

# Putting Your Dermatology Practice on the Map



Google Maps is the key to local search optimization success.

BY NAREN ARULRAJAH

>> Before someone can choose your practice, that individual must be able to find you. Where can they find you? Google Maps, of course.

Google Maps is a web mapping platform that is available as a standalone application (app) and is integrated into Google Search as well as many third-party applications and websites. People frequently use the map interface to perform searches when looking for local businesses. Moreover, 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?

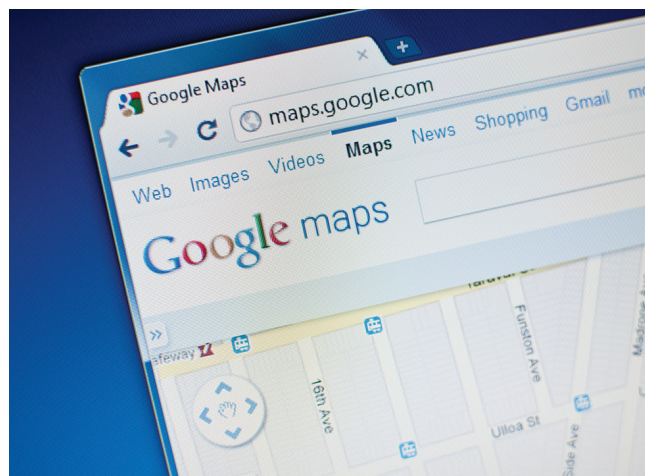
Very. In fact, for a well-optimized aesthetic practice, Google Maps can easily be one—if not the—top patient acquisition source. It's used by more than 1 billion people per month and about 5 million websites per day. Moreover, 86% of Google Maps users search for local businesses, and 44% of Google Search users click a result in the “3-pack,” which is Google's format for displaying the top three results for local business searches. By contrast, just 19% of searchers click on paid advertisements.

## TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR GOOGLE MAPS LISTING

Google Maps can show a lot of information about a business, including photos, reviews, and links, sourced primarily from its Google Business Profile. If you've already added a Business Profile, it should be readily accessible on Google Maps.

Google also pulls data from a variety of publicly available sources, which means your practice might be listed even if you haven't personally added it. However, if you've ever changed your practice's name or address, this can lead to multiple listings, which is one of the more crucial issues addressed here.

To begin, visit Google Maps on the web or in the app, search for your practice name and city, and assess your next steps:



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- 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, click on the menu icon in the upper left corner and select “add a business” from the drop-down menu.
- If there are duplicate entries that include old addresses or variations of your practice name, remove the inaccurate ones. This can usually be done via the Google Business Manager interface or the “suggest an edit” button on a map listing.

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

## OPTIMIZE YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE FOR GOOGLE MAPS SUCCESS

Don't just add your practice's name and address; fill in all the applicable information on your Google Business Profile. Make sure the details are accurate, include keywords where appropriate, and add photos.

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If your goal is 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. Many relevant, high-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 indicator of your reputation and quality of service. The ideal profile includes a significant number of reviews, with frequency and recency playing a vital role. Actively encourage clients to rate your practice. Additionally, Google takes into account the length of reviews. A five-star rating is good; five stars accompanied by a detailed testimonial praising your practice is fantastic.
- **Name, address, and phone number (NAP) consistency.**

Your most basic business details serve as identifiers for Google. Therefore, multiple accurate online directory listings, mentions in the news media, and other citations can help confirm the validity and relevancy of your business. 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 work you don’t see. Clean code, fast loading time, accessibility, functionality, multidevice compatibility, and other technical aspects of website performance will impact your search rankings, as well as the user experience.

*Naren Arulrajah, President and CEO of Ekwa Marketing, has been a leader in medical marketing for over a decade. Ekwa provides comprehensive marketing solutions for busy doctors, providing web design, hosting, content creation, social media, reputation management, SEO, and more. If you’re looking for ways to boost your marketing results, call 855-598-3320 for a free strategy session with Naren. You may also schedule a session with the Senior Director of Marketing – Lila, by visiting <https://www.ekwa.com/msm/> or simply sending a text to 313-777-8494.*