



YOUR PRACTICE

## SEO: Four Reasons Why These Three Letters Are So Important to Your Practice

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It is a term that gets thrown around a lot: SEO or search-engine optimization; but what does it really mean and why is it so important to your practice? SEO is the process of making specific changes to both the design and content of your website, or *optimizing* it, so you get more organic, unpaid traffic to your site and rank higher on the search-engine results pages. Let me share with you four reasons why SEO is so important to your practice.

### 1. Improved Website Traffic and Visibility

Google is never going to divulge its algorithm, but there are commonly known strategies you can use to increase SEO and get your site in front of more potential patients. Using specific keywords can definitely boost your traffic; and improving your traffic and visibility to potential patients in your area is just one way to get more physical traffic coming through your door for acupuncture appointments.



Adding content on a regular basis is a great way to get keywords on your page and improve your SEO ranking. Examples of different content include blogs, research and trade journal articles, patient testimonials and reviews, and even videos. Smartphones make filming a quick 1- to 2-minute video easy to do and upload to your website. Blogs can be quick 500- to 600-word articles on the latest research on any new products or services you are offering. It does not have to be difficult or terribly time consuming if you have a plan to consistently post new content.

And if you do not think you have the time to generate content, there are plenty of freelance writers and marketing companies that specialize in this type of content and would be happy to discuss your needs and how they can help.

To find out how your site is performing and what keywords would be helpful to your SEO, register for a Google Analytics account. This will give you an idea of where your current site ranks and give you some ideas to begin your SEO keyword journey.

## 2. Understand Your Patients

Once you start looking at the analytics of your website, you can find some interesting metrics to tell you more about the people visiting your website. You can get demographic and device information from analytics; and if you use the [Google Search Console](#) tool, you can get an idea of where they are in the decision-making process and see what keywords are getting you increased traffic. It is always helpful to know what information might be lacking on your site that is preventing potential patients from booking an appointment with you.

## 3. Cost-Effective / Great ROI

SEO marketing, while it may seem overwhelming at first, is actually very cost-effective. When your traffic increases due to these more-targeted searches, you know that the people coming to your site are looking for answers to their health care questions. And you want your practice to appear at the

top of the list when someone types in "Acupuncturist in my area," or "Can acupuncture help with chronic pain?"

People are already interested in the services you provide; you are just convincing them, through your website, that you are the right health care partner to meet their needs. Once you begin to consistently rank well, that consistent online traffic should translate into actual physical traffic with more patients coming through your door.

#### 4. Thought Leadership

Another reason to utilize SEO is to position yourself as a thought leader in your area. By posting blogs and research relevant to your specialty, you can position yourself as the go-to practitioner for your area.

For example, if dealing with infertility is your area of expertise, make sure your website is clearly communicating that. If it's chronic pain, herbs, or diet and nutrition – whatever it is, make sure you are taking advantage of those keywords to improve your ranking and position yourself as the expert in your region.

#### Worth the Commitment

It's important to note that SEO takes time, so you may not see strong results for a few months. Additionally, Google is constantly changing and updating its algorithm, so this is going to be a long-term strategy that will need to be adjusted on a regular basis. If you just cannot devote the time necessary to plan that initial strategy, there are marketing companies spanning a variety of budgets that can help get you going in the right direction. Just ask Google and see who is at the top of the ranking for SEO marketing in your area!

Perhaps one of the most important advantages to strong SEO is the ability to connect with your patients and potential patients. People are already performing a search because they think acupuncture is the answer to whatever ails them. Creating content and providing a website that answers the questions your target audience is asking helps pave the way for an ongoing relationship with patients.

Publishing content on a regular basis positions you as a reliable and trusted source of information for your patients, all while improving your organic traffic and driving even more people to discover your website. It definitely takes an investment of time and attention, but creating strong SEO will do a great deal to improve your practice in the long run.

AUGUST 2021