

Eli's Rehab Report

Clip & Save: 4 Strategies For Souping Up Your Website

This advice will help increase the value of your online offerings.

A multi-media web strategy may sound like a very expensive pipe dream -- but a relevant website doesn't have to break your bank.

You can increase the value of your website now simply by integrating these four best practices into your current web design:

Tip #1: Post anything patients will need. Your website is the perfect place to store registration forms, privacy notices, Medicare information, and other important forms clients will need, says **Melissa Horton, PT**, with Carolina Balance and Rehabilitation Center in Raleigh.

Point out your forms to new and established patients so that they can print and fill out the documents prior to your first meeting.

Tip #2: Optimize for keywords. Online search is no longer king, but it's still important. Fewer online users are turning to search engines to find information, according to a recent **Nielson** study. However, hundreds of thousands of people use search engines everyday. You can't afford not to come up in those searches. To increase your chances, make sure you use keywords that your potential patients are likely to use, Passmore encourages.

For instance, an online user in San Diego who is searching for occupational therapy for her attention deficit child may use the search string "occupational therapist ADHD children San Diego." Your site must use words (pediatric, ADHD, children, occupational therapy, San Diego) that will help search engines bring the user to you.

Tip #3: Tone down the unnecessary flashes. Many practices invest their resources in a flash header or entry page, but online users don't want graphics for the sake of graphics, notes **Michael Arnold, PT**, a therapy marketing consultant currently based in London.

Rather, pour your money and energy into videos and images that highlight why potential clients should spend more time learning about your services -- which could translate to a new customer, he advises.

Tip #4: Sweat the small stuff. Just creating a pretty site won't keep future patients on your site. You must test it in different browsers to ensure it looks good from every angle, find and fix any broken links, and constantly update with new information, Passmore recommends.

Make sure your menu is clean and consistent and that your text is easily read against the site background. Left unchecked, these small issues can balloon into big problems for viewers.