



# PUTTING YOUR AESTHETIC PRACTICE ON THE MAP



Google Maps is the key to local search optimization success.

BY NAREN ARULRAJAH

**B**efore a person can choose your practice, the individual must be able to find you.

Where can they find you?

Google Maps, of course.

## WHAT IS GOOGLE MAPS?

Google Maps is a web service that is available as a standalone app. It is also integrated into Google Search and many third-party applications and websites. People can, and often do, perform searches within the map interface when looking for local businesses. Additionally, Google's intelligent search recognizes queries with local intent and responds by displaying results from the map.

So, how important is Google Maps to your aesthetic practice?

Very. In fact, for a well-optimized aesthetic practice, Google Maps can easily be a top (or the top) new patient acquisition source. More than one billion people, along with five million websites and applications use Google Maps, and 86% of Google Maps users search for local businesses. Moreover, 44% of Google local searchers click a result in the "3-pack," which is composed of the top three Maps results. This is more than twice the number (just 19%) of searchers who click on paid advertisements.

## CLAIMING AND UPDATING YOUR GOOGLE MAPS LISTING

Google Maps can show a lot of information about a business, as well as photos, reviews, and links. This primarily

comes from the Google Business Profile. If you've already added your practice there, it should be on Google Maps.

Google also pulls data from a variety of publicly available sources. That means your practice might be listed even if you never added it. (If you've ever changed your name or address, your practice might be listed a few times, which can be a big problem.)

Visit Google Maps or open the app on your mobile device and search for your practice name and city.

- If you have a business profile, you should be able to access and manage it.
- If your practice is listed, but you do not have a business profile, you should be able to claim the listing.
- If your practice is not listed, go to the menu and right-click on the map to add a business.
- If there are duplicate entries, such as old addresses still listed or separate listings for variations of your name, remove the inaccurate ones. This can usually be done via the Google Business manager interface or the "suggest edit" button on a map listing.

(Pro Tip: Google offers detailed help instructions if you encounter problems adding, claiming, verifying, or removing a business.)

## OPTIMIZING YOUR PRACTICE FOR GOOGLE MAPS SUCCESS

Don't just add your practice; fill in all applicable information on your Google Business Profile, make sure the

details are accurate, include keywords where appropriate, and add photos.

If you want to reach the Google 3-pack, you will need to optimize your practice's entire online presence.

Key components of a winning local search engine optimization (SEO) strategy include:

- **Backlinks.** Links from respected aesthetics bloggers, news outlets, industry publications, and other authoritative websites serve as trust signals. A high number of relevant, quality backlinks—from trustworthy sites—essentially tells Google that your website is also trustworthy.
- **Online reviews.** Google not only analyzes your reviews but also considers them a strong indication of your reputation and quality of

service. The ideal profile includes lots of reviews. Frequency and recency matter. Encourage clients to rate your practice consistently. Lastly, Google notices the length of reviews. A five-star rating is good; five stars accompanied by a long text praising your practice is fantastic.

- **NAP (Name, Address, and Phone number) consistency.** Online directory listings, mentions in the news media, and other citations help confirm the validity and relevancy of your business. Your most basic business details serve as identifiers for Google. NAP inconsistencies can not only sink your search performance but also confuse patients.

- **Content marketing.** Google is looking for relevant, authoritative, trustworthy, in-depth, valuable content. Avoid duplication, thin content, and irrelevant useless filler.
- **Technical SEO.** The backbone of any optimization strategy is the part you don't see. Clean code, fast loading time, accessibility, functionality, multi-device compatibility, and other technical aspects of website performance will impact your search rankings, as well as the user experience. ■

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