and four years and takes around 500 hours of study.
- There are no academic entry requirements, but you should have practised yoga with a BWY recognised teacher for at least two years before starting the course.



**Cheng Hao Zhou** practises Chinese herbal medicine at the Northern College of Acupuncture in York. She treats illness with plant remedies, following a tradition which is over two thousand years old.

## What is Chinese herbal medicine?

Traditional Chinese medicine dates back to a time before the development of modern sciences like chemistry and physiology. It is based on the idea that all of nature is balanced – heat is balanced by cold, for example. Humans should be balanced too, and if something happens which disturbs a person's balance, they become ill.

## Who can you help?

Chinese herbal medicine can help people of all ages with a wide range of common medical complaints. These include asthma, allergies, skin conditions, depression, high blood pressure and back pain.

## What happens during a consultation?

Traditional Chinese medicine looks at the whole person and not just the symptoms of the illness. I spend a lot of time talking to the patient, finding out about their illness, when and how it started, how it has progressed and how it responded to previous medical treatment. Information about the patient's lifestyle and diet is very helpful too.

## Do you carry out a physical examination?

Yes, I check the patient's pulse and look at their tongue. The strength and various qualities of the pulse, and the colour, shape and coating of the tongue can tell me a lot about the patient's health.

# Herbalist (Chinese herbal medicine)

jobs4u Herbalist



## How do you decide what treatment to prescribe?

All the information I gather from the patient helps me to understand the cause of their illness and how their balance has been disturbed. I then prescribe a number of herbs to balance the disorder. For example, if the patient suffers from weakness, I would use plants with strengthening properties.

## What happens next?

I dispense the remedy. Most of the herbs I use come from the supplier in powder form. I then explain to the patient how to use the remedy – they usually need to mix the powder with water and boil it.



### Cheng's route

- Bachelor of Medicine (MB).
- Worked and studied further in China.
- Took up present job in the UK and became a Member of the Register of Chinese Herbal Medicine (MRCHM).



### Cheng's tip

- Find out more about Chinese herbal medicine on the Internet. Sites like [www.chinese-medicine.co.uk](http://www.chinese-medicine.co.uk) and [www.rchm.co.uk](http://www.rchm.co.uk) give useful information.

## Do you give any other advice?

In some cases it's very important to give the patient advice on lifestyle changes which will improve their health. I often advise patients on how to keep a good life-work balance, relaxation techniques, nutrition, using food supplements and appropriate exercises.

## How long does it take?

Consultations last around 45 minutes to an hour. Patients with minor illnesses might see me once or twice, but severe illnesses can take one or two years to treat. On average, I see each patient about ten times. I take notes on everything discussed during each consultation and all the treatments I prescribe.

## What do you like most about the job?

I really enjoy working with people and helping to make their lives easier and happier. I also teach traditional Chinese medicine to the students at the college where I work, which gives me variety. I enjoy the constant challenge to learn more and keep improving my skills.

## Is there anything you dislike?

Some people think of herbal remedies as "witches' brew" rather than medicine. I find this very frustrating. However, Chinese medicine will soon be regulated, just like mainstream western medicine, so hopefully this image will change.



### Related jobs

Acupuncturist  
Aromatherapist  
Dietician  
Homeopath  
Pharmacist



### Salary information

Most herbalists are self-employed, so their income varies. A new entrant, building a practice, could earn about £12,000 a year. With experience this could increase to £20,000. Herbalists with large practices and 10 to 15 years' experience could earn £40,000 a year.



### Getting in

- To qualify for registration with one of the professional associations for herbalists you must take a recognised professional course accredited by either the National Institute of Medical Herbalists (NIMH) or the European Herbal Practitioners Association's (EHPA) Accreditation Board.
- Degrees and diplomas in herbal medicine are available. Entry requirements vary but for a degree you usually need two or three A levels/four H grades, or equivalent, including biology or human biology.
- The Register of Chinese Herbal Medicine ([www.rchm.co.uk](http://www.rchm.co.uk)) has a list of institutions offering approved professional courses in Chinese herbal medicine.

## What hours do you work?

I work from 9 a.m. until 6 p.m., Monday to Friday.

## What qualities make a good herbalist?

Listening skills and observational skills are essential. It also helps to have an understanding of the philosophical background of traditional Chinese medicine.



# Naturopath

jobs4u Naturopath

**Shireen Sherif** is a naturopath who practises in Hampshire. She also teaches students at the British College of Osteopathic Medicine in London.



## What treatments do you recommend?

Changes in diet are often helpful, although people's bodies react to food in different ways. I examine the patient's diet diary and identify a food which could be causing the problem. I advise them to avoid that food completely for six weeks and monitor their condition during that time. If it doesn't improve, that particular food was not causing the problem and we try something else.

I could also recommend breathing and other exercises, and in some cases food supplements.

## Do you give any physical treatment?

There's hydrotherapy which stimulates the circulation and the immune system. The patient sits in a large bowl, known as a sitz bath, which is filled with cold water. Their feet are placed in another bowl filled with hot water. I alternate hot and cold water in the bowls throughout the treatment.

I could also use my hands to treat parts of the body. For example, to treat the lungs, I would work on the ribs, intercostal muscles, diaphragm and its nerve supply.

## What hours do you work?

I work in my private practice three days a week, from 9.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m. There are often breaks between appointments, so I can sometimes go home for a few hours in the middle of the day. On the two days when I am teaching, I work from 9.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m.

## What do you like most about your job?

I really enjoy the variety and I meet new people all the time. It's very satisfying when treatments work. I also enjoy choosing my own hours.

## What is naturopathy?

A naturopath believes that the body is capable of repairing itself, so my work involves educating people on how to boost their immune systems and create the best possible environment to help their bodies repair.

## What happens during a consultation?

I start by asking the patient about their complaint, how severe it is, and how it affects their life. I then take a full medical history, noting previous injuries, operations and serious illnesses, and whether the patient is taking any medication.

I also find out about the patient's family medical history and their working life. I check their weight and height, and examine their body for problems with posture. I also check their blood pressure and pulse.

## Do you ask for other information?

I give patients a diet diary and ask them to list in detail everything they eat and drink in the following week. If they have cereal for breakfast I need to know what type, roughly how much they ate, how much sugar they added, how much milk they used and whether it was full-fat, semi-skimmed or skimmed.

## Why do you need to know so much?

A health problem could be caused by many different factors. Building a complete picture of the patient and their lifestyle helps me to understand their problem and recommend the most appropriate treatment.



### Shireen's route

- A levels in physics, chemistry, biology, maths and English.
- BSc Osteopathic Medicine (with Diploma in Naturopathic Medicine).
- MA Osteopathic Medicine.
- Teaching at the British College of Osteopathic Medicine.
- Five years working in a complementary health clinic.
- One year in her own practice.



### Shireen's tips

- Work experience with people can be helpful.
- Contact a naturopath and ask to observe them at work.
- You won't be able to instruct patients unless you believe in naturopathy and follow the lifestyle yourself.

## Related jobs

Acupuncturist  
Aromatherapist  
Dietician  
General practitioner  
Herbalist  
Homeopath  
Osteopath

## Salary information

Naturopaths are self-employed, so income depends on how many patients they treat and the rates they charge for each session. A new entrant, building up a practice, could earn about £12,000 a year. With experience this could increase to £20,000. Naturopaths with established practices could earn £40,000-£45,000.

## Getting in

- To qualify for registration with the General Council and Register of Naturopaths (GCRN) you must have studied a full-time accredited course in naturopathic medicine, leading to a Naturopathic Diploma (ND), or hold a Degree in Health Sciences, Complementary Therapies (Pathway for Naturopathic Medicine) from the University of Westminster. For more information about accredited courses contact the Naturopathic Helpline (see *Further information*, p20).
- The British College of Osteopathic Medicine offers a BSc (Hons) Degree in Osteopathic Medicine combined with a Naturopathic Diploma, and a four-year full-time Diploma in Naturopathy.
- Minimum qualifications for entry are three A levels/four H grades, usually including biology and chemistry, and five GCSEs/S grades (A-C/1-3), including English.

### Is there anything you dislike?

Naturopathy doesn't help everybody and it can be frustrating when treatments don't work.

### What skills do you need?

Listening skills and empathy with patients are very important. Treatment can take a long time and results depend on how well the patient follows advice, so patience is essential.

# Hypnotherapist

## jobs4u Hypnotherapist

**Andy Stratton** is a hypnotherapist with his own practice in Brighton. He is fascinated by the way the human mind works and trained as a hypnotherapist to help people make positive changes in their lives.



### What is hypnotherapy?

Hypnotherapy uses the natural process of relaxation to encourage calm throughout the mind and body. This is known as a trance state. It's a time when the unconscious mind becomes more open to accept positive suggestions which can overcome anxieties, break habits and improve many areas of life.

### Andy's route

- BA in Politics, Philosophy and Economics.
- TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) course.
- Taught English in Japan for one year.
- One-year Diploma in Hypnotherapy.
- Volunteered on a mental health help line while studying, which gave him experience of talking to people with a variety of difficult issues.

### Andy's tips

- Try hypnotherapy yourself. It's a very relaxing experience and a session will help you to understand how the therapy works.
- Any work experience with people, particularly if it involves helping them to deal with problems, will be helpful.

### Who can you help?

More and more people are trying to give up smoking and many of them turn to hypnotherapists for help. I also treat phobias, such as a fear of flying or public speaking. I have some clients who use hypnotherapy to help overcome depression.

### And how do you help them?

When a new client phones to make an appointment we talk about what they would like to achieve from hypnosis and how I can help. I find out more information about the problem when they arrive – this helps me to decide how I will direct the hypnosis.

During hypnosis, the client closes their eyes, sits back and listens to my voice. I use a special way of talking to help them relax and reach a trance state. Then I guide them through imagery of how good life will be when they lose their fears or habits.

### How long does it take?

The first session with a new client lasts 90 minutes. Subsequent sessions last one hour. The number of sessions each client needs depends on their problem. Giving up smoking, dealing with phobias or breaking habits usually only need a couple of treatments, but clients with depression will need more sessions.



## What hours do you work?

A lot of clients work during the day and so prefer evening or weekend appointments. I book appointments which are convenient for both the client and me. This means my hours are not predictable.

## How did you train?

I did a one-year diploma in hypnotherapy. There was a lot of emphasis on how people can maintain good mental health by balancing different aspects of their lives and having social contact, goals and ambitions, and good nutrition.

## What do you like about the job?

The best moment is when the client looks completely calm after a session, especially if they were anxious before. Sometimes I know that I've made a big difference to someone's life and that is really satisfying.

## Is there anything you dislike?

Sometimes clients fail to come for treatment without letting me know. That is a real waste of my time.

## What qualities make a good hypnotherapist?

It's essential to make the client feel relaxed and encourage them to see how their lives can improve and change. You should also be able to change your style and adapt the hypnosis to each individual patient.

## How do you market your practice and find new clients?

I put adverts in local papers and distribute leaflets through doors and in cafes, pubs and gyms. I have a website which is registered with search engines so people who are looking for hypnotherapy can find me.



## Related jobs

Clinical psychologist  
Counsellor  
Dramatherapist  
Psychiatrist  
Psychoanalyst



## Salary information

A new entrant could earn £12,000. This could rise to £20,000 a year with experience. A hypnotherapist with a large, established practise could earn £40,000.



## Getting in

- A number of organisations offer hypnotherapy training, but to be eligible for membership of the General Hypnotherapy Standards Council (GHR) you must have completed a course validated at practitioner level. A list of organisations offering validated courses is available on the GHR website at [www.general-hypnotherapy-register.com](http://www.general-hypnotherapy-register.com)
- There are no formal entry requirements for most courses. Some organisations offer foundation courses or introductory workshops which candidates should complete before beginning practitioner level training.
- Courses range from two weeks full-time, to one year part-time.



**Zoe Kirby** is a self-employed nutritional therapist based in London. Zoe was attracted to her career because she realised that a good diet and using the right nutritional supplements had a positive impact on her own health.

## What is nutritional therapy?

It is a natural approach to restoring and maintaining good health through the use of diet and supplements. It addresses the underlying causes of health problems rather than just the symptoms.

## How does diet affect our health?

Our body cells use the nutrients in the food we eat and drink to grow and repair themselves. The modern diet does not generally provide the range, level or quality of the nutrients we need. Also, factors such as smoking, alcohol, stress, pesticides and pollution can actively lower nutrient levels in the body, and this can lead to a wide range of health problems.

## What sort of people use your services?

Anyone – from babies and children to the elderly – can benefit from nutritional therapy. Some clients have specific health problems like asthma, depression, fatigue or arthritis. Others just want to improve their general well-being. Nutritional therapy can also strengthen the immune system.

## How do you help your clients?

Before a consultation I send out a detailed questionnaire about health, diet and lifestyle, and a 7-day food diary for clients to record everything they eat and drink for a week. Then I visit the client in their own home for a consultation.



# Nutritional therapist

jobs4u Nutritional therapist



## What qualities make a good nutritional therapist?

You must have an interest in natural health and good food. It's important to be a good communicator and, because you are your own boss, to be self-motivated.

## How do you market your business and find new clients?

Word of mouth is probably the most important way – existing clients often recommend me to their friends. I also have a brochure and business cards which I distribute in local shops and I give talks to relevant groups of people, such as pregnant women.

We discuss positive changes to their diet, and I give them an individually tailored programme of lifestyle and dietary changes to put into practice until the next time we meet. I could also recommend that they take nutritional supplements, or undergo tests to see if they have a food intolerance.

## How long does it take?

The first consultation lasts between an hour and 90 minutes. Follow-up consultations last around 45 minutes. I try to see clients a minimum of three times during the first six months, and then once a year after that.

## What hours do you work?

I work for myself, so I can be flexible. I see clients during normal working hours, but if that isn't convenient for them, I can offer appointments in the evenings and at weekends.

## How did you train?

I did a three-year part-time course at the Institute for Optimum Nutrition in London. Most people on the course were working full or part time as well as studying. The first year was science-based with a lot of theory to learn; after that we began to have supervised practical experience advising clients.

## What do you like about the job?

I really like working for myself. I know that the harder I work and the more effort I put into finding clients, the more successful I will become. I also enjoy helping people to improve their health by natural methods.

### Zoe's route

- Four A levels including biology and chemistry.
- MA (Oxon) in Psychology.
- Diploma from the Institute for Optimum Nutrition.
- Member of the British Association for Nutritional Therapy.
- Work experience shadowing other therapists.

### Zoe's tip's

- Science A levels will help you to cope with the diploma course.
- If you don't have science qualifications you could do a science Access course or Foundation Degree.
- Work experience in a natural health clinic or shadowing qualified nutritional therapists can be helpful.

### Related jobs

Dietician  
General practitioner  
Health visitor  
Herbalist  
Naturopath  
Nurse

### Salary information

Most nutritional therapists are self-employed and incomes vary. A new entrant will probably receive about £15,000 a year. With experience this could increase to £25,000. An experienced nutritional therapist could earn £35,000.

### Getting in

- There are no set entry requirements for some diploma courses in nutritional therapy, but some GCSEs/S grades or equivalent qualifications will be helpful. Biology, anatomy, physiology and pathology are useful subjects.
- To do a degree in nutritional therapy the usual requirements are at least five GCSEs/S grades (A-C/1-3) and three A levels/four H grades, preferably including biology, human biology, physics or chemistry.

Whatever your career in complementary therapies you will need help to sell your services and to organise your business. These supporting roles are a useful way of gaining an insight into the various therapies before choosing specific training.

# Sales assistant (Health shop assistant)

jobs4u Sales assistant

**David Price** works in Nutricentre in Newcastle. He developed his interest in natural healthcare while travelling in New Zealand, Australia and America, and now enjoys helping to educate and motivate customers to take responsibility for their own health.



## Can you describe your role?

I'm acting manager in a newly-opened store, helping staff who are new to the company to settle into their jobs, and dealing with everything from stock ordering to serving customers.

## What products do you sell?

We stock food supplements like vitamins and minerals, herbal and homeopathic medicines, aromatherapy oils and sports nutrition. We sell some food, including pulses, beans and nuts and speciality foods for gluten-free or wheat-free diets.



### David's route

- HND Applied Biology.
- BSc Applied Human Physiology.
- One year travelling around the world.
- Worked at Nutricentre.
- Was promoted as the company grew.



### David's tips

- English, maths, biology, chemistry and health studies are all useful subjects.
- Reading about complementary therapies will give you a basic knowledge of natural healthcare.

There's also a range of natural beauty products like shampoos and face creams, books and some exercise equipment like yoga mats and yoga bricks.

## Do you advise customers?

That's very important. Some customers are very interested in natural healthcare and want a lot of information about different products and how they work, as well as lifestyle advice.

## Do you need a lot of knowledge?

Yes, but it's something you learn with experience. There are lots of books to consult about natural healthcare. We also have a health information program on the computer which we can use to check things like the medicinal properties of herbs.

Sometimes suppliers send trainers to work with staff in the shop. They talk us through their products, explaining which conditions they could help and how they should be used.

## What else does your job involve?

I order stock. It's important to respond to customer needs and monitor the sales of particular products in the shop. The computerised till system is useful because it records everything that is sold, so I can see which products are the most popular.

## What happens when stock arrives?

I check the delivery against my original order. If there are any problems I contact the suppliers to sort them out. I then put the bar codes of the newly-delivered items into the till which adds them to our stock system. I also notify the accounts department that the delivery has arrived so they can deal with the payment.

## Where do you put the stock?

Storage space is limited, so most of the stock goes straight onto the shelves. Products are arranged so that customers can find what they need easily. It's important to keep the shelves clean and tidy to attract customers.

## Do you do anything else?

I also take payments from customers. That involves using the till and handling cheques and credit card payments. It's important to understand the system for discounts and special offer products. At the end of the day I cash up, checking that the amount in the till matches the sales records, and make sure the takings are delivered to the bank.

## What hours do you work?

Probably about 40 hours a week on average. You have to be prepared to work some evenings and weekends.



# Receptionist

jobs4u Receptionist

## Related jobs

Beauty consultant  
Checkout operator  
Customer services assistant/manager  
Display designer/visual merchandiser  
Receptionist  
Store demonstrator  
Store owner/manager

## Salary information

The starting salary for sales assistants is around £8,000 a year. More experienced sales assistants earn around £12,800. Supervisors may earn up to £15,000 a year.

## Getting in

- There are no minimum qualifications for this career although some employers ask for at least two GCSEs/S grades (A-C/1-3). Some companies set tests in basic maths and English.
- Qualifications in retail include a BTEC first diploma, national certificate and national award, NVQ/SVQ at Levels 2 and 3, and an AVCE.
- Apprenticeships may be available.

## What skills do you need?

It's important to have an interest in natural healthcare and to want to help other people look after their own health. You should be friendly and helpful. Good communication skills are useful and basic maths is important for dealing with money.

## What do you like most about your job?

I love working with people, helping them to change their lifestyles and improve their health. This industry is growing all the time, so there are lots of opportunities to advance my career.

**Kat Riddle** is a receptionist at The Health Works, a complementary therapy clinic in Walthamstow. She is also training to be a reflexologist and finds her work on the reception desk an excellent way of building her knowledge.



## What does your job involve?

One of the most important tasks is answering the phone and making appointments for patients to see the therapists. I take the patient's name and phone number and write them in a time slot in the book, along with the cost of the treatment. I also give them directions to the clinic if necessary.

## What happens when a patient arrives for treatment?

There's a buzzer system at the clinic so patients tell me who they are and who they have come to see before I let them in. When they arrive I offer them a drink and let the therapist know their patient has arrived.

I ask new patients to fill in a registration form and any other forms the therapist might need, for example a medical history questionnaire. The therapist then comes to reception to collect their patient.

## And when they leave?

When a patient has finished their treatment, they come back to reception to pay. I put the payment into a plastic wallet with the relevant therapist's name on it. I also record the payment in the appointment book. If the patient asks for a receipt I complete a handwritten form.

## Do you ever give advice?

Sometimes I get calls from people who have a problem but don't know which therapy would be best for them. I explain some of the therapies available to help them to decide which therapist to see.

Other people simply want information about the clinic, so I send them a brochure. Making up the brochures is another of my tasks. At quiet times I print out the pages from the computer and put them together in the right order.

## Kat's route

- GCSEs and A levels.
- Gap year at the Millennium Dome.
- BA in History of Art.
- Receptionist at a health and beauty clinic.
- Present job.
- Currently training to be a reflexologist.

## Kat's tips

- IT skills are an advantage.
- A receptionist is the first point of contact with a company for most people, so it's important that you look presentable, as well as being friendly and helpful.



### Do you do anything else?

Occasionally a therapist is unwell and has to cancel an appointment. It is my job to call the patient to explain and rearrange the appointment.

We also sell natural products, ranging from hand creams to cough remedies and homeopathic first aid boxes. They are all price-marked and kept in a cabinet in reception. It's part of my responsibility to deal with the product sales.

### What hours do you work?

I work three days a week from 2.30 p.m. to 8.30 p.m. The clinic is open from 10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. on Saturdays too. Sometimes, I cover for other receptionists when they are on holiday.

### What do you like about the job?

I love working with the therapists. I'm training to be a reflexologist, so it's really helpful to talk to them and find out about how they work. I also enjoy being part of an organisation that helps to make people feel better.

### Is there anything you dislike?

When the clinic is busy it can be a bit overwhelming. I could be helping one new patient to fill in forms and taking payment from another, with the phone ringing, the entry buzzer going and a child screaming in reception!

### What qualities make a good receptionist?

You must be able to speak clearly, be polite and friendly, and enjoy working with people. Good communication skills are essential. You should be well organised, remain calm under pressure and have a lot of energy to cope at busy times.

### Related jobs

Administrative assistant/officer/manager  
Customer services assistant/manager  
Medical receptionist  
Messenger  
Secretary  
Switchboard operator

### Salary information

Trainee receptionists earn about £8,500 a year. Experienced receptionists receive about £13,000. A receptionist in a senior position can earn £17,500 or more.

### Getting in

- There are no minimum qualifications, but GCSEs/S grades (A-C/1-3), particularly in English, are useful.
- Employers usually ask for clerical, secretarial and numerical skills. Some employers may also require IT skills.
- Some colleges of further education and private colleges offer courses in reception work.
- Apprenticeships may be available.



## Further reading

(Some may be priced)

Becoming a Complementary Therapist – How To Books

Complementary Medicine – Trotman

Getting into Complementary Therapies – Trotman

Working in healthcare - Connexions

For further details on careers look on the Connexions jobs4u website

🌐 [www.connexions-direct.com/jobs4u](http://www.connexions-direct.com/jobs4u)

Leaflets and information can be obtained from the organisations listed below.

## Useful addresses

### The British Complementary Medicine Association (BCMA)

PO Box 5122  
Bournemouth BH8 0WG  
☎ 0845 345 5977  
🌐 [www.bcma.co.uk](http://www.bcma.co.uk)

### Complementary Medical Association

🌐 [www.the-cma.org.uk](http://www.the-cma.org.uk)

### The Prince of Wales's Foundation for Integrated Health

12 Chillingworth Road  
London N7 8QJ  
☎ 020 7619 6140  
🌐 [www.fihealth.org.uk](http://www.fihealth.org.uk)

### Skills for Health

Goldsmiths House  
Broad Plain  
Bristol BS2 0JP  
☎ 0117 922 1155  
🌐 [www.skillsforhealth.org.uk](http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk)

### Chiropractic

AECC Chiropractic College  
13-15 Parkwood Road  
Bournemouth BH5 2DF  
☎ 01202 436200  
🌐 [www.aecc.ac.uk](http://www.aecc.ac.uk)

### British Chiropractic Association (BCA)

Blagrove House  
17 Blagrove Street  
Reading  
Berkshire RG1 1QB  
☎ 0118 950 5950  
🌐 [www.chiropractic-uk.co.uk](http://www.chiropractic-uk.co.uk)

### General Chiropractic Council

44 Wicklow Street  
London WC1X 9HL  
☎ 020 7713 5155  
🌐 [www.gcc-uk.org](http://www.gcc-uk.org)

**University of Glamorgan**  
The School of Applied Sciences  
Pontypridd  
Glamorgan CF37 1DL  
☎ 0800 716 925  
🌐 www.glam.ac.uk

### Homeopathy

**Alliance of Registered Homeopaths (ARH)**  
Millbrook  
Millbrook Hill  
Nutley  
East Sussex TN22 3PJ  
☎ 08700 736339  
🌐 www.a-r-h.org

**British Homeopathic Association (BHA)/The Faculty of Homeopathy**  
Hahnemann House  
29 Park Street West  
Luton LU1 3BE  
☎ 0870 444 3950  
🌐 www.trusthomeopathy.org

**Homeopathic Medical Association (HMA)**  
6 Livingstone Road  
Gravesend  
Kent DA12 5DZ  
☎ 01474 560336  
🌐 www.the-hma.org

**The Society of Homeopaths**  
11 Brookfield  
Duncan Close  
Moulton Park  
Northampton NN3 6WL  
☎ 0845 450 6611  
🌐 www.homeopathy-soh.com

### Acupuncture

**British Acupuncture Council (BAcC)**  
63 Jeddo Road  
London W12 9HQ  
☎ 020 8735 0400  
🌐 Website: www.acupuncture.org.uk

### Yoga

**The British Wheel of Yoga**  
25 Jermyn Street  
Sleaford  
Lincolnshire NG34 7RU  
☎ 01529 306 851  
🌐 www.bwy.org.uk

### Aromatherapy

**Aromatherapy Consortium**  
PO Box 6522  
Desborough  
Kettering  
Northamptonshire NN14 2YX  
☎ 0870 774 3477  
🌐 www.aromatherapy-regulation.org.uk

**The International Federation of Professional Aromatherapists (IFPA)**  
82 Ashby Road  
Hinckley  
Leicestershire LE10 1SN  
☎ 01455 637987  
🌐 www.ifparoma.org

### Herbalism

**The College of Phytotherapy (CPP)**  
Rutherford Park  
Marley Lane  
Battle  
East Sussex TN33 0TY  
☎ 01424 776780  
🌐 www.collegeofphytotherapy.com

**National Institute of Medical Herbalists (NIMH)**  
Elm House  
54 Mary Arches Street  
Exeter EX4 3BA  
☎ 01392 426022  
🌐 www.nimh.org.uk

**The Register of Chinese Herbal Medicine**  
Office 5  
1 Exeter Street  
Norwich NR2 4QB  
☎ 01603 623994  
🌐 www.rchm.co.uk

### Naturopathy

**General Council and Register of Naturopaths (GCRN)/British Naturopathic Association (BNA)**  
Goswell House  
2 Goswell Road  
Street  
Somerset BA16 0JG  
☎ 0870 745 6984  
🌐 www.naturopathy.org.uk (GCRN) and  
🌐 www.naturopaths.org.uk (BNA)

### Osteopathy

**British College of Osteopathic Medicine (BCOM)**  
Lief House  
120-122 Finchley Road  
London NW3 5HR  
☎ 020 7435 6464  
🌐 www.bcom.ac.uk

**British Osteopathic Association (BOA)**  
Langham House West  
Mill Street  
Luton  
Bedfordshire LU1 2NA  
☎ 01582 488455  
🌐 www.osteopathy.org

**General Osteopathic Council (GOsC)**  
176 Tower Bridge Road  
London SE1 3LU  
☎ 020 7357 6655  
🌐 www.osteopathy.org.uk

**Osteopathic Sports Care Association (OSCA)**  
PO Box 542  
Haywards Heath  
RH16 2YE  
☎ 0870 601 0037  
🌐 www.osca.org.uk

### Reflexology

**Association of Reflexologists**  
27 Old Gloucester Street  
London WC1N 3XX  
☎ 0870 567 3320  
🌐 www.aor.org.uk

**The British Reflexology Association**  
Administration Office  
Monks Orchard  
Whitbourne  
Worcester WR6 5RB  
☎ 01886 821207  
🌐 www.britreflex.co.uk

### Hypnotherapy

**The General Hypnotherapy Standards Council (GHSC) and General Hypnotherapy Register (GHR)**  
PO Box 204  
Lymington SO41 6WP  
☎ 01590 683770  
🌐 www.ghsc.co.uk  
🌐 www.general-hypnotherapy-register.com

### Nutritional Therapy

**British Association for Nutritional Therapy (BANT)**  
27 Old Gloucester Street  
London WC1N 3XX  
☎ 08706 061284  
🌐 www.bant.org.uk

**Nutritional Therapy Council**  
PO Box 116  
Ripon  
Harrogate HG4 2WA  
☎ 0845 355 1162

### Massage

**General Council for Massage Therapy (GCMT)**  
Whiteway House  
Blundells Lane  
Rainhill  
Prescot L35 6NB  
☎ 0151 430 8199  
🌐 www.gcmt.org.uk

### Sales assistant

**Skillsmart (Sector Skills Council for Retail)**  
40 Duke Street  
London W1A 1AB  
☎ Retail career line: 0800 093 5001  
🌐 www.skillsmart.com



## Jobs which might interest you in the complementary therapy sector include:

Acupuncturist  
Alexander technique practitioner  
Aromatherapist  
Chiropractor  
Herbalist (Chinese herbal medicine)  
Homeopath  
Hypnotherapist  
Masseur/Masseuse  
Osteopath  
Naturopath  
Nutritional therapist  
Reflexologist  
Yoga teacher

Check out further details about some of these jobs at [www.connexions-direct.com/jobs4u](http://www.connexions-direct.com/jobs4u)

### Other Formats

This publication is available in Braille, large print and on audio cassette.

Please telephone DfES publications on: **0845 602 2260 (select option 2)**, or email: [connexions@prolog.uk.com](mailto:connexions@prolog.uk.com) to order copies.

A text only version is also available to download at: [www.connexions-direct.com/wicompththerapy](http://www.connexions-direct.com/wicompththerapy)

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### Feedback

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