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# Your Step-by-Step Medical Practice Social Media Guide



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## Introduction



Social media has become a vital marketing channel in the healthcare world, and your independent practice cannot afford to ignore it. Today, two-thirds of patients use online search before booking an appointment with a healthcare provider. Over 50 percent of the search results come from social media sites. According to DC Interactive Group, 41 percent of people said social media would affect their choice of a specific doctor, hospital, or medical facility.

The average U.S. consumer spends 15 hours per week on social media channels.


While jumping into social media to promote your business may seem intimidating at first, it doesn't have to be. You probably already have some familiarity from personal use. Nearly 75 percent of all Americans use social media for personal use, and 60 percent of doctors have a personal Facebook account.

Setting up your business account isn't that much harder. Most social media channels can be set up by following a set of simple, step-by-step instructions. [Use this guide to walk you through setting up the most common social media sites for your medical practice.](#) 

“Social media gives you powerful tools to define yourself online and establish your online reputation.”

Kevin Pho, MD, Founder, Kevin MD

# Facebook

Think of Facebook as a channel to connect with your existing patients and even bring in new ones by offering helpful tips and insights into what it is like to be part of your practice. [It is also a good starting point for practice owners, since many people are already familiar with Facebook for their personal connections.](#) 

Only 30% of practices have a Facebook page.

## 1 Your Personal Account

If you don't already have a personal account on Facebook, it is time to set one up because your business account will be connected to it. By Facebook rules, you cannot have separate business and personal accounts or you risk having them both shut down. And, while you can set up a business-only page, without having a personal account, there are many limitations to these pages that make them far less attractive for use in marketing your practice. Just make sure that as the practice owner, your Facebook business page is connected to your own personal page. You don't want to have it connected to the page of even a trusted employee because if they leave your practice, you risk losing access to your business page. To set up your personal account, just go to [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) and follow the instructions.

## 2 Creating the Page

Once you have created and are logged into your personal profile, go to [www.facebook.com/pages/create.php](http://www.facebook.com/pages/create.php) and choose the option "Local Business or Place". It will then ask you to choose the category of your business from a drop-down menu. You will also choose a sub-category to further refine your niche, making it easier for patients to find you. Make sure to choose the categories that best fit your practice so that if, for example, a patient is searching for an urologist in San Francisco, they can easily find you.



### 3 Choosing Your Facebook Page Name

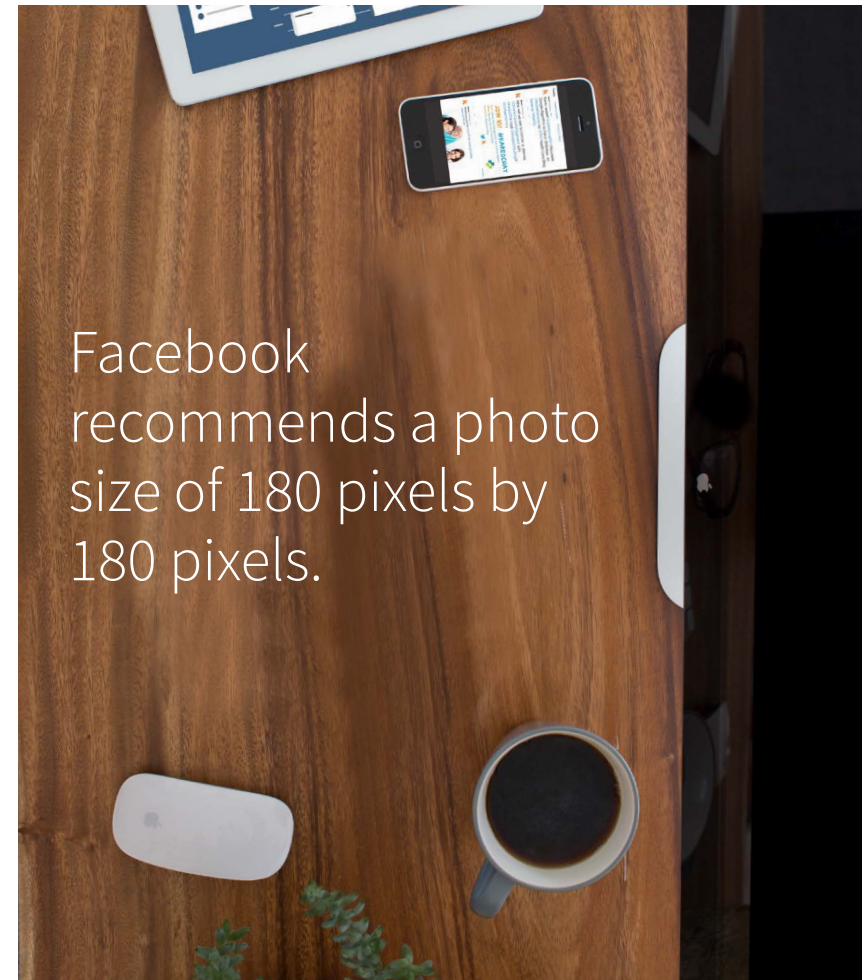
Under the Category menu, you will be asked to enter the name of your page. This should be the name of your practice. However, if another practice with the same name already has that page it is time to get a little more creative. You might choose your practice name followed by the city you are in. Facebook gives you 70 characters to work with in choosing your page name, so you may have to tweak it a little. Select the box next to “I agree to Facebook Pages Terms” and click “Get Started” to move to the next step.

Remember that once you have more than 200 fans or likes, you won't be allowed to change your page name, so make sure the page name you choose will stand up for the long term.

### 4 Your Profile Picture

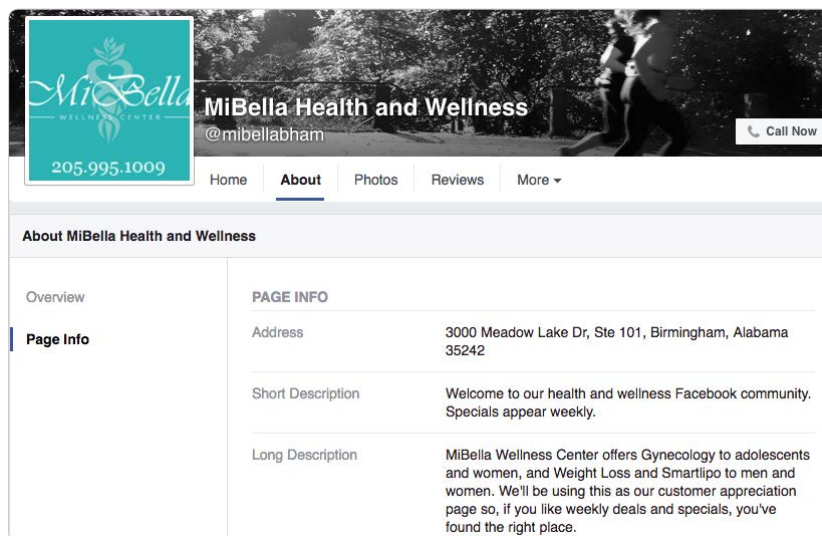
Your profile picture could be a photo of yourself, your staff, or your office. Choose what you feel your patients will connect with best because this picture will appear next to every post that goes into the news feed from your page. Facebook recommends a photo size of 180 pixels by 180 pixels. If you choose a picture

that is larger, you can adjust the viewable portion by placing your pointer on the picture and clicking “Edit Profile Picture” and then “Edit Thumbnail”. Once you have your profile picture set, click “Next” to move on.



## 5 The About Section

Be as thorough as you can in filling out this section. Here you will put your website address, your physical address, and describe your practice. Don't skimp on your description here. Tell patients about yourself and your practice and be sure to use keywords here to make your page as easy to find as possible. At this point, you will click on the button that says you are a real business and then click "Save Info". You now have your own Facebook business page.



## 6 Choose Administrators

Your page is up, but you still have a few housekeeping tasks to take care of before you are ready to begin posting. First, you need to choose who will be responsible for adding content to your page. You can designate a Page Manager.

Just remember that this person will have the right to send messages, create posts and ads, and review the reports generated by Facebook on your page.

If you choose to keep the role of Manager for yourself, you can designate other functions such as Moderator or Content Creator for employees to limit access while still allowing your staff to handle some of the basic necessities.

## 7 Review Your Permissions

To review your permission settings, click "Edit Page" then "Manage Permissions". You will find these in the admin panel. Two key areas to check are the Profanity Blocklist which should be set to medium or high and the Message button. If you leave your message button on the default setting, patients can send you messages through your page. This is fine if you make sure to monitor your page. However, if you don't plan to check your page regularly, change your default messaging so that patients will be able to reach you through your office email. You never want patients to message you and not receive a reply.

## 8 Your Cover Photo

The final step before you are ready to begin posting is to add a cover photo to your business page. To do this, just click “Add a Cover” and upload a photo from your computer. You can position it the way you like and then click “Save Changes”. Facebook requires your cover photo be a minimum of 399 pixels wide. Most standard photos work well but sometimes the top or bottom of the picture may be cut off so you might have to try a few shots to find the one that looks best on your page. Facebook does have a rule that cover photos cannot contain more than 20% text, so just be aware of that and you can choose a picture that best shows off your practice to both new and current patients.

Photo posts receive 39% more interaction than text posts.



## 9 Start Posting

Now that you have your business Facebook page up and running, you can “Like” your own page, start posting content, and send out emails to your patient community letting them know where to find your page. Remember that by its nature, social media is “social”. That means that once your page is up, it is vital that your practice is active, posting regularly, and providing timely, useful content, tips, and glimpses into your practice itself. Adding this personal touch can greatly improve how connected patients feel to you, your staff, and your practice.



# Twitter

Many businesses are using Twitter to connect with followers, create brand awareness, and drive traffic to their websites and you can do the same for your independent practice. Twitter is a powerful social media channel that lets you share small bites of content that can keep both potential and existing patients interested in your practice while allowing you to re-purpose content from your blog and other social media outlets like Facebook.

Setting up a business Twitter account is a simple process and the sooner you get started, the sooner you can begin “tweeting” and building a following for your practice.

## 1 Account Basics

The first step is to go to the Twitter homepage at [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com) and click “Sign Up” in the upper right corner. You will need to enter your business name and email address. You will also be required to verify your phone number before moving on. Choosing a username for your account is easy since it should reflect the name of your practice. Just remember, your username is limited to 15 characters.

## 2 Follows and Interests

At this point, Twitter will prompt you to complete a couple of steps designed to make your Twitter account more active. It will ask you to select people or businesses to “Follow” and to choose your “Interests”.

Following other healthcare providers in your area as well as companies that offer healthy tips and patient-oriented content can be a good idea to help you learn what is successful on Twitter. Choose “Interests” that reflect your practice and what you feel your ideal patients are looking for to get the most from your Twitter experience.



### 3 Your Profile Picture

Now that the first steps are complete, it is time to upload a profile picture. You want to choose a photo that best represents your practice. It can be a picture of your office, a staff picture, or a picture of yourself if you are a solo practitioner. Your profile picture will be part of your Twitter feed so make sure it reflects the tone of your practice.

### 4 Company Bio

The next step is adding your company bio. Twitter limits the bio to 160 characters, so while it should describe your practice, it has to be short. Using keywords that patients would be searching for is helpful, and don't forget to add a link to your website address.

### 5 Mobile Settings

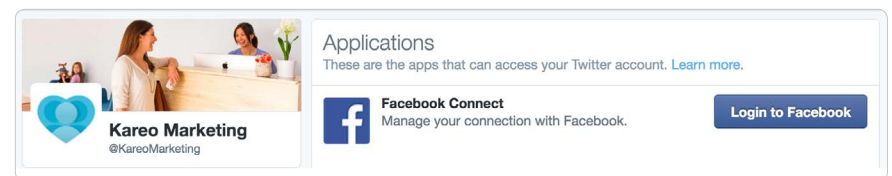
To make it easier to tweet even when you are not in the office, go to "Mobile Settings". This section lets you add a mobile number to access Twitter on-the-go.

### 6 Email Notifications


Go to the "Email Notifications" section to manage when and how often Twitter notifications are sent to you. Here, you can choose to be emailed when a patient likes your tweet or re-tweets you. This is a great way to keep track of how your tweets are being received and to be able to thank patients who are sharing your content.

### 7 Links to Other Social Media Accounts

To make the most of your Twitter business account, you want to make sure it is linked to your other social media channels. Luckily, Twitter makes this easy. Just go to the "Apps Settings" tab to add links to other social media tools like Facebook.



### 8 Time to Tweet

Once all of these steps have been completed, your independent practice is ready to start tweeting. To tweet, you can click on your home page where it says "Compose New Tweet" or on the blue button with a pencil. Each tweet is limited to 140 characters. You can add links to your tweets, such as ones to blog posts you have written, and photos to catch the interest of your patients. [Now that your practice has joined the Twitter community, the most important thing to remember is to stay active.](#) 

Twitter followers generally expect multiple tweets each day and are looking for content that is engaging, helpful, and shareable. When done right, Twitter can help your independent practice reach more patients, drive traffic to your website, increase patient visits, and build loyalty.

## Google+ and Google Places

Google offers a number of tools that make connecting with new and existing patients easier for your independent practice and you should take advantage of them. Google+ and Google Places are often easily confused, but each one offers its own unique benefits. While Google+ is a social media channel that allows you to engage with patients, post content, and build awareness of your practice online, Google Places is not a social media tool, but instead, literally places your practice on the map so that your patients can find your physical address using Google Maps.

Both Google+ and Google Places are easy to set up. To get started with either of these, you will first need a Google account. So, if you do not already have one, go to [accounts.google.com](https://accounts.google.com) and click “Create an Account”. Once you have a Google account, you will use it to set up both the Google Places and Google+ pages for your practice and you are ready to move on.

Let’s take it step-by-step and break down how to get started with Google Places and Google+, individually.

## Google Places

### 1 Set up Your Place

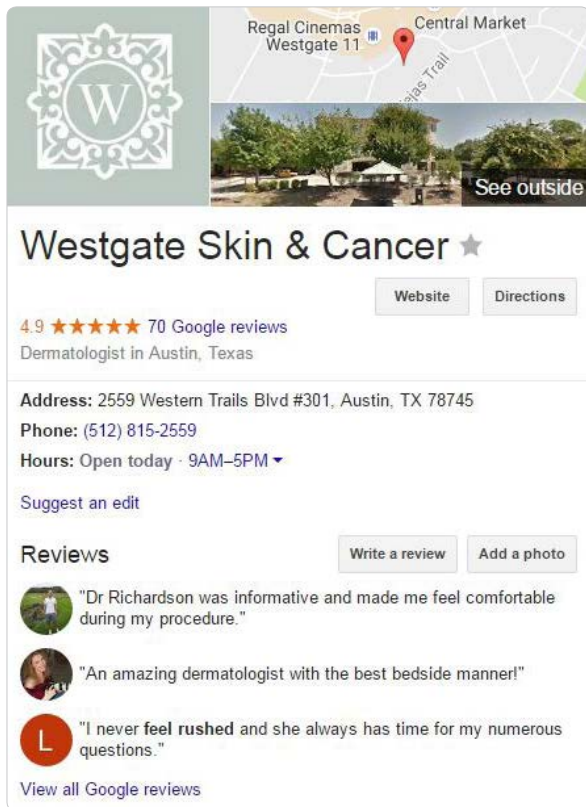
To set up a Places page for your practice, go to [www.google.com/business](https://www.google.com/business) and click on “Google My Business”. You will then enter your practice name. If your practice is already listed, select it and move on to the next step. Otherwise, enter your practice name and click “Add” and then continue.

### 2 Verify

Google wants to make sure that you as the practice manager or owner are the only person who has access to your information. The easiest way to complete this step is to click the “Verify by Phone” option. If this is not available to you, you will have to choose the postcard method to complete this step.

### 3 Review and Make Changes

Once you have verified that you are authorized to set up your Places page, you will need to review your information. Make sure that your address, website, and phone number is correct, update your business hours, and add photos. When your information is complete and up-to-date, click “Done Editing”.



While a couple of directories tend to rank highly for searches for most practice types— Healthgrades.com and Vitals.com, and, above all, Google’s own business listings—there is quite a lot of local variation.

The only way to know what the top directories are for your practice is to search like a patient.

If you’re an OB/GYN in Bend, OR, then search on phrases like these:

- OB/GYN Bend OR
- Obstetrician Bend OR
- Gynecologist Bend OR
- Well woman visit bend OR

You get the idea. Add anything else that your ideal prospective patient might search on to find you. See which sites pop up first for the searches that are most relevant for your practice, and use the results from the first couple of pages to build your initial list of targets.

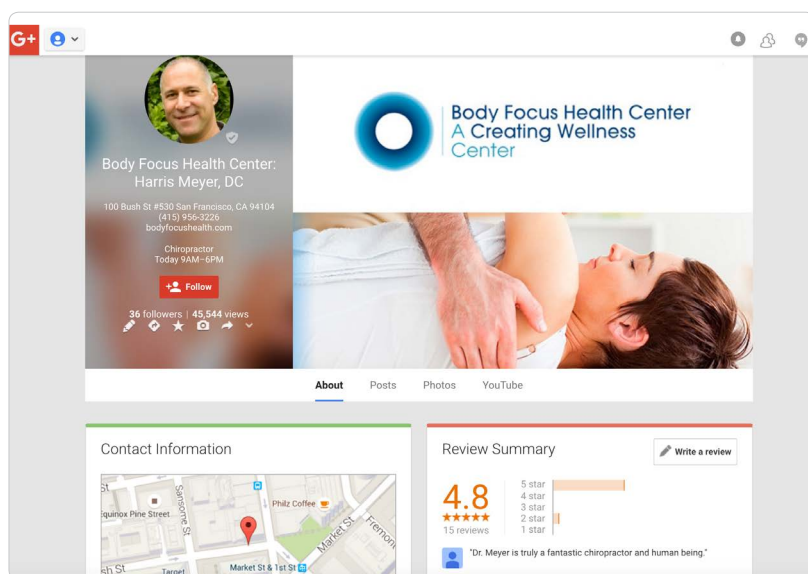
Once you’ve gone through all the top review and rating directories for your practice, make a note in your calendar to check again at least once a year.”

Laurie Morgan, Senior Consultant and Partner, Capko & Morgan

# Google+

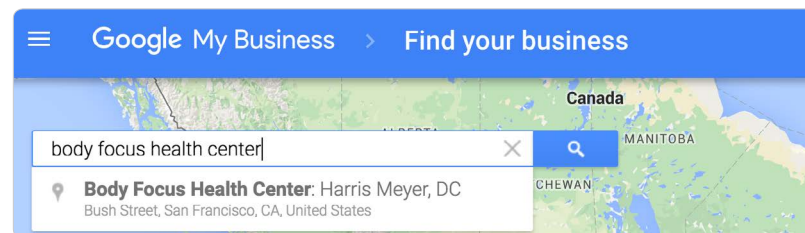
## 1 Your Personal Profile

Just like with Facebook, you will need to set up a personal Google+ profile page before you can set up one for your practice. Just go to Google+ and click “Sign Up” to create your personal profile.



## 2 Pick a Category

Once your personal profile is completed, go to “Create a Business Page” and click “Create a Page”. Select the category for “Local Business” and enter your country and telephone number at the prompts. You will then be able to choose a sub-category that best fits your practice.



## 3 Your Practice Information

You will next choose a name for your page. Try to stay consistent with your name across all of your social media channels to get the best results and make it easy for your patients to find you. Add all of the information about your practice and link to your website. Click the button to agree to Google’s terms for your page, and you are ready for the next step.

## 4 Customization Options

At this point, Google lets you customize your page. You will add your profile picture and you can even add a cover photo. Since the cover photo is larger, a picture of your office or your staff can work well here. You are also allowed to add a “Story” here but it is limited to 10 words. Think of this as your practice tagline or the 10 words that best describe your practice.

## 5 About

Use the “About” section to manage your selections, make changes, or choose groups to follow. Remember that Google+ is a social media channel and social media is about the personal touches that make your patients feel more connected to you and your practice.

Once you have your Google+ page completed, you are ready to start sharing content, health tips, practice updates, and other valuable information with new and potential patients. With all of the social media tools available today, there is no reason why your independent practice can’t build a loyal patient following, increase new patient visits, and show the online world what it is like to be a part of your practice. Google is one more place where you can do this.



## YouTube

There is one more social media outlet that you should not overlook, YouTube. With YouTube, your practice can post video tips, a series of videos with health information, a “Meet Your Doctor” clip, and more. And, with more than 1 billion people visiting YouTube each month globally, it is easy to see how using this social media powerhouse can help you grow your independent practice, increase patient visits, and generate practice awareness. Since YouTube is part of Google, set up is easy and very similar to setting up your other Google social sites.

If you have already created a Google+ account for your independent practice, follow these 3 simple steps and you will have a YouTube business account to help you connect with patients using the power of video:

### 1 Using Your Google Account

Go to [www.YouTube.com](http://www.YouTube.com) and click “Sign In” in the upper right corner. Make sure to sign in using the information you set up for your practice’s Google+ page. Next, click “My Channel” on the left-hand side of the screen. A box will pop up showing “Use YouTube As”. Make sure your information is correct and click “Create Channel”.

### 2 Automation Makes It Easy

Since you signed in through your Google+ account, Google automatically transfers all of your practice’s information to your YouTube channel.

### 3 Verification

Now that your YouTube channel is set up, the final step is verification. Click “Channel” on the left-hand side of your screen and then “Status and Features”. Next to your profile picture, you will see a button that says “Verify”. Click it and choose whether to verify via phone or text. Once YouTube is assured that you are not a robot, you will be free to start posting videos for your practice.

Don't forget that YouTube is a 'social' platform just like Facebook and Twitter. Make sure you're actively subscribing to other's content, responding to comments on your videos, and liking content that is popular among your target audience. Just like the other social platforms, you will help increase engagement, activity, and awareness with your own content if you don't hesitate to put yourself out there!

Erika Crespo, Owner, Stretch Synergy



If you have not set up a Google account for your practice yet, use the following steps to get started on YouTube:

#### 1 Getting a Google Account

Your first step is to go to [www.YouTube.com](http://www.YouTube.com) and click “Sign In” on the upper right. Next click “New to YouTube? Create an account”. You will then be prompted to fill in the blanks to create a new Google account. Remember, since your YouTube channel will be used for your practice, it is best not to use a personal Google account to set it up. Instead, use a separate Google account created for your business and a sign-in that you feel comfortable sharing with your staff members who will be posting your videos.

#### 2 Confirmation

Google will send you an email to confirm your account. Follow the link provided and then move to the next step.

#### 3 Your Username

In this step, you will choose your username for your practice's YouTube account. Ideally, this will be your practice name. However, if it is already taken, get creative. You can add the name of the city you are in to your username or even its initials.

#### 4 Profile Set Up

This is actually a non-step. Since your profile will be linked to your Google account rather than a Google+ account, you can skip setting up the profile here.

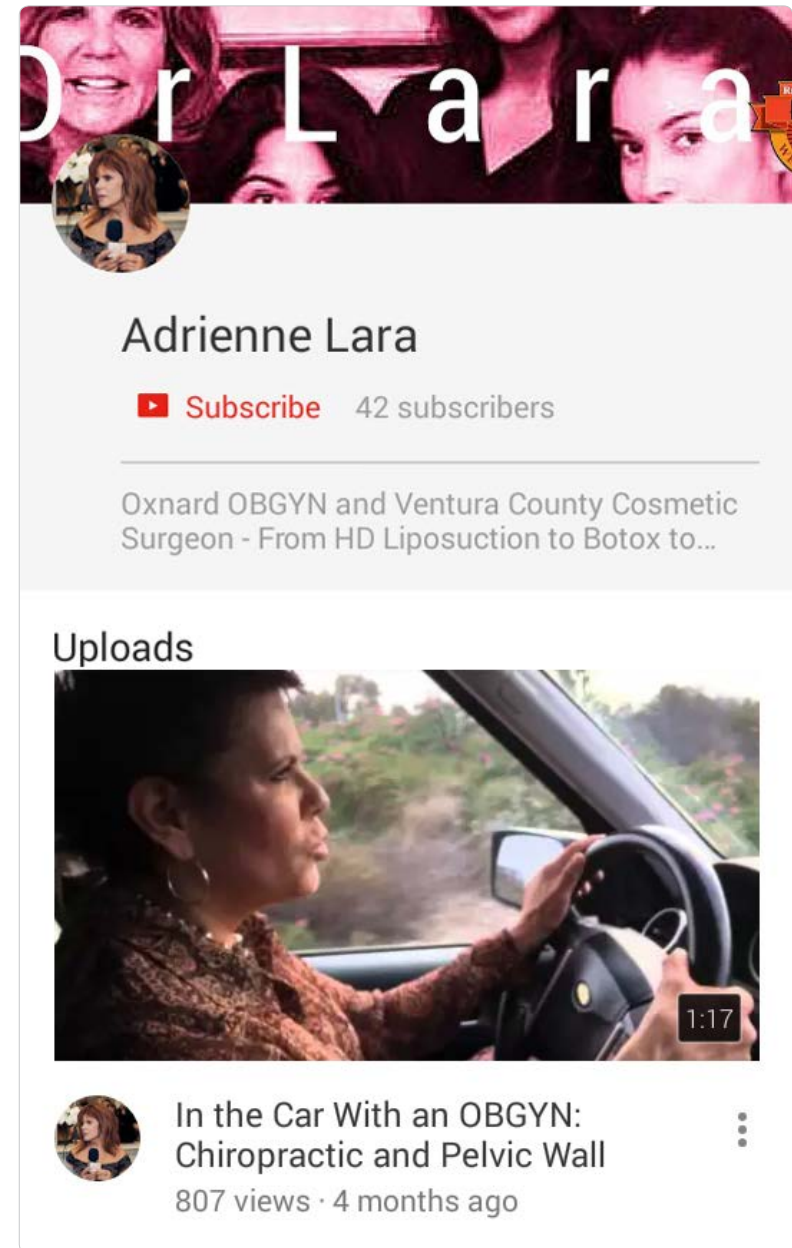
#### 5 Channel Name

Now that your housekeeping is done, click “Back to YouTube” and click the “My Channel” link on the left-hand side of the page. A box will pop up showing “Use YouTube As”. Make sure that the name you have chosen is entered correctly and then click “Create Channel”.


#### 6 Verification

Just like in the verification section of step # 3 above, click “Channel” on the left-hand side of your screen and then “Status and Features”. You will see a button that says “Verify”. Click it and choose whether to verify via phone or text. Once YouTube knows you are not a robot, you are ready to go.

Whichever way you choose to start your YouTube business account for your practice, you will be glad that you did. Engaging your existing and potential patients through video is a valuable tool in your practice’s growth. And, as an added benefit, YouTube can help you build your email list, allowing you to reach out to potential patients easier by letting you embed a sign-up form directly into your YouTube videos. Don’t wait any longer to put the power of video to work for your independent practice. Start setting up your YouTube account today.



## Conclusion

Social media is no longer optional for medical practices. [Some form of social media presence is critical to continued success and independence.](#) 

Once you have your preferred pages set up consider this advice from expert blogger John Lynn, founder of [Healthcarescene.com](#):

“My three strategies for success in social media are:

### Be Authentic

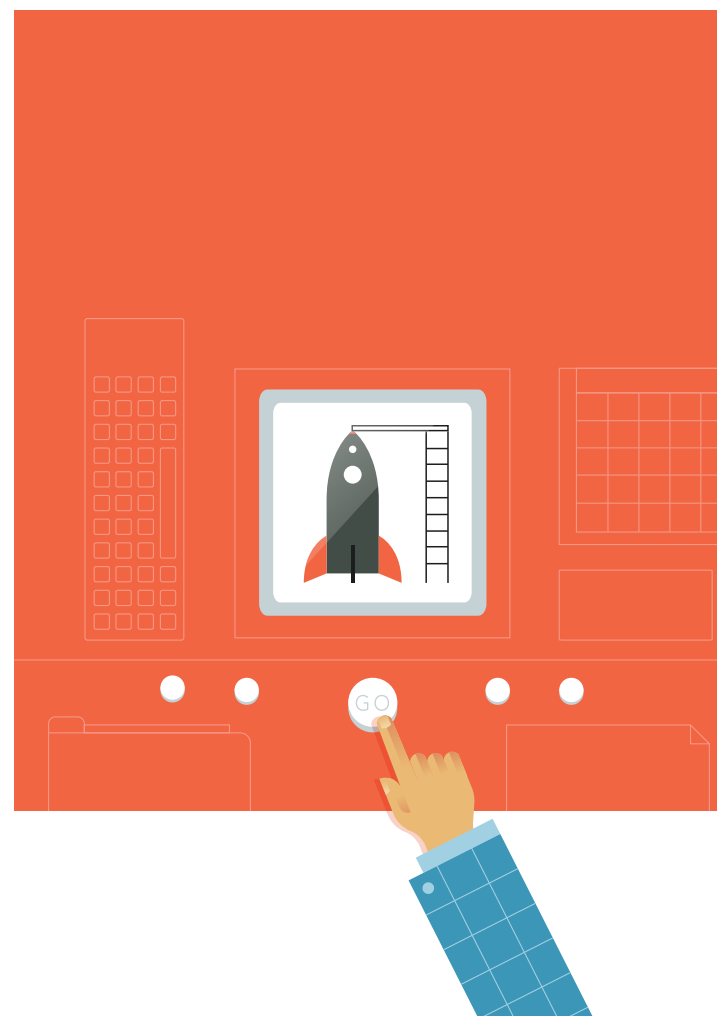
People connect with authenticity and run away from people who are fake or trying to sell them something. This means you need to have the real people doing the work at your practice producing your social media content. Keep the sales stuff out of your social media.

### Give Before You Get

When approaching social media, think about how many ways you can freely give value to those who follow you. This give first approach will attract a large following, which will eventually provide a valuable return for your practice. Once you have a following, don't be afraid to thoughtfully ask them for their support.

## Pace Yourself

Set realistic expectations for how you'll use social media and what the right pace is for your practice. It's really easy to sprint out of the social media blocks. This early sprint will undoubtedly lead to burnout and kill your social media efforts. Relationship building on social media takes time, and so it's more of a marathon than a sprint.”



## About Kareo

Kareo is the only cloud-based and complete medical technology platform purpose built to meet the unique needs of independent practices. Today we help over 35,000 providers in all 50 states run more efficient and profitable practices, while delivering outstanding patient care. In 2016, Kareo introduced the first technology platform that helps independent practices find more patients, manage their care with a fully certified and easy to use EHR, and get paid quickly – all in one complete and integrated package. Kareo has received extensive industry recognition, including the Deloitte Technology Fast 500, Inc. 5000 and Black Book's #1 Integrated EHR, Practice Management and Medical Billing Vendor. With offices across the country, our mission is to help independent practices succeed in an ever-changing healthcare market. For more information, visit [www.kareo.com](http://www.kareo.com).



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