



# Build a Better Blog in 11 Easy Steps

Sweat the lead and other smart practices for bloggers

By Wendy Lewis

**B**logging can be a fun and engaging way to showcase your practice's strengths, if you do it correctly. A blog is a frequent, chronological publication of your thoughts replete with web links. It is like a micro website where the author or authors can express themselves on topics of interest to their target audience. Blogs tend to be myopic in their focus and should be updated fairly regularly.

These 11 steps can help you develop more powerful posts and build a better blog.



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## 1 Set the Tone

If you intend for your blog to represent your brand and enhance your profile, you can either blog in the first person ("I or we found...") or second person ("You will find..."), or assign a staff member to blog for the practice in the third person ("It has been found

that...). You can also enlist the services of a professional who can write in the first, second, or third person. If your goal is to express yourself and get your opinions and viewpoints out there, your blog needs a more personal touch.

## 2 Give It a Name

The next decision is what to call your blog if it will be a separate domain name from your website (such as Aesthetics Blog or Dr Smith's Blog).

Another option is to add a link for "BLOG" to your practice website menu and let it live there. The latter is most common.

## 3 Choose a Catchy Headline

Six snappy words make for a great title. List-based titles are commonly used. For example, Five Ways to Reduce Wrinkles, Seven Ways You Are Sabotaging Your Skin, 12 Ways to Avoid Brown Spots. The headline is important because a high percentage of readers may not actually read more than those six little words. Make them count. My personal preference is to use a consistent format for each post, such as upper and lower case or all caps for headlines.

## 4 Sweat the Lead

As they say in journalism school, sweat the lead. A strong introduction draws readers in, keeps them interested, and lets them know what the post is about. Try asking an open-ended question to get readers engaged, such as "Liposuction, CoolSculpting, Flywheel - What Haven't You Tried to Get Back to Your Pre-Baby Body?" For a short blog post, the introduction doesn't have to be longer than a few sentences. If your lead is not compelling, your reader will bail.

## 5 Deliver On Your Promise

The real meat or "nut graph" of your post can include statistics, trend data, research, or expert quotes that back up your lead. Keep it friendly and conversational. The goal is to inform, engage, and encourage sharing. Humor is always welcome. Make sure posts are not overly

### Ingredients for a Perfect BLOG POST

- 6-word brilliant headline
- Catchy Lead
- Sub heads
- 300-500 words
- Hyperlinks
- Images, videos, memes
- Call to Action
- Tags
- Share Buttons

didactic or clinical. Your reader is likely a layperson, not a resident or professional colleague. Avoid anatomical or complex terms without bracketed explanations, such as "dermis (deeper layer of the skin)."

## 6 Break It Up

Shoot for 300- to 500-word posts, and compartmentalize the text to make it flow more like a magazine or news article. Sub-heads summarize the content in your post for those who will just be skimming.

## 7 Add Links and Visuals

Blog posts that contain images perform much better than just plain text. These can include photos, illustrations, infographics, charts, slides, videos, Graphics Interchange Format (GIF), or

Memes (a funny or edgy image, video, or piece of text that is copied sometimes with slight variations and spread). If you mention a treatment offered in your practice, add a hyperlink to take the reader to that content for more details. For product choices, add a hyperlink to your skin care section or shopping cart. You can also use links that direct the reader to content on your other social media platforms.

## 8 Categorize and Tag It

In WordPress, as well as other platforms such as Blogger and Square Space, you will have the capability to add tags and select categories that organize your posts. Tags are essentially keywords, such as New York Dermatologist or Facial Plastic Surgery. You can also create a hierarchy of categories by choosing broad categories like anti-aging, facial surgery, injectables, as well as corresponding sub-categories such as skin rejuvenation, face-lift, or hyaluronic acid gel fillers. It is best to set this up in the very beginning, and add tags and categorize each post as you go. Some blog platforms have “uncategorized” set as the default category. Make sure all bloggers are aware that they must

unchoose “uncategorized” and choose a relevant categories.

## 9 Hide Comments

Unless you have substantial traffic to your website and a well-established blog, you are not likely to get a lot of legitimate comments or questions on your blog. Keep all comments as “pending” so you have the ability to approve the ones you want to be visible and trash all the spammy posts.

## 10 Tell Readers What To Do

Think about what you want the reader to do as a result of reading your blog post. Make a comment? Share it? Call for an appointment? Purchase a product? Sign up to receive your eblasts? RSVP to an event? Receive a special offer? Like your Facebook page? The possibilities are endless. A call to action is help to encourage readers to respond the way you want them to.

## 11 Blog!

Lastly, coming up with topics is really pretty simple. Think of every question your patients ask. What's

on their minds? What's hot in aesthetic medicine? What safety concerns do you want to get out to the public? What's going on at your practice? Do you have a new staff member? Did you start offering a new treatment or service? Is there media coverage you want to showcase?

Many blogs double as the “What's New” section. Consider offering your point of view on current events related to your specialty. This can include breast or skin cancer awareness; Victoria Beckham's tattoo removal; or the US Food and Drug Administration's approval of a new laser, drug, or implant. As an expert in your field, your opinion and commentary on any of these consumer-friendly topics will be welcome. ■

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