

Social Media Guidelines For Chiropractors



Introduction



There's no denying that social media has become a necessity when operating and growing a successful healthcare practice. With over 4.33 active social media users globally, there's no denying that your current and prospective patients are spending at least some of their time on one social media platform or another.

It's important for any business owner to adopt best practices when using any digital platform, but as a chiropractor and leader in your community, it is especially important for you to create a practice policy when it comes to social and other digital media.

Your patients and audience look to you for guidance in many areas and with them placing so much trust in you, their privacy and protection has to be at the forefront of your mind when creating and sharing content.

In this guide you will learn the best practices and guidelines you can implement to ensure your patients and practice are protected when it comes to sharing online.



Why Chiropractors Need Social Media

Using social media for your practice is often seen by chiropractors as another task they don't have time to do.

But social media is an incredible way to keep in contact with your current patients and enhance the personal relationships you have built-in practice.

Your social media doesn't have to be something that takes up hours of your time. There are ways you can share your practice's personality and happenings without having to sit down each week and create pages and pages of content.

Encouraging your team (if you have one) to take control of the practice's social media accounts throughout the day is a great way to share the load when it comes to social content.

Has a patient brought you a gift or some baked goods they have made at home? Share this across Instagram and Facebook you'd be surprised how much that will mean to them. Just be sure to do it the right way. (Something we will cover later in this guide.)

Social is also a great place to share your knowledge. Many chiropractors today use social media platforms to educate, inform and interact with their audience. This helps to build trust and authority with your current and prospective patients.




Not All Social Media Is Created Equally

Each social media platform serves a specific purpose. So, before posting, ask yourself if your content is in context, and if it's relevant to the audience on this platform.

Here are the main social media platforms and where their strengths lie.





YouTube

YouTube is a visual social channel with its main focus being video. This makes it a great platform to share educational content. Create videos demonstrating exercises patients can do at home for their particular issue, stretching tips everyone should be doing and training videos for specific injuries that are beneficial to your audience.



Instagram

Instagram is first and foremost, a visual platform. Naturally, the platform is great for sharing day-to-day life at your clinic. This also includes documenting the before and after of patients' chiropractic journeys (with their permission, of course). Be sure to utilise the various features such as IGTV, Reels and Insta Live to connect with your audience. Over 50% of all users here fall into the 18-35 age range.



Facebook

Facebook is the biggest of all the social medias, making it a great way to connect with a wide range of users. For your practice, the platform allows you to connect with current and future potential patients easily and allows users to share your content, unlike Instagram where they can only like or comment on your post. The age demographic of Facebook is somewhat higher than Instagram's 18-35 range. You're more likely to reach people who are mid 30's and above on Facebook's platform. Depending on your main demographic, this could be where most of your patients spend their time.



LinkedIn

LinkedIn is strictly a professional site. The platform is ideal for connecting with other people within the chiropractic industry. Chiropractic students can locate employment opportunities and professional chiropractors can connect with graduates. LinkedIn is also a great place to collaborate with other chiropractors if you have a podcast or YouTube channel you're trying to grow.



Twitter

Twitter is a less used platform in the chiropractic industry. It is text-based, allowing you 144 characters per post and is therefore ideal for sharing quick, bite-sized information. Recently, Twitter added a voice chatroom feature called Twitter Spaces which encourages real-time conversations.

Where Should You Be Focussing Your Energy?

Which platform you decide to build your brand and share on (and yes, you and your practice are both brands) depends on a few factors and is by no means the same for every chiropractor.



If you have a love for video and are comfortable being in front of the camera, Facebook live is a great tool to get your audience engaged in real-time. For you, YouTube is also the perfect place to take your practice online.



Alternatively, if you would rather not be in front of the camera all the time, but you love taking photos (or one of your team do) then Instagram is perfect for you.



Another factor that plays a huge role in this is your main demographic. If you work with mainly athletes and younger patients then Instagram is ideal for you and your practice. If, however, most of your patients are in the latter years of their lives, then you should focus more on Facebook. If you are looking to coach other chiropractors or build a chiropractic podcast, then LinkedIn may be where you need to spend more time to connect with other professionals in your industry.



Protecting Patient Information

As chiropractors, we know the most important thing to you is the health of your patients. Not only their physical health but also their mental, emotional and spiritual health. This is why it's so important to protect all of your patient's personal information. Your patients trust you enough to believe you won't share their information publicly without their knowledge and permission.



When creating content for social media, we must all do our very best to ensure that we have consent and permission to share everything we publish online. Things that constitute as content include blogs, emails, testimonials, recordings of adjustments, in practice photos and videos and almost any type of creative you can share online. Some people may not feel comfortable having their faces out there, while others might be fine with it. It's our role to ensure that everyone who appears on our social has given consent to do so.

The key here is to understand and respect private and sensitive information as well as being empathetic to your patient's wishes. The last thing you want is for one of your patients to be annoyed or upset because they have seen themselves on your social media without them giving permission for you to do so. Not only will this create unease between them and the practice, but certain people may feel the need to take things further and you may find yourself facing legal action down the line.



Copyright and Infringement

Copyright and its infringement is something all professionals should have in mind when finding content to share online. As you know, you can find information on any subject you are looking for online. But just because it's online does not mean it's fair game for you to use as your own!



Much of the content available online is protected under copyright laws. Meaning you can't just use any video or image you find, without identifying what category it falls under. For instance, if you use a copyright-protected image (many of which can be found on Google images) for purposes such as advertising, you could find yourself in court facing copyright infringement charges. This is not said to scare or put you off from sharing online, but to make you aware of what could happen if you're not careful.

A great way to ensure you are covered is to either take your own photos, or to use a stock photo and video service. Sites like Pixabay.com or Unsplash.com are royalty-free image and video libraries where you can search for and download the content you require. This gives you peace of mind you're not going to receive a cease-and-desist email from the creator.

Apart from images, whenever sharing texts such as quotes, always try to give credit where credit is due.



Social Media Ethics and Etiquette

Social media ethics are important in any professional practice. As free and open as these platforms are, you need to act the right way. This entails the way you share information, the type of information you share and how you interact with people. Principles to keep in mind in regard to social media ethics and etiquette include transparency, authenticity and communication.



When creating social media usernames, be transparent with your identity. It's different if it's a personal account but for professional accounts, choose a name that people can easily identify, like the name of your practice or your own name.

Remember...



- Authenticity and transparency help to build trust in you and your practice.
- Always approach conversations in an open and honest manner.
- Avoid insulting people online and engaging in heated conversations.

- If anyone is being rude or abusive in your comments section, rather than fueling the fire by responding to the trolls, simply hide their comment. Once a comment is hidden on Facebook, only the person who wrote it, and their friends can see the comment.

- Most people you're speaking to online are not experts in the field so try to avoid industry jargon and terminology.

- Speak to your audience in a friendly and easy to understand manner.

- Try not to share your patient's full name, usually a first name and initial will suffice.

- Social media is not exempt from following ASA guidelines, so be sure to stay up to date and always be mindful of what you are posting.



Finally

We hope these guidelines help you to make better decisions and implement best practices when it comes to sharing content online.

If you are the owner of your practice or you have a team that you manage, then we recommend using this document as a starting point for building your own practice social and digital media policy.

This policy can then be shared with your CA's, any associates or new grads you have working with you and anyone who represents you or your brand to ensure that their actions online match those of your practice.



UCA