



Checklist for social media

Promoting your research online

What is the aim of your post?

Think of why you are posting. This will help to craft an engaging post, to speak in the right language to the right people, and focus on what's relevant. For example, your aim might be to:

- Promote your work or speed up the adoption of study outcomes (convince surgeons and clinicians, lobby decision makers, business managers)
- Prepare for a next career move (future employers, references)
- Boost your citation rates, improve research funding (researchers, sponsors)
- Educate patients, attract customers to your clinic (patients)
- Grow your overall online influence, become an influencer, a trusted authority, attract paid partnerships (more general audience and the algorithms)
- Other _____

Relevance and value first!

Put yourself in your audience's shoes: why should they care, what is in it for them? First define your aim and the audience you want to speak to and lead with what's relevant for them.

- When posting about studies and outcomes, keep in mind the aim of your study, why is it important, what knowledge gap or need does it address, what is the clinical application? How will it make the audience's life easier or advance their practice or career?
- This will help define the right target audiences and articulate strong messages that resonate with them. Why should they care? It's not about you, it's about them.
- You can use LinkedIn surveys or Instagram story polls to gauge what your followers are interested in and want to see.

Stay authentic, keep it personal

Be real and transparent! Post about what is important and genuine to you. No one is perfect, don't be afraid of mistakes—being human and staying personal is more important. People don't want polished and scripted posts; they want someone they can connect with.

Lead with your passion, your values, and relate to your followers. Your credentials are important, but the audience will find out more about you if they are interested in what you have to say.

You could post for example:

- Behind the scenes photos or video
- Delve into the background of your work
- Stories of you and how you got to where you are
- Reuse best posts, highlights of the year, collect your best posts/reels into one
- Original content always resonates best

Try to be consistent, but don't worry about the numbers

You don't have to post every day—or even every week—but try to remain consistent. To develop relationships, more touch points enable your followers to get to know you and stay interested.

Don't worry about the number of followers and likes. You are going after the right audience, not quantity. If people unfollow you, that's also OK!



Checklist for social media continued

Engage to grow your reach and visibility faster

Posting content for views is great, but engagement is better. To actively grow your network, link with your peers and influencers, key opinion leaders. Content that appeals to you, is likely to appeal to your network as well. Value the human connections—the algorithms do, too! Growth will accelerate, more means more.

- “Shout for shout”—work together to grow each others’ reach.
- Use **@tags** to mention people and organizations (e.g. @AO Spine) and **#hashtags** for topic areas people are following (#KFTumor, #degeneration, #scoliosis, #osteoporosis, #backpain, etc.)
- Message, comment, like, share, and otherwise engage with your audience and to connect with new people. People like to be noticed and seen. Respond to comments and reply to questions in your posts.
- If you can, take an interest in your followers, scroll through their profile and comment on something you appreciate or are impressed by.

Show your face—photos and videos

Always include a photo or video with your post. Your face is your most valuable asset and makes your posts more relatable. It creates trust and an emotional connection, adds credibility, and a non-verbal level to your message.

A selfie always works, you alone or with people you want to be associated with. We are naturally drawn to faces, eyes, and smiles—so show your face and speak in your own voice. You only have a fraction of a second to grab the audience’s interest.



- With your smart phone, take photos, record and edit testimonials, talking heads, interviews, discuss trending events, share your insights or thoughts on a topic or publication, explain complex topics, debunk myths and misconceptions, etc.
- There are several free apps for more editing options (e.g. [riverside.fm](#)).
- Make sure you have light on your face and not behind you.
- No need to aim for polished professional videos, real-life scenes are better.
- Open graph enables posting a rich object on social media directly from a website: Paste the page link into a new social media post, and it will automatically pull the image/video, title and link from the page.
- Enter the “magic” AI tools that will automatically edit interesting clips from long videos, create subtitles and transcriptions.
- People mostly watch video without sound (85%) so don’t make your story depend on sound alone.
- Don’t go over the ideal video lengths: Instagram 30 sec, X (formerly Twitter) 45 sec, Facebook 1 min, YouTube 2 mins. First shot is crucial!
- Best formats: vertical or square videos are best for viewing, landscape for YouTube. MP4 best universal format: 1080×1080 pixels (square, max resolution), 1080×566 px (landscape), 1080×1350 px (portrait videos) Minimum resolution 600×315 px.

Other points:

- Your posts do not need to always have a link—the platforms prefer posts with no links, so people don’t leave to other websites. You can also add links to comments.
- Include links to important sites in your profile (your clinic, AO, recent papers, etc.)
- Pin your most important posts to the top of your feed (featured posts, highlights)
- Short is sweet; but long posts, blogs and articles are trending again.
- Honor copyrights!
- Review your channel and post metrics occasionally (channel analytics and dashboards)
- To manage your online reputation, search for yourself on Google and see what comes up. Manage content about you on your institution’s page, in your social media profiles, your Google and other online accounts, and in Wikipedia.
- Monitor mentions of keywords or you on the web, e.g. with [Google alerts](#).
- Explore and be surprised; you never know what works today!