

## Podiatry: The Career That Found Me

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*“A lot of students seeking a career in medicine either don’t know about podiatry as an option, or do not know the many aspects a career in podiatric medicine and surgery has to offer.” –Jaclyn Reed*

I first found out about podiatry as a potential career when I was playing Division I College Softball and suffered a season-ending ankle injury. I was referred to a podiatrist by my mom’s friend, who had recently been evaluated for foot pain. An MRI revealed the extent of my injuries, and I underwent surgery to repair my lateral ankle ligaments and peroneus longus tendon.

Throughout the course of my treatment, my podiatrist took the time to get to know me and my career aspirations. I was a Biology major and Chemistry minor with an interest in medicine. However, I was unsure of which route I wanted to pursue since it was still early on in my college education. She offered for me to shadow her so I could see the full spectrum of what a career in podiatry had to offer. Two years later, in the summer of my Junior year, I reached out and decided to take her up on the offer.

While shadowing in both the clinic and operating room, I saw a multitude of pathologies and procedures ranging from a calcaneal fracture, bunionectomies, pediatric flatfoot reconstruction, neurologic disorders, diabetic foot wounds, and everything in between. Shortly after I began shadowing, it became apparent that there was a strong doctor-patient relationship that was built. She truly took the time to get to know all of her patients and made conversation amidst evaluating the patients.

The ability to improve patients’ quality of life and to see the gratitude that her patients expressed also strongly impacted my decision to choose podiatry as my career. I knew that I would have the ability to help patients in the same capacity, while establishing a rapport with my patients.

Her personable and outgoing demeanor led her to learn about my potential interest in a career in podiatry. In my own practice, I hope to recruit aspiring students into a career in podiatry and provide them with the shadowing experience and exposure that I was fortunate enough to have. I think the best way to recruit new students to the field is within your own office, just as I had been introduced to the field. A lot of students seeking a career in medicine either don’t know about podiatry as an option, or do not know the many aspects a career in podiatric medicine and surgery has to offer.

I wanted a career that allowed me to work with my hands and interact with people throughout the day, while applying my clinical and surgical skills. The myriad of surgical and office-based procedures that you can perform, combined with the variety in patient population and pathologies, ultimately was what led to my decision to pursue my career in podiatry. The influence and exposure that my podiatrist provided me was the gateway to my career, which I will always be grateful for!