



PRACTICE TOOLS

10 Steps to a Successful in-Home NIR Therapy Program (Pt. 1)

Rob Berman | DIGITAL EXCLUSIVE

Peer-reviewed scientific studies over the past several decades show an impressively large list of health conditions that are amenable to NIR (near-infrared/red light) therapy. As a result, NIR therapy has increasingly grown in popularity and acceptance in many health-related fields, where it has earned a place in clinics across the United States.

Adding NIR therapy as a treatment option makes sense for acupuncturists as well, because by including NIR therapy on your treatment menu, you can confidently offer patients a painless, simple, all-natural, non-invasive, highly effective, and risk-free treatment modality that triggers and supports the body's own innate healing ability.

NIR therapy can be depended upon to bring effective pain relief and circulation support for a wide range of musculoskeletal issues, from sprains and strains to back pain, knee, hip, and joint issues, tennis elbow, whiplash, and carpal tunnel syndrome - and can even help reduce the painful symptoms of chronic conditions such as osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, peripheral neuropathy, tendinopathy, plantar fasciitis, and fibromyalgia. The bottom line is that NIR therapy can improve the quality of life for those suffering from a variety of minor to major health issues.

Frequent Treatment is Key



NIR therapy sessions usually last up to 20 minutes. For a minor condition, one or two sessions may be all that is needed for pain to subside and the issue to disappear. For acute conditions, a few days to a few weeks of NIR therapy sessions may be required.

However, in the case of chronic conditions, most practitioners who utilize NIR therapy have discovered that the key to successful results is a plan of frequent treatments over a longer time span. For chronic conditions, daily therapy sessions (or a minimum of three sessions per week) for a number of weeks seem to be the most beneficial treatment plan for optimal results.

Dr. Steven Chalk is the owner of Freedom Clinic of Chiropractic in South Jordan, Utah. He uses NIR therapy to treat his patients with neuropathy. When asked how many treatment sessions it takes before the average neuropathy patient begins to see improvements, Dr. Chalk reports, "It is hard to say because it varies, but probably 30 daily treatments."

In-Home Treatment

For some chronic-condition patients, having to come in for office visits as often as is needed to achieve effective results is time-consuming, difficult and, depending upon the mileage required or other costs of transportation, expensive. (This is particularly problematic during COVID-19 restrictions.) As a result, this regimen may quickly get tedious and hard to maintain for these patients, especially if they have a demanding work schedule, are seniors and/or have mobility issues. The answer to this problem is for acupuncturists to develop treatment programs that can be conducted in the convenience of the patient's own home and on the patient's own schedule. Because NIR therapy is so easy to administer, therapy sessions eventually can be performed by the patient on their own, or with the assistance of

family members. Dr. Brian McKay, owner of Core Health in Darien, Conn., has his patients purchase an NIR therapy system to conduct their own daily treatment sessions at home. As he explains, "It is a passive type of treatment, so there's no real reason why they cannot do it."

Steps to a Successful In-Home Program

Practitioners have found the 10 steps listed below to be the key to successful in-home programs. Complete details about these 10 steps will appear in part 2 of this article (March digital issue).

1. Purchase and sell NIR therapy systems.
2. Explain NIR therapy to your patients.
3. Schedule regular office visits for therapy.
4. Assign monthly self-assessments.
5. Establish a realistic time frame.
6. Make NIR therapy sessions easy.
7. Provide diet and nutrition advice.
8. Make supplements part of your treatment protocol.
9. Encourage the patient to develop a regular exercise program.
10. Show interest and provide encouragement.

Note: Part 2 of this article will help you see why steps 7-9 are important aspects of getting patient buy-in for their in-home NIR therapy program.

Happy Patients, Happy Practice

Of course, the success of any in-home program ultimately depends upon the patient's own efforts and diligence. But an educated patient who understands NIR therapy, and is knowledgeable about diet, nutrition and exercise, stands a much better chance of being invested in their own health enough to keep up the daily in-home NIR therapy sessions that are essential for effective results, especially with chronic conditions.

Over time, as results are gradually realized, the patient should be happy and satisfied with the effectiveness of NIR therapy and dedicated to their in-home program. And a happy, satisfied patient leads to a loyal, long-time patient who becomes a walking testimonial for your professional care and clinic!

Editor's Note: Part 2 of this article (March digital issue) discusses in detail each of the 10 steps to a successful in-home NIR therapy program.

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