

Simple SEO Tips for Google's
May 2021 User Experience Update.

Simple SEO for Busy Pharmacies



How SEO is Changing

And how the upcoming Google algorithm update can benefit you.

Promoting your pharmacy online can play a key part in growing your pharmacy business. And expanding your online presence will delight your current patients and attract new ones.

But you know this by now. Technology has become a big part of our lives. Online marketing is no longer an option, it's now a requirement for growing businesses.

To get the most out of your online strategy, you need to understand SEO, or search engine optimization.

Sound intimidating? It shouldn't.

You see, SEO used to be a lot more complicated, so it's gained a bit of a reputation for being difficult. But the good news is that in 2021, SEO has evolved to become easier than ever.

With Google's upcoming Page Experience Update in May 2021, it'll be all about offering the best possible user experience.

Which is pretty easy to do if you're already offering authentic, patient-based service. In this article, we'll talk about what you need to know to grow your SEO presence online.

And best of all, we'll keep it simple.

"The page experience signal measures aspects of how users perceive the experience of interacting with a web page. Optimizing for these factors make the web more delightful for users across all web browsers and surfaces, and helps sites evolve towards user expectations on mobile."

[-Google Search Central Blog](#)



Part One: On-Page SEO



SEO and Content

Content comes in so many formats; blog articles, infographics, and more. It's part of the fun of marketing; there are just so many possibilities.

You can read more about types of content in our Ourstore 30-Day Content Challenge.

For SEO purposes, it's good to have a variety. So what are some other points to focus on to optimize your content for SEO?

Post High Quality Content

It's important to post often, that's true; but if it's a question of quality vs. quantity, quality wins every time.

Why?

Because SEO is about the user experience, which means providing real value. Often, we're busy; that's life in pharmacy. And if you're feeling obligated to post every day, your offerings could be lacking in depth.

If you find yourself in this boat, know that it's fine to post less as long as your content is valuable. And bear in mind that consistency helps.

What does that look like? Perhaps it's posting twice a week on the same days, but it's well thought out advice your patients can use. A diabetes checklist that makes it easy to eat right. Or a medication tracker that makes tracking meds and side effects super simple.

Quality takes more work; and in the SEO game, it's worth it.

< Keywords >

Keyword Research

If you've heard of SEO, you've likely heard of keyword research. It's one of those SEO concepts that tends to make people a little nervous. But it needn't be complicated or time consuming

It can actually be quite simple.

Keyword research is finding keywords and phrases people search to find information on your topic. By using these words and phrases in your content, you help search engines index your page. So next time someone is searching for that topic, your business will show up in the results.

If you're a brick-and-mortar business, you'll need to integrate some local search terms.

So if you're ranking for 'pharmacy' in Toronto, use the keywords 'pharmacy Toronto'. If your topic is 'vaccine clinics' and you're in Boston, try 'vaccine clinics, Boston'.

By using local keywords, you make it easier for local users to find you in search results.

So how do you do keyword research? There are several tools available, most of them simple, all fun. One of the top tools is [Google's Keyword Planner](#), but there are several others, including:

- [Ahrefs Keywords Explorer](#)
- [Moz Keyword Explorer](#)
- [SEMRush](#)
- [Ubersuggest](#)

While it may not sound scintillating, keyword research can be interesting. It can help put you in the heads of people interested in your topic. So grab a cup of tea and start playing with some keyword tools! Keyword planning is a great skill to develop.

Note: We've talked a few times about how to come up with content ideas for your pharmacy, in the following articles:

- [7 Easy Ways to Create Amazing Content for your Blog](#)
- [Simple Ways to Come Up with New Content Ideas](#)

Feel free to follow these ideas for coming up with content and then do the keyword research for each!



Provide Solutions

One thing to keep in mind to optimize user experience is to provide solutions. By helping your readers solve deep problems in their lives, you add value.

And in pharmacy, you've got lots of room to do that; there are lots of areas where patients need help. From side effects to prevention, you can provide authoritative advice that improves lives.

One thing to stay aware of is that it's important to offer solutions that patients don't always need to pay for. Whether it's free downloadable resources or local resources, patients need to perceive you as giving more than you take.

In turn, you benefit when patients trust you to fill their scripts, or they buy items from your front shop because you're their go-to pharmacy. A great user experience is about give and take; and the giving part is on you.

Create Authoritative Content

Part of SEO comes from assuring the search engines that your site is a reliable source for advice. Which is why posting authoritative content is so important. So what does authoritative content look like?

Authoritative content is often a little longer; it's in-depth. Longer blog posts, guides and white papers are good examples. Content that's built to offer intelligent advice and high value is what search engines want to see.

Epic content is also a great example of content that adds value and helps with SEO. You can read more about creating epic content in our article on [How to Create Epic Content](#).

Your Website Architecture

Another very important aspect of SEO is the architecture of your website. What exactly is site architecture? It's the framework within which your site organizes and presents your content.

This includes page hierarchy. It also includes the technical structure search engines need to crawl your site.

How does this apply to SEO?

It all goes to optimal user experience. If your users are having to wait for your pages to load, they'll get impatient and click away. The same applies if your headings and content are not easy to follow.

So what do you need to optimize your architecture for SEO?

Build a Site Map

In order for your site to appear in search results, search engines need to be able to index your pages.

Site maps make this easy by allowing search engines to move through your content in an organized way.



Quick Load Speeds

Ever go to a website and have to sit and wait for pages to load? I bet you didn't sit there for very long; most people don't. Slow websites are terrible for user experience, which means they're terrible for SEO.

How do you know whether your website is up to speed? There are several sites you can use to test it, including:

- [Pingdom Speed Test](#)
- [Google PageSpeed Insights](#)
- [Uptrends](#)
- [WebPageTest](#)
- [GTmetrix](#)

If your site is slow, these tools will give you insights into how you can improve.

A Mobile Responsive Site

Most people access the Internet via their phones and/or tablets. Which means your site must be mobile responsive to provide a good user experience. If your site is not optimized for mobile usage, you can expect your SEO to suffer.

Relevant Page URLs

For optimal SEO, your URLs should describe what is on the page they direct the user to. So be sure to make your URLs meaningful. For example, at ourstore, the URL for our demo booking page is:

<https://www.ourstore.com/book-an-online-demo>.

It's not fancy, but it gives people a pretty good idea of what they're going to find on that page. Which in turn translates to a good user experience and helps boost SEO.

"Through both internal studies and industry research, users show they prefer sites with a great page experience. In recent years, Search has added a variety of user experience criteria, such as how quickly pages load and mobile-friendliness, as factors for ranking results."

-Google Search Central Blog

Avoid Duplicate Content

Search engines struggle with duplicate content, and having it on your site will hurt SEO. You can learn more about this in our article [Where to Publish Your Content](#). This article was part of our 30-Day Content Marketing Challenge. It includes resources for understanding duplicate content.

If you're posting content you've researched from another source you need to be especially careful. You can avoid issues by using a plagiarism checker like [Copyscape](#) or [Grammarly](#). Both tools are great and will help ensure your content is unique.

Making sure your site is well organized and easy to navigate is essential to SEO.

Security

Security is important to your visitors, especially if you're selling on your site. It's also important to Google that you have both a secure HTTPS and a valid SSL certificate in place. If you need more information on how this works, ask your hosting company for advice.



Your Site HTML

HTML is an important part of your website architecture, and therefore your SEO. It can sound pretty complicated, especially for non-developers.

Yet provided you're using a good platform for your site such as [WordPress](#) or [Wix](#) it's quite simple.

So what should you keep in mind as far as your HTML?

Keywords in Titles & Tags

Each of your pages and blogs should have a title. Your photos images should have alt tags attached. These titles and tags should include a keyword as well as a clear description of the content. Much like clarity in our URLs, this keeps things simple for the user and the search engines..

Meta Descriptions

Meta descriptions tell the search engine about your content. Again, depending on what platform you're using, meta descriptions can be quite easy.

On WordPress, for example, you can use a plugin like [Yoast](#) for meta descriptions and other SEO. On Wix, [Squarespace](#) and other sites, meta descriptions are also made simple.

Never forget to add your meta descriptions. They're an important part of communicating with search engines.

Navigation

Easy navigation goes a long way when it comes to SEO. Your site visitors should be able to tell at a glance on your homepage or landing page how to get around. If your site is especially large, you may want to create a tour so users know where to start and where to go next.

Headers

Using the proper headlines, subheadings and H1/H2 tags is helpful for your readers. It helps break up content for your human visitors so your content is easy to read.

But it's also great for SEO. Why?

It helps search engines better understand your content. That way they can direct the appropriate traffic to your site.

While some of these items may sound intimidating, SEO is much easier than it used to be. You've definitely got some options.

As mentioned, you can use a platform like WordPress or Wix to keep things simple. We talk about this in our article: [Want to Make Your Website the Best? Here's What You Need to Know.](#)

In it, we cover the basics of some of the most popular website platforms out there. If needed, you can also hire a web designer to build your site and help with your search engine optimization.

Part Two: Off-Page SEO

Off-page SEO refers to anything you do off of your website to bring people to your site. There are three basic areas where you can put effort into your SEO offline. Nurturing patient relationships, link building, and social media.

Building Trust & Relationships

As a pharmacist, you know how important your patient relationships are. After all, if someone doesn't trust you, they're not likely to take your professional advice.

Building trust online is also important; so how can you do that?

Staying consistent is one of the most important ways to build trust with your audience. By posting high quality resources on a consistent basis, you earn the trust of your readers.

Some other ways to build trust with your website and digital strategy are:

Demonstrate Your Authority

As a healthcare professional, you're expected to be an authority. So how can your posts reflect your expert status?

Always be sure your advice is of the utmost quality, for one. Help your readers solve problems by posting only the most reliable information.

If you're giving advice, be sure you know your subject. If you're sharing or linking to someone else's advice, be sure to double check that they're trustworthy.

Engage with your Audience

When your patients come in to see you in person, you speak with them; you engage. Engagement is just as important online as it is in person.

Say you've posted an amazing article on managing spring allergies.

A patient leaves a question in the comments on your blog. Another patient asks you a question on your Facebook page. Answering in a timely and professional manner will build trust, so be sure to watch for ways to engage.



But Don't Over Sell...

Sure, your website is a great marketing tool; a great website is a huge asset to any business. But be careful not to look at it as a way to pump out the sales. Don't oversell.

We've all seen those websites packed with ads; they're there to sell us something. Of course your overarching goal is to grow your patient base and increase revenue. But the way to doing that is to build strong and authentic relationships.

How can you do this?

By creating so much value that your patients love visiting your site. Remember, nobody likes to feel as though you're in it for the money. The minute you start treating your website like a sales tool, you'll lose ground.

Building trust and authority is a vital part of off-page SEO and genuine interaction will always win the day.



About Link Building

Another way to build out your online presence is link building.

So what exactly is it? Link building is building links between your site and other authoritative websites.

For example, if you're the go-to pharmacy for several local doctor's offices, they may post a link to your site on their website or social media. By building links with well established and authoritative sites, you also build credibility.

But there are some things to be aware of when link building, such as:

Focus on High Quality Links

If you're building links to legitimate, authoritative websites, that's perfect. Especially sites that are trusted by a big audience. Never try to build links to just any site; search engines love links that show off your authority and credibility.

Use Relevant Anchor Text

As with all things SEO these days, relevance adds to a great user experience, and that matters with link building too. Be sure that when someone links to you they use relevant keywords that make sense.

Remember, a genuine experience is what you're looking to give your readers.

The More the Merrier

Link building is about building as many high quality, authoritative links as you can; the more you have, the better. But again, quality matters- linking to a bunch of random sites that don't make sense is not good for SEO.

So take your time, be patient and build links in a genuine way; think links that will add value to your patients lives, like you do.



**LINK
BUILDING**

How to Build Links

One strategy is to find local doctor's offices or health authorities to link to, as well as professional organizations in the industry. On top of that though, you can find established and trustworthy blogs and websites online to connect with; or you can link with respected influencers in your space.

You can build relationships through guest blogging, mentions and referrals, to name just a few ways. Want to know more about reaching out to other businesses? Check out our article, [How to Partner with Other Local Businesses](#).

In it, our own Name Here gives sound advice on reaching out to local businesses, but there are also several pointers that can apply to online influencers and industry sites, too.

Always remember: When link building, think quality over quantity but go for both! And above all, never, ever pay for links; be sure your link building is a natural reflection of your efforts on social media, guest blogs, webinars and all the rest of your content.

Geographic Location and SEO

Geography is another important consideration when it comes to SEO. If you're looking to focus on a local audience, your address is key, so be sure to include your address, phone and other information on your site.

And don't forget to use local keywords.

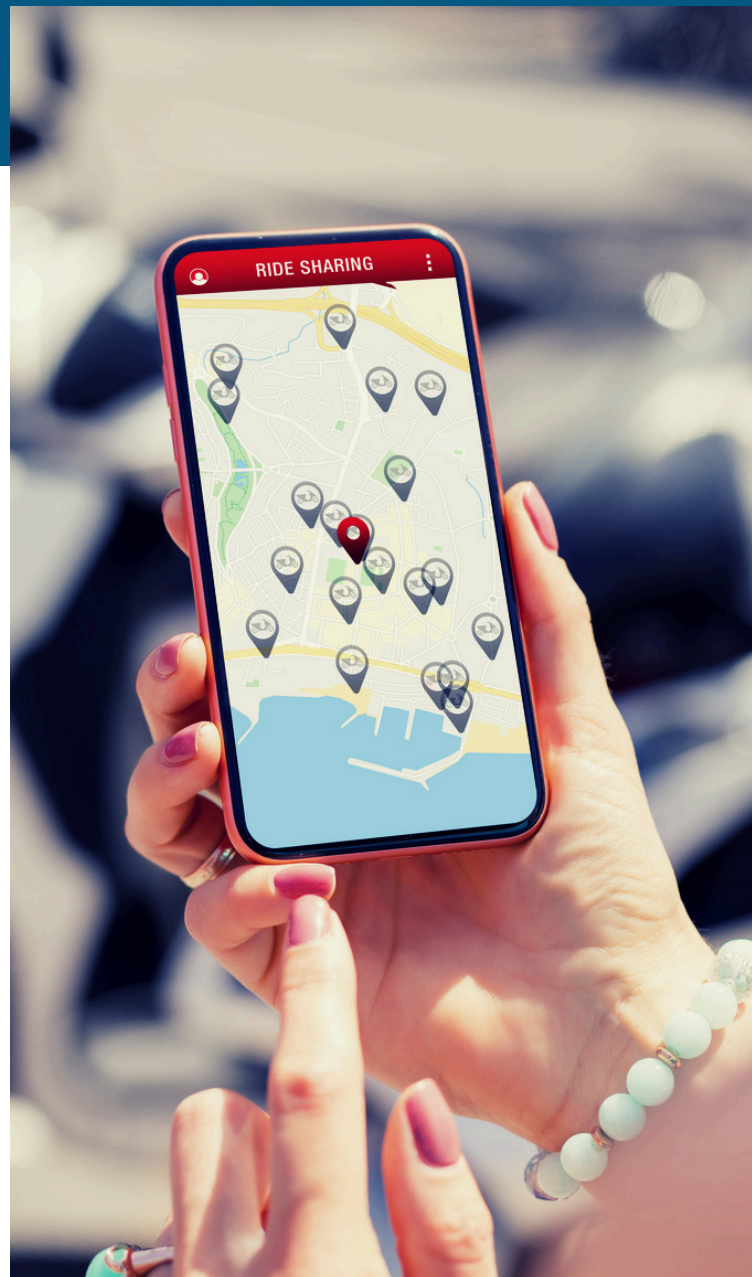
Social Media and SEO

Social media can do a lot to improve your SEO; when used well, it can give you a dramatic boost in site traffic. But there's more to it than making random, salesy posts. For your social media to be an effective SEO tool, you need a sound strategy.

It's all about shares; or developing shareable content that delivers value. By building an engaged follower base and asking for shares, you build your authority.

We talk about social media for pharmacies in our article [How to Promote Your Business on Social Media](#).

Here are a few steps you can take to optimize your social media for SEO:



Get More Followers

By growing your follower base, you increase your shares and your credibility. So how can you do that? There are several ways; post a giveaway, run a contest, and engage.

Answer questions, reply to comments, build a presence that your followers love. Once others see how much value you can add to their lives, they'll want to follow you too!

Optimize Your Content

As you get those shares rolling, you need to optimize your content for SEO. Be sure your page titles are accurate and descriptive, have meta tags in place and alt tags on your images. By optimizing your content, you make it easy for search engines to love you.

Ask your Followers to Share

You're engaging with your audience and creating valuable content, right? Which means you're building a bond with your followers. So don't be afraid to ask people to share your content on their social media.

It's not enough just to put it out there and assume people will know what you want. Ask and they will share.

Make it Easy to Share: Develop Shareable Content

What does shareable content look like? It's content that adds value to the lives of your readers. It's could be a health tip that provides relief for a well known issue or a mindful thought for the day. Perhaps it's a motivational quote that gets people on track for the day; there are so many possibilities.

We talk about great content a lot in our blog. Check it out for tips on how to create content that your audience wants to share.

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Follow Influencers

Have local influencers you'd love to have associated with your brand? Follow them! Engage, communicate. Mention them in posts, call them out once in a while (in a nice way). Promote their posts now and again, but don't overdo it. This is not about getting attention, it's about building quality relationships.

And as you build these relationships with influencers you share in their audience. Oh, and don't forget to return the favor. You can also do this with other businesses in your community.

But remember, this is your brand we're talking about here. So be sure to engage with reputable sources only.

Social media is an important part of building strong SEO. And best of all, it's one that pharmacies of all sizes can take advantage of.

Always keep your brand voice strong, friendly and professional, and engage. With consistency and strong content, your efforts will pay off in SEO and website traffic.

Share the Workload

Search engine optimization is essential to a solid digital marketing strategy. When done well, it can help grow pharmacy sales and revenue. And, you **can** keep it simple.

Create valuable content and use effective keywords; you've got the tools. And when posting, be careful to add tags and descriptions. If time is an issue, as it tends to be in pharmacies, get your staff involved.

We've talked before about why it's important to have your staff helping with content. Not only does it help save time and produce more, their perspective on your patients is vital.

By having each staff member do a few minutes of keyword research for their own content, it keeps the load light. But the SEO results will be well worth it. And if you're looking for a tool to sketch out your digital strategy, check out our 2021 Pharmacy Content Planner.

In it you can lay out your blog series and posts, detail your upcoming social media efforts and decide who is responsible for what.

Sound like fun? I thought so!

Have questions or comments on SEO for pharmacies? We'd love to hear them!