



The Ultimate SEO Guide for
MEDICAL PRACTICES



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Did you know that one of the best ways to get patients to your medical practice is through targeting them through online search engines? But what makes search engine traffic so effective for driving new patients to medical practices?

It's simply because potential patients find your website through Googling specific keywords and they've landed on your page by typing in search terms related to the service you offer.

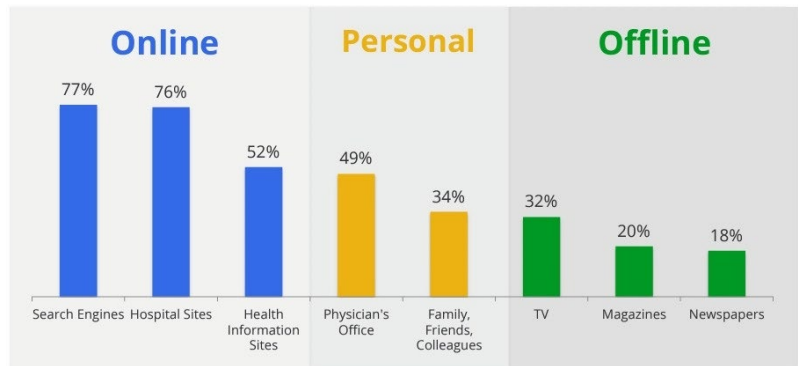
According to a Google study, 77% of patients first start their research on search engines before going to a hospital.

According to a Google study, **77%** of patients first start their research on search engines before going to a hospital.

Google

Online plays a significant role in the research process

84% of patients use both online and offline sources for research



Taking this into consideration, there's no doubt about the importance search engines have to your medical practice. Therefore, neglecting this platform would mean potentially losing patients and leaving money on the table.

So, if you're ready to optimize your medical website and other online properties to attract more patients from search, we recommend implementing these traits into your digital marketing strategy to start driving more ROI into your medical practice. Let's dive in. ❖



FIND THE RIGHT
KEYWORDS



Think about your own behavior when searching for information on the web. Where do you start? For many, it starts with typing some words into a search engine to see what pops up in the results page. For the business on the backend who is vying for the top spot on that page, whatever is put into that search engine are known as the “keywords”.

The same thing applies to potential patients who are looking for the services you offer, which means that it’s your job to figure out what keywords are useful for people finding your medical practice online.

As a medical professional, you probably have an idea of possible keywords your patients use. Nevertheless, you need to validate these keywords before optimizing your pages for them.

In some cases, you might even find out that potential clients are not using the keywords you have in mind. That's why it's worth it to take an extra moment to carry out additional keyword research.

To do this, there are some helpful keyword research tools available that will also give you metrics on those keywords including search volumes, competition, and cost per click (CPC).

Some of these tools include Ahrefs, SEMrush, Cognitive SEO, Moz, Majestic SEO, KeywordTool.io, and Ubersuggest.

For instance, to use the Ubersuggest tool, enter your keyword into the tool and click on "Search":

Ubersuggest

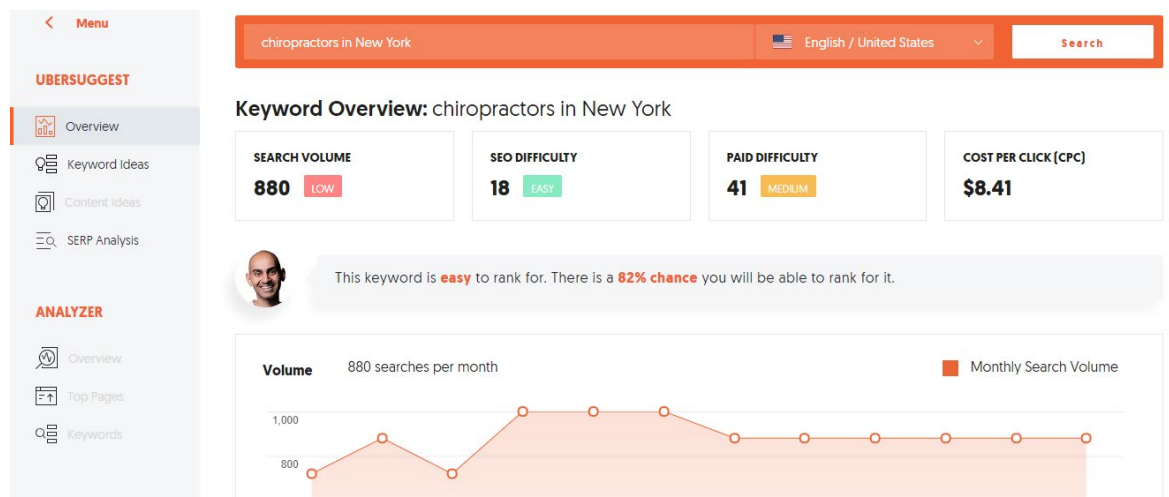
Looking for more keyword ideas?

Type in a keyword below to start generating more suggestions.



A screenshot of the Ubersuggest search interface. It features a search bar with the text "chiropractors in New York" entered. To the right of the search bar, there is a dropdown menu showing "English / United States" and a "SEARCH" button.

Details pop up on the keyword like search volume, difficulty, and cost per click:



A screenshot of the Ubersuggest keyword overview page for "chiropractors in New York". The page displays several key metrics:

- SEARCH VOLUME:** 880 (LOW)
- SEO DIFFICULTY:** 18 (EASY)
- PAID DIFFICULTY:** 41 (MEDIUM)
- COST PER CLICK (CPC):** \$8.41

Below the metrics, there is a message: "This keyword is **easy** to rank for. There is a **82% chance** you will be able to rank for it." A small profile picture of a man is visible next to this message.

At the bottom, there is a line graph showing the "Volume" of searches over time. The graph indicates "880 searches per month" and shows a fluctuating line representing the "Monthly Search Volume".

You can also find similar keywords to coincide with your main keyword. This can help uncover some additional keyword opportunities:

Keyword Ideas SUGGESTIONS | RELATED

KEYWORD ?	TREND ?	VOLUME ?	CPC ?	PAID DIFFICULTY ?	SEO DIFFICULTY ?
chiropractors in new york		880	\$5.69	36	16
chiropractors in new york city		2,900	\$8.72	39	17
chiropractic new york city		2,900	\$8.72	39	17
chiropractic schools in new york city		390	\$10.62	43	18
chiropractic schools in new york		390	\$10.62	43	18
chiropractor in new york ny		170	\$5.71	37	17
chiropractic new york ny		170	\$5.71	37	17

[VIEW ALL KEYWORD IDEAS](#)

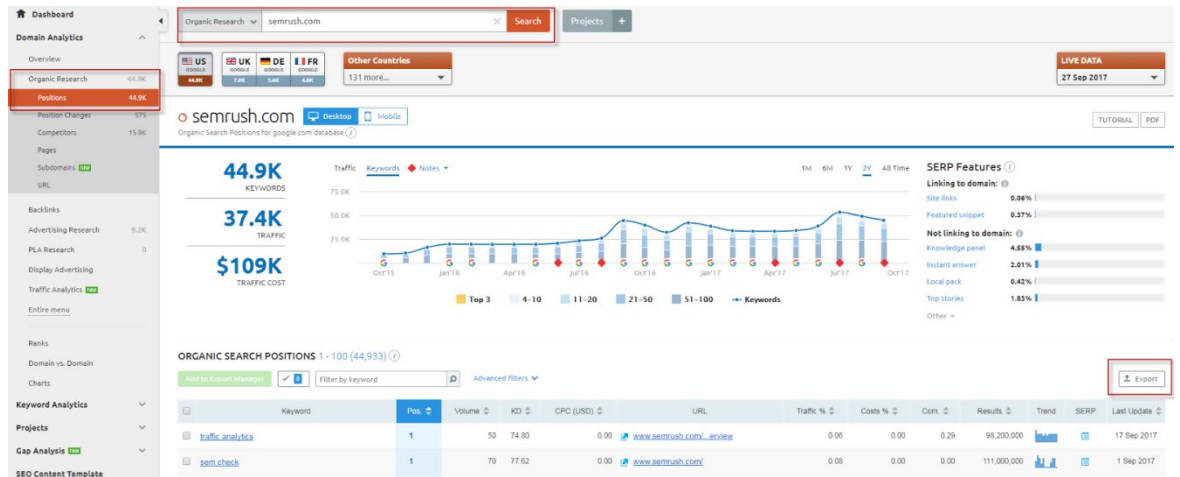
The SERP analysis shows the pages currently ranking for the keyword:

SERP Analysis: chiropractors in New York

RANK ?	SEO TITLE ? URL ?	ROOT DOMAIN ?	EST. VISITS ?	SOCIAL SHARES ?	DOMAIN SCORE ?
1	The Best 10 Chiropractors in New York, NY - Last Updated December 2017 - Yelp yelp.com/search?cflt=chiropractors&find_loc=New York, NY	yelp.com	267	2	62
2	Chiropractors in New York - Yelp yelp.com/c/myc/chiropractors	yelp.com	142	3	62
3	Chiropractor NYC - Dr. Shoshany's NYC Chiropractic & Spinal Decompression Center drshoshany.com/	drshoshany.com	85	698	19
4	21 Best New York City Chiropractors Expertise expertise.com/ny/nyc/chiropractors	expertise.com	57	0	46
5	Find Best Chiropractors in New York, NY – Reviews & Appointments zocdoc.com/chiropractors/new-york-46063pm	zocdoc.com	41	2	55
6	NY - List of Chiropractors icpa4kids.org/Find-a-Chiropractor/results_list.php?showonly=UnitedStates&state=NY	icpa4kids.org	29	5,036	42
7	Homepage - Dr. Jay Handt, and Dr. Josh Handt chiropractors in New York NY - New York Chiropractic Life Center newyorkchiropractic.com/	newyorkchiropractic.com	22	303	19
8	Body in Balance Chiropractic, LLC Midtown NYC Chiropractor Body ... bodyinbalancenyc.com/	bodyinbalancenyc.com	17	116	19

There is the potential to still miss out on valuable keywords, but you can always look at your competitors to see which keywords they're ranking for that you're not.

A tool like SEMrush performs competitive analysis to help discover these:



After spending some time on keyword research, you should now have a list of keywords you want to target on your various pages. ❖



INCORPORATE THOSE
KEYWORDS INTO YOUR PAGE



DIGITAL MARKETING



Finding keywords relative to your medical practice is only the first task. Next, you need to optimize your web pages for your target keyword. For instance, if a page is about how to find a qualified neurosurgeon, then you should place your target keywords in the important areas of that page.

Here are the important aspects of a page to focus on:

- **Headline**
- **Page URL**
- **First few paragraphs**
- **Image alt text**
- **Title tag**
- **Meta description**

A warning: as important as this activity is, don't overdo it. Adding too many keywords to a page is called keyword stuffing and can lead to a bad experience for your visitors. Plus, Google frowns at it. In fact, your website could get kicked off the search engine results when keyword stuffing is happening consistently on your website. ❖

ENSURE YOUR WEBSITE IS
INDEXED ON SEARCH ENGINES

SEO

BLOG

ANALYTICS

MARKETING
ONLINE

STRATEGY

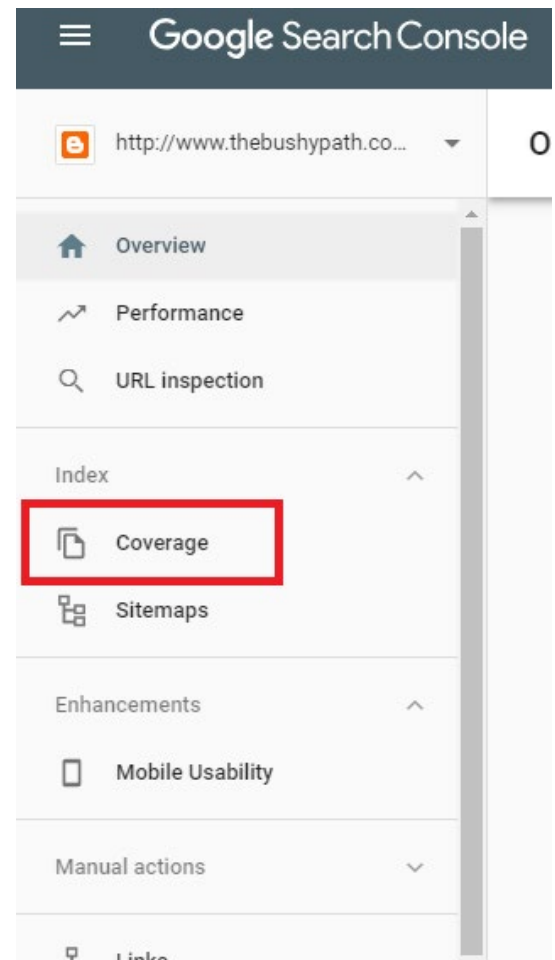
SOCIAL
NETWORK

SEM



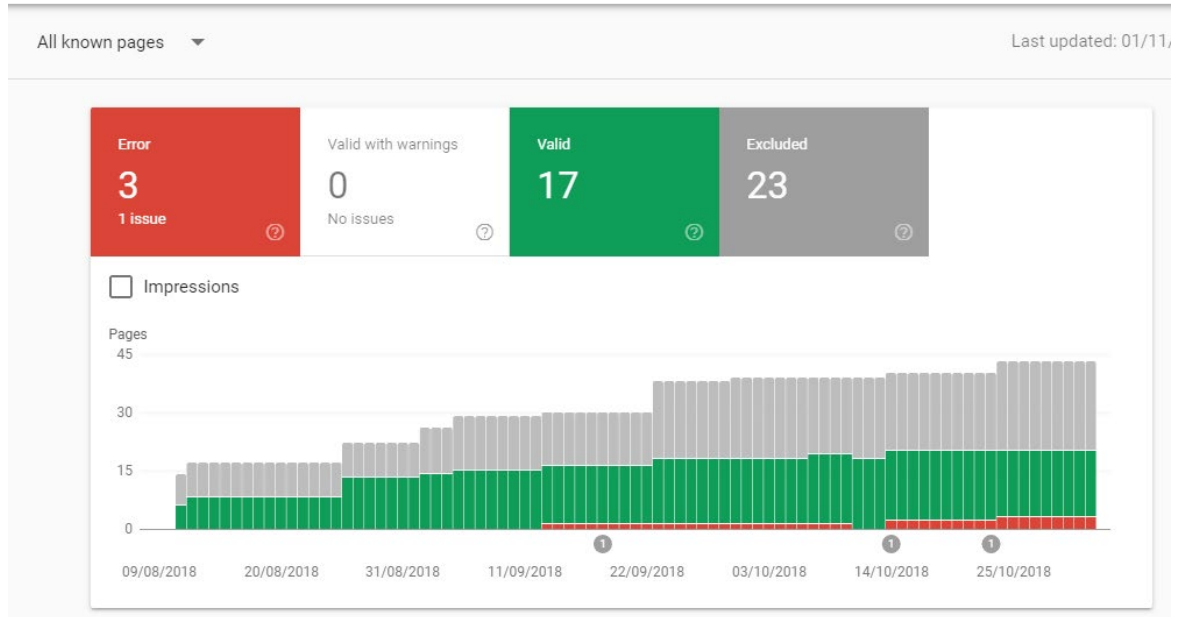
Another thing to keep in mind is that before your website can show up on search engines, it must be indexed. If your website pages are absent from Google index, then there's no way your pages will show up for a search term.

Check the number of your pages indexed on Google by using Google Search Console. To do this, go to your dashboard and click on "coverage":

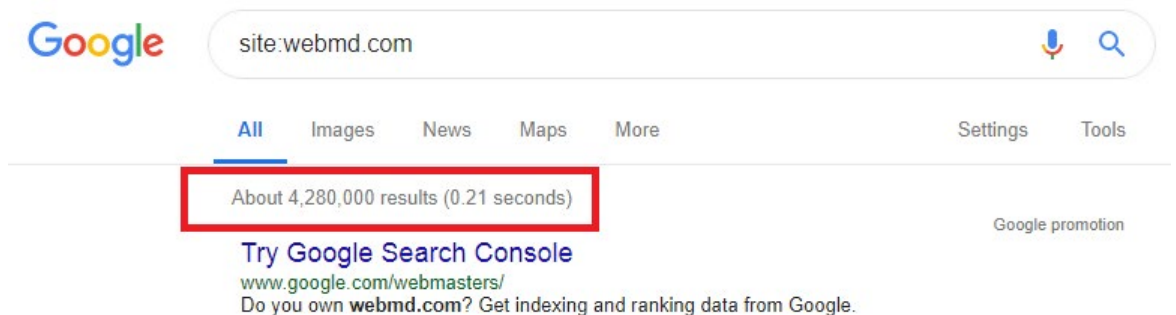


This shows the number of valid pages, pages with error, valid pages with a warning, and excluded pages from the index:

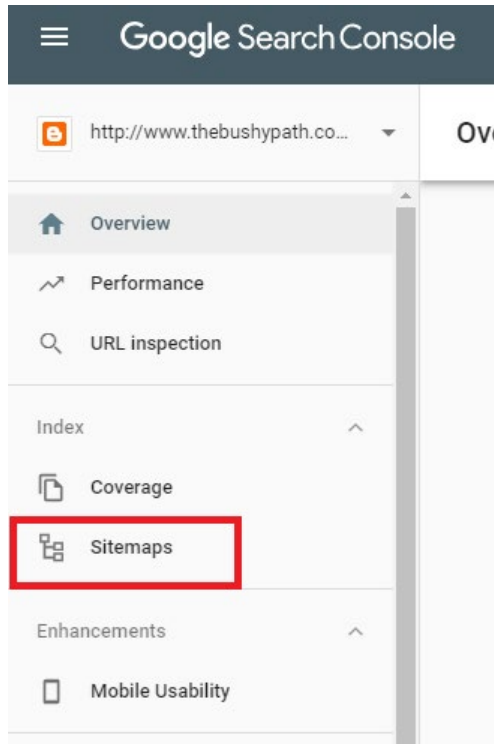
Coverage



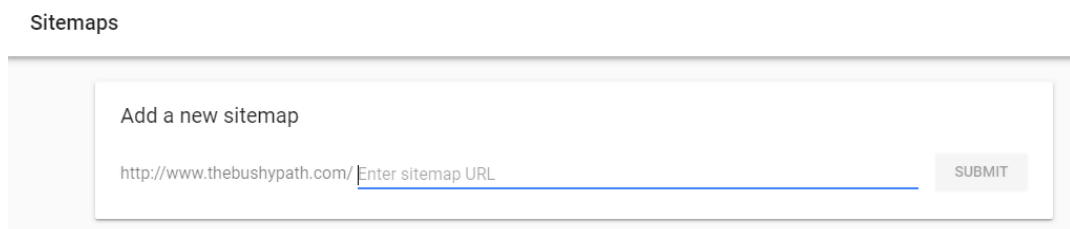
Another way to check that your website is properly indexed and showing up is to use the site search operator on Google. To do this, enter the search string “site:yourwebsite.com” into Google search. The number of results pop up which will give you an approximate number of your indexed pages:



If your medical practice's website is not indexed, it could be because a sitemap has not been submitted. To check, go to your dashboard and click on "Sitemaps":



If you have no sitemap on your search console, you can submit one here:



There are many sitemap generators online to easily create one. Likewise, a plugin like Yoast SEO available for WordPress websites can also generate a sitemap. ❖

CREATE LONG-FORM
QUALITY CONTENT





Your chance of ranking high with little to no content is practically impossible (especially in the competitive industry of medical practices). Google's job is to provide value to its users which means that it will pay close attention to its ranking system to ensure that it is providing the correct and relevant information to its users.

Quality content is defined in the online world as a piece of content that provides necessary information to a reader about a topic. In most cases, this type of content is in long form.

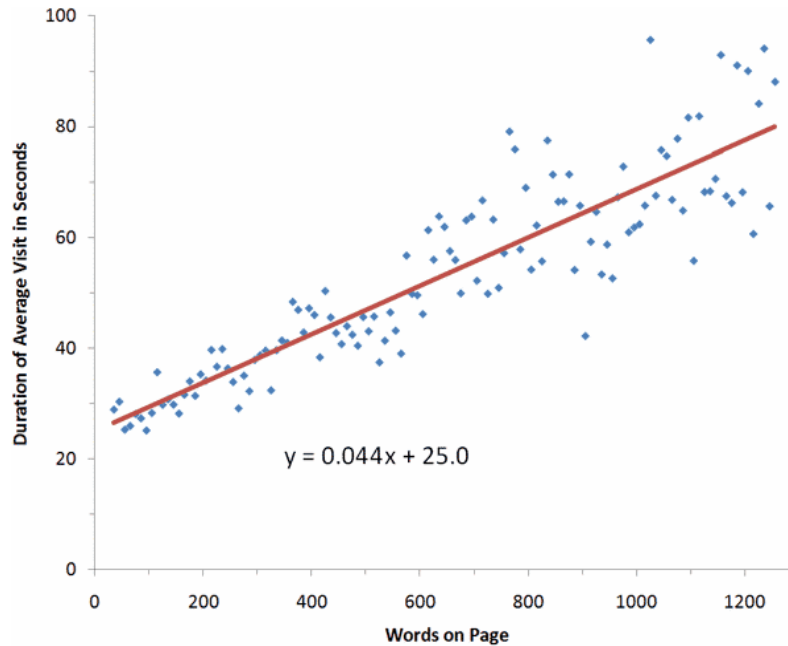
The purpose of the page will help you determine what high quality content means for that page. For example, High quality information pages should be factually accurate, clearly written, and comprehensive. High quality shopping content should allow users to find the products they want and to purchase the products easily. High quality humor or satire should be entertaining, while factual accuracy is not a requirement as long as the page would be understood as satire by users.

There's no rule about the length of your content, it just must be clear, relevant, and concise. If you can provide all the needed information on a topic with 1,500 words, then don't need to ramble on to push the word count to more than that.

The Google search quality evaluator guidelines state that a narrow topic will usually require fewer words than a wide topic to provide enough detail:

The amount of content necessary for the page to be satisfying depends on the topic and purpose of the page. A High quality page on a broad topic with a lot of available information will have more content than a High quality page on a narrower topic. Here are some examples of pages with a satisfying amount of high quality MC.

Another point to keep in mind is to create content that is readable. This is especially important considering studies show that an average reader will only read 20 to 28% of your page content:

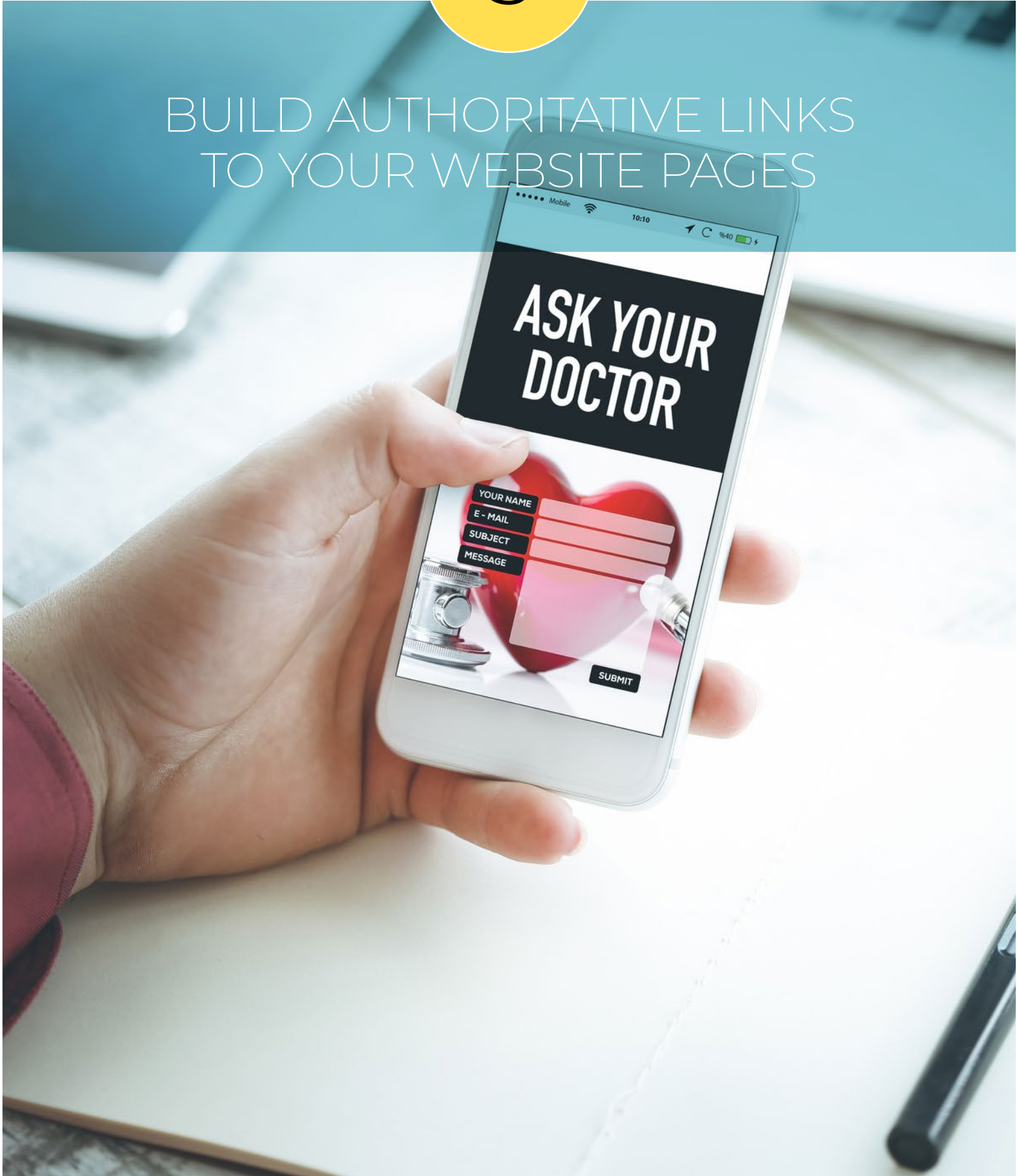


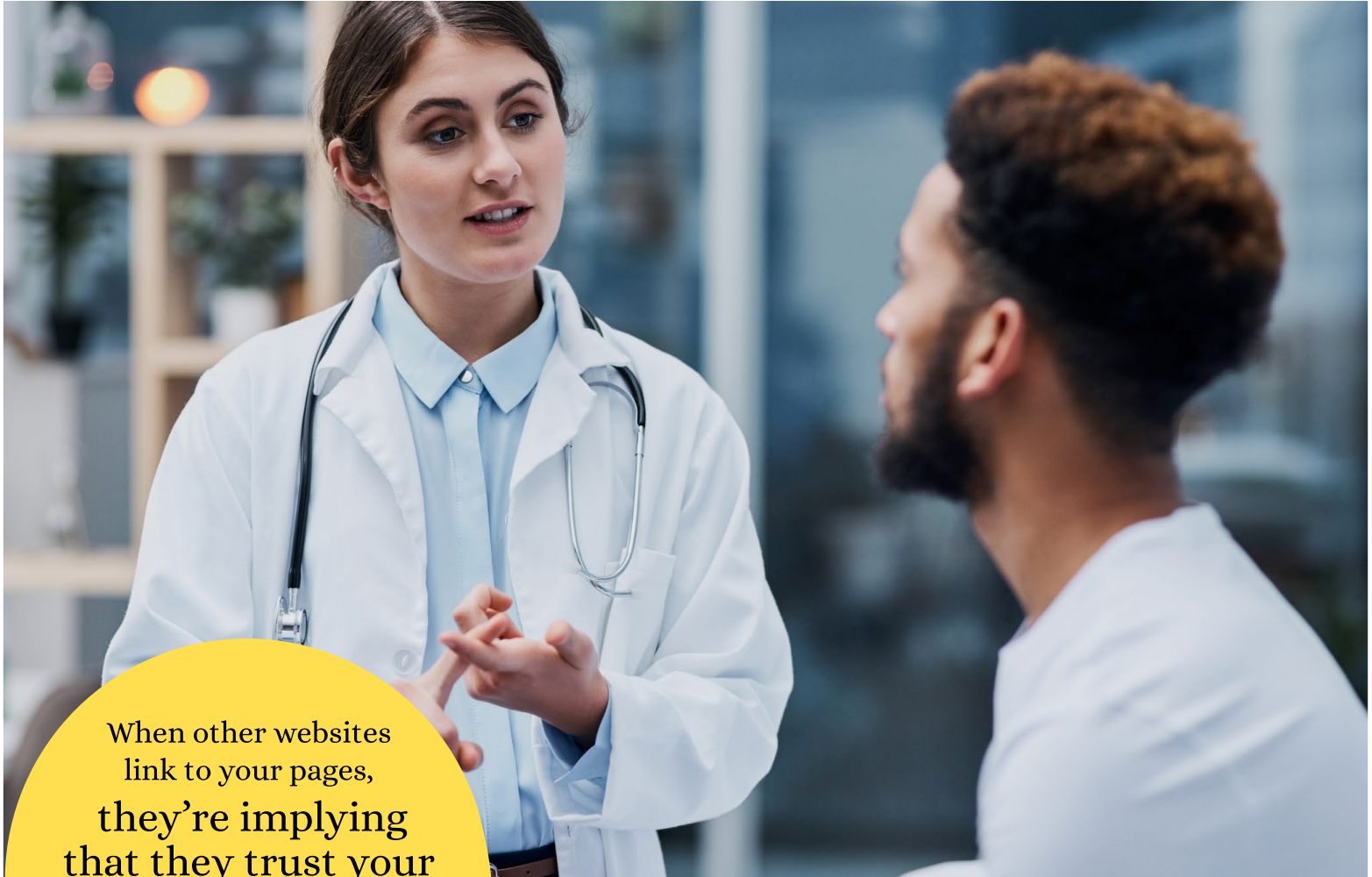
Aim at getting your points across even to readers who skim your page. Some ways to do this are:

- Using short sentences
- Using short paragraphs
- Structure subheadings to draw out certain points
- Nestle images between blocks of text
- Use bullet points

These can make visitors to your page stay longer and give Google an impression that your pages provide value to users. ❖

BUILD AUTHORITATIVE LINKS
TO YOUR WEBSITE PAGES





When other websites link to your pages, they're implying that they trust your web page and think it's valuable enough to share with their own readers.

Backlinks are the most important off-page SEO activity and also one of the 3 most important ranking signals.

Because when you think about it, a backlink is essentially a vote for your page. When other websites link to your pages, they're implying that they trust your web page and think it's valuable enough to share with their own readers.

Editorial backlinks are the best backlinks to lead back to your website because there's no bias involved- these are the links that an external website has provided to their readers to promote your business on their own volition.

However, generating these type of links takes time because you need to build a reputation online and with the media first.

The good news is that you don't have to wait for that long before you get backlinks on editorial pages. There are other activities you can engage in, such as:

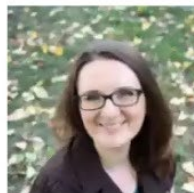
GUEST BLOGGING

Guest blogging means writing posts for other websites. It's effective in driving more business to your medical practice because it helps reach a new audience where you can build your reputation as an expert.

Plus, you get a backlink to your website in the author bio which helps boost your medical practice's reputation and gives your own website a higher domain authority.

Guest posting on local websites is also a smart idea as these backlinks will help you to rank higher in your region where potential patients are most likely to find you. For instance, check out this example of a guest post with a backlink in the author bio:

Short Bio:



Dr. Sharonrose Samelak is a Webster Certified Chiropractor in Fremont, Seattle. Her practice, Seed of Life Chiropractic and Wellness, LLC is largely focused on prenatal, postnatal, and pediatric care.

Dr. Sharonrose is passionate about helping women have healthy pregnancies with fewer aches and pains as well as optimizing their bodies for labor and delivery. To learn more about health and wellness, subscribe to follow her website blog.



Website: www.SeedOfLifeChiro.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/SeedOfLifeChiro/

PARTICIPATE IN LOCAL EVENTS

Running a medical practice means most of your patients will be from your area. Therefore, you should participate in local events related to health.

Even though this is an offline event, hopefully local websites will report about it, such as the event organizer or local news outlets. If you've played a part, there's a chance to get a backlink to your website which is inadvertently vital for local SEO.

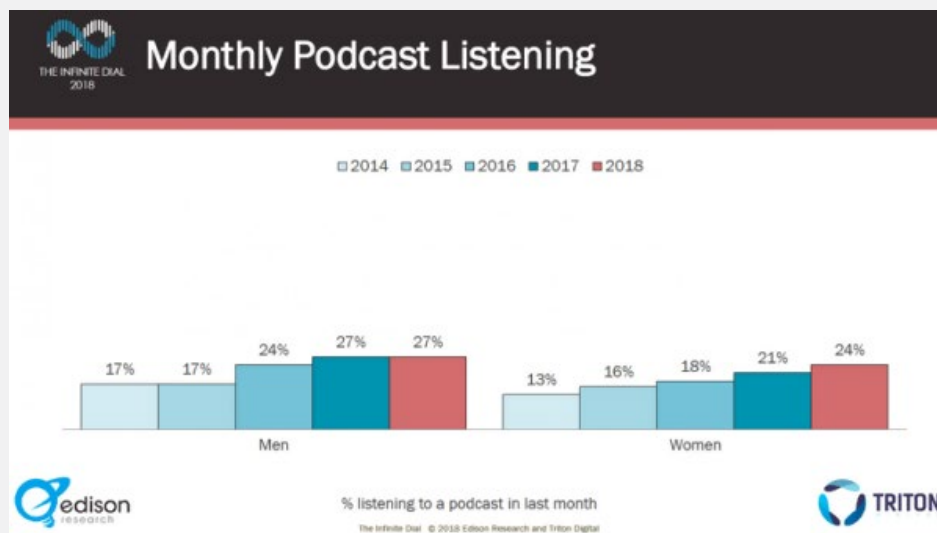
For instance, Dr. Steven Shoshany created the readiness protocol for the 2017 New York City marathon. Here is a press release by PRWeb in which there are 3 backlinks to his website:



The screenshot shows the top portion of a PRWeb article. At the top left is the CISION PRWeb logo. To the right are two buttons: 'LOGIN' and 'CREATE A FREE ACCOUNT'. Below this is a navigation bar with 'HOME', 'NEWS CENTER' (underlined), and 'BLOG', followed by a hamburger menu icon. A teal bar below the navigation shows the date 'Saturday, November 17, 2018' and three icons: RSS, email, and a share icon. The main text of the article is 'Chiropractor Dr. Steven Shoshany Unveils New 2017 NYC Marathon Readiness Protocol'.

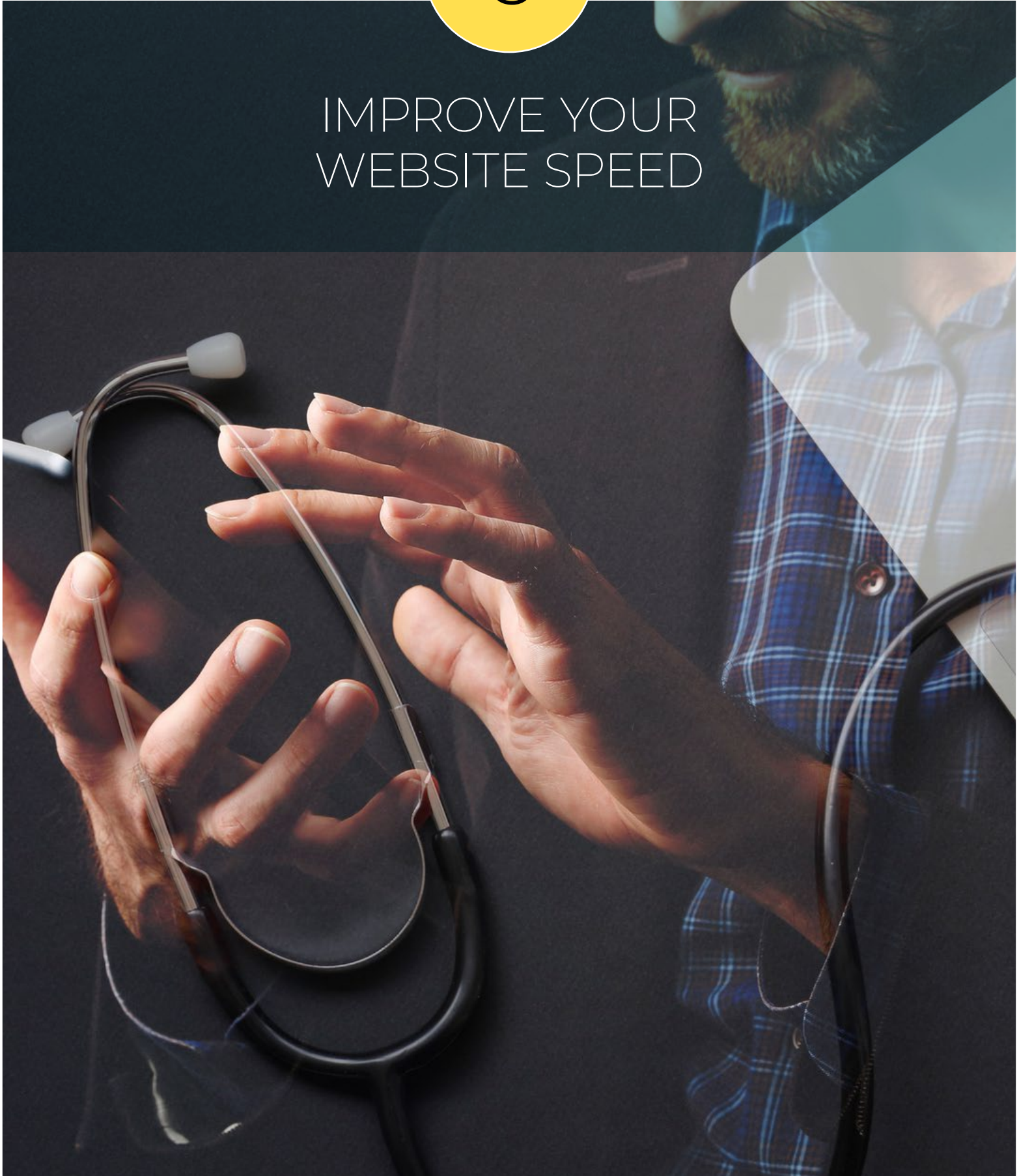
PODCASTS INTERVIEWS

Podcasts are an increasingly popular way through which people consume content. For instance, Edison Research and Triton Digital found in a study that 26% of Americans listen to podcasts monthly, which is about 73 million Americans.



Some podcasts also welcome medical professionals as guests to help explain a complex medical concept or simply conduct an interview. You can reach many potential patients this way and there's the possibility to get a backlink to your website from the podcast episode in which you appear. ❖

IMPROVE YOUR
WEBSITE SPEED



No visitor wants to wait forever for any website to load and if it's more than 7 seconds, then it's likely that visitors will bounce off and go to your competitor's website.

According to a Google study, the probability a visitor will bounce from your website increases by 32% once your website loads for more than 3 seconds.

When users consistently and quickly bounce from your site, Google sees it as a poor user experience and will push your website rankings down.

In fact, Google has stated clearly that website speed is a ranking signal.



As page load time goes from:

1s to 3s the probability of bounce **increases 32%**

1s to 5s the probability of bounce **increases 90%**

1s to 6s the probability of bounce **increases 106%**


1s to 10s the probability of bounce **increases 123%**

Source: Google/SOASTA Research, 2017.

To improve your website speed, test your website using speed test tools. Some of these include Google Pagespeed Insights, Pingdom, GTmetrix, etc.

Through this test, you'll gain insight into important details on your medical practice's website like load time, page size, number of requests, and other metrics. Below is an example of a speed test results on Pingdom:

Summary



Performance grade [?]

A 91

Load time

1.41 s

Faster than

83 %

of tested sites


Page size

803.7 kB

Requests

54

Tested from

 **San Jose**

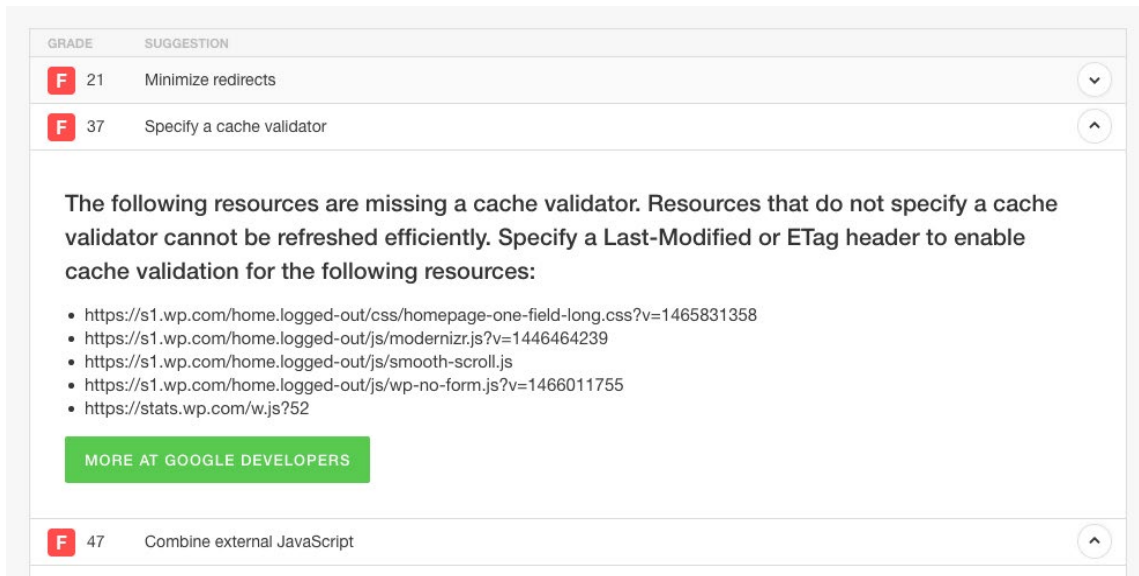
on Jun 22 at 11:28

pingdom

Performance insights

GRADE	SUGGESTION	
D 67	Remove query strings from static resources	▼
B 81	Serve static content from a cookieless domain	▼
B 88	Leverage browser caching	▼
A 97	Specify a cache validator	▼
A 98	Minimize request size	▼
A 100	Avoid bad requests	▼
A 100	Minimize redirects	▼
A 100	Specify a Vary: Accept-Encoding header	▼

It also shows details about what to do in some parts of your website to improve its speed:



GRADE	SUGGESTION
F 21	Minimize redirects
F 37	Specify a cache validator

The following resources are missing a cache validator. Resources that do not specify a cache validator cannot be refreshed efficiently. Specify a Last-Modified or ETag header to enable cache validation for the following resources:

- <https://s1.wp.com/home.logged-out/css/homepage-one-field-long.css?v=1465831358>
- <https://s1.wp.com/home.logged-out/js/modernizr.js?v=1446464239>
- <https://s1.wp.com/home.logged-out/js/smooth-scroll.js>
- <https://s1.wp.com/home.logged-out/js/wp-no-form.js?v=1466011755>
- <https://stats.wp.com/w.js?52>

[MORE AT GOOGLE DEVELOPERS](#)

F 47	Combine external JavaScript
------	-----------------------------

When you know your website speed, here are some steps to improve it:

- Use a fast host
- Minimize images to reduce page load size
- Minify your page code
- Use a reliable content delivery network (CDN)
- Implement Google Accelerated Mobile Pages (AMPs)

You can always retest your website speed after implementing these changes to see if it is headed in the right direction. ❖

ASK FOR ONLINE REVIEWS FROM PATIENTS





There may be some negative reviews among your patients, but instead of getting defensive, **look at it as constructive criticism and use it to improve your practice.**

For a topic as critical as medical services, people want to know what past patients' experiences have been before they book their first appointment because choosing the wrong medical practice could pose a danger to an individual's health or even their life.

Therefore, reviews are vital for your medical practice.

They're important in two ways: on the backend they help you to rank higher in the local map pack when people in your area carry out searches and on the frontend they provide unbiased "word of mouth" testimonials to what your practice is really like to help potential patients decide whether they want to book an appointment with you or not.


And the reality with the local map pack is that it's almost impossible to rank high enough to get noticed without reviews.

However, people don't always post reviews after their visit as that takes extra time and effort. Therefore, to get reviews for your practice you must ask your patients if they'd mind giving you a review, as soon as they finish their treatments with you.

There may be some negative reviews among your patients, but instead of getting defensive, look at it as constructive criticism and use it to improve your practice. Likewise, you should respond to reviews to show you care about your patients' feedback.


Here is an example of replies to reviews on a Google My Business page:

Google reviews

 **Amore Rubirosa**
3 reviews


★★★★★ 2 months ago

Pain reduction in 1 visit. Pain free in 2 visits! No Bull!
I'm a amateur bodybuilder, personal trainer and work banquets at a fast paced 5 star hotel. I'm very active! Just a week ago i injured my right lumbar area ... [More](#)

 Like


Response from the owner 2 months ago


So glad you are feeling better! Chiropractors have been helping Bodybuilders for a long time. Did you know that the greatest athletes in the world utilize Chiropractic regularly to reach their potential, recover faster, and gain an edge? ... [More](#)

 **John Parks**
Local Guide · 17 reviews

★★★★★ 2 weeks ago


Great facility, staff, and service. Excellent atmosphere. I had most of the best feedback. I truly loved and enjoyed all the service. Thank You!!

 Like

 **Katy Haggis**
1 review

★★★★★ a month ago

In the 20+ years that I've seen chiropractors throughout my life for scoliosis, Dr. Shoshany is by far one of the best! He's hands on and thorough in every visit and his office staff are super friendly and accommodating. Added bonus: his ... [More](#)

 Like

Response from the owner a month ago

Thank you for your kind words. We take great pride in patient satisfaction. The tables we use are state of the art and are very comfortable due to the memory foam cushions. Scoliosis is something that we are very comfortable treating.

[More Google reviews](#)

From Dr. Steven Shoshany Chiropractor

'Our office has on-site X-rays and we offer a integrated approach. We combine evidence based Chiropractic care with Physical therapy, Medical massage and Acupuncture. We specialize in treating Disc herniation's with non-surgical spinal decompression... [More](#)

ENSURE NAP CONSISTENCY ON LOCAL LISTINGS



Google

Stories to read

More stories

Local listings are a vital part of ranking in local searches. In a Moz survey, local search specialists say that citation signals are the fourth most important factor for the local map pack and 5th most important for local organic rank.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. My Business Signals (Proximity, categories, keyword in business title, etc.) 19% | 1. Link Signals (Inbound anchor text, linking domain authority, linking domain quantity, etc.) 29% |
| 2. Link Signals (Inbound anchor text, linking domain authority, linking domain quantity, etc.) 17% | 2. On-Page Signals (Presence of NAP, keywords in titles, domain authority, etc.) 24% |
| 3. On-Page Signals (Presence of NAP, keywords in titles, domain authority, etc.) 14% | 3. Behavioral Signals (Click-through rate, mobile clicks to call, check-ins, etc.) 11% |
| 4. Citation Signals (IYP/aggregator NAP consistency, citation volume, etc.) 13% | 4. Personalization 9% |
| 5. Review Signals (Review quantity, review velocity, review diversity, etc.) 13% | 5. Citation Signals (IYP/aggregator NAP consistency, citation volume, etc.) 8% |
| 6. Behavioral Signals (Click-through rate, mobile clicks to call, check-ins, etc.) 10% | 6. My Business Signals (Proximity, categories, keyword in business title, etc.) 7% |
| 7. Personalization 10% | 7. Review Signals (Review quantity, review velocity, review diversity, etc.) 7% |
| 8. Social Signals (Google engagement, Facebook engagement, Twitter engagement, etc.) 4% | 8. Social Signals (Google engagement, Facebook engagement, Twitter engagement, etc.) 4% |

Generally, these listings are categorized in 3 types, which are:

i). General listings: these are local listings that are available worldwide, like in Google My Business and Yelp.

ii). Medical listings: these are professional directories to add your medical practice to that help to establish your credibility as a professional. Examples of these are:

- ZocDoc
- HealthGrades
- Wellness.com
- RateMDs

iii). Location-based listings: these are local listings for a particular city or region.

Your practice's details (hours of operation, photos, specialty, reviews) should appear on the 3 types of local listings. Having said that, ensure your practice details are consistent on all local listings.

This is especially applicable to your practice name, address, and phone number (NAP). Before Google ranks your practice for a local search, it will check various sources to authenticate that your business is legit.

But keep in mind that having different details on various platforms will confuse Google and it may drop your page from the results. ❖



CONCLUSION

KEYWORDS

Showing up for important keywords on search engines is vital for your medical practice, but it takes time.

However, following the steps in this guide is a good way to start showing up to potential patients who need your medical services.

For more information please reach out to Cardinal at:
am@cardinaldigitalmarketing.com
or 404-585-2096.