

# Blogging

For Your Osteopathic Practice



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# Why Write a Blog

Every business wants to attract visitors to its website. The more visitors we can attract, the more we can convert into customers, and the more money we'll make.

The standard information on our website is likely to talk about our services, what we do, our prices and how to contact us. Until someone is actively looking for us, this information isn't going to have a great "share potential" - information that people will enjoy and share with their network. What we want to do is attract people who are further up the funnel, who may not be actively looking for our services at the moment, but who are very much potential customers.

Sharing useful information on our website is the best way to do this. Potential customers who are not actively searching for us at the moment won't be interested in our basic information, but may well be interested in information that relates to a problem they're having. Someone with back pain might not be thinking of looking for treatment, but will be interested in information about the causes and treatments of back pain. Someone who enjoys running will be interested in information about running safely, warmups, the right shoes, etc.

We can put a lot of useful information in our main website pages. As we saw in the last guide, if we see that a lot of people in our area search Google for "running injuries", it makes sense for us to create a page on our site dedicated to running injuries, with lots of information that will be interesting and useful to people making that search. As we create more links into that page, it will rise in the Google rankings and we will get more traffic to our site.

Still though, we only have one page on running injuries, and once we have promoted it to someone once we can't really go back in six months time and ask them to promote it again. Blogging allows us to constantly create fresh, useful content to share. If we write a blog article about knee injuries in running, we can write another a couple of months later about good stretches and warmups, another a couple of months later about avoiding shinsplints, another a couple of months later about plantar fasciitis, and so on. As long as we keep writing, we have a fresh stream of useful, interesting content to promote..

We write a blog so that we always have fresh, useful content, which means constant fresh reasons to contact our market and tell them about ourselves, by sharing new information that will be useful to them.

Although this is the main advantage of blogging, there are other advantages to our blog-keeping. First, we're creating a knowledge base. Someone who visits our website can read through our articles and see that we know what we're doing. They can find an article that relates to their problem and see that we understand it and have treated it before. We can also use our blog on social media. If someone asks a question on a Facebook page, for example, we can point them to the blog article we have already written about it.

Second, reading our articles allows our potential patients to get to know us a little. Reading someone's writing is not massively different to listening to them speak, so by the time someone has read one or two of our articles, we will have gone some way to building up trust and rapport with our potential patient, and they're much more likely to contact us.

## **Local vs (Inter)national**

Just as with SEO, it's great if our content is shared far and wide and read by people all over the country, but unless we stand to make money some other way than by treating people (for example by selling something online or by affiliate links), we'll want to focus on getting our content read by people who are close enough to us to come for treatment.

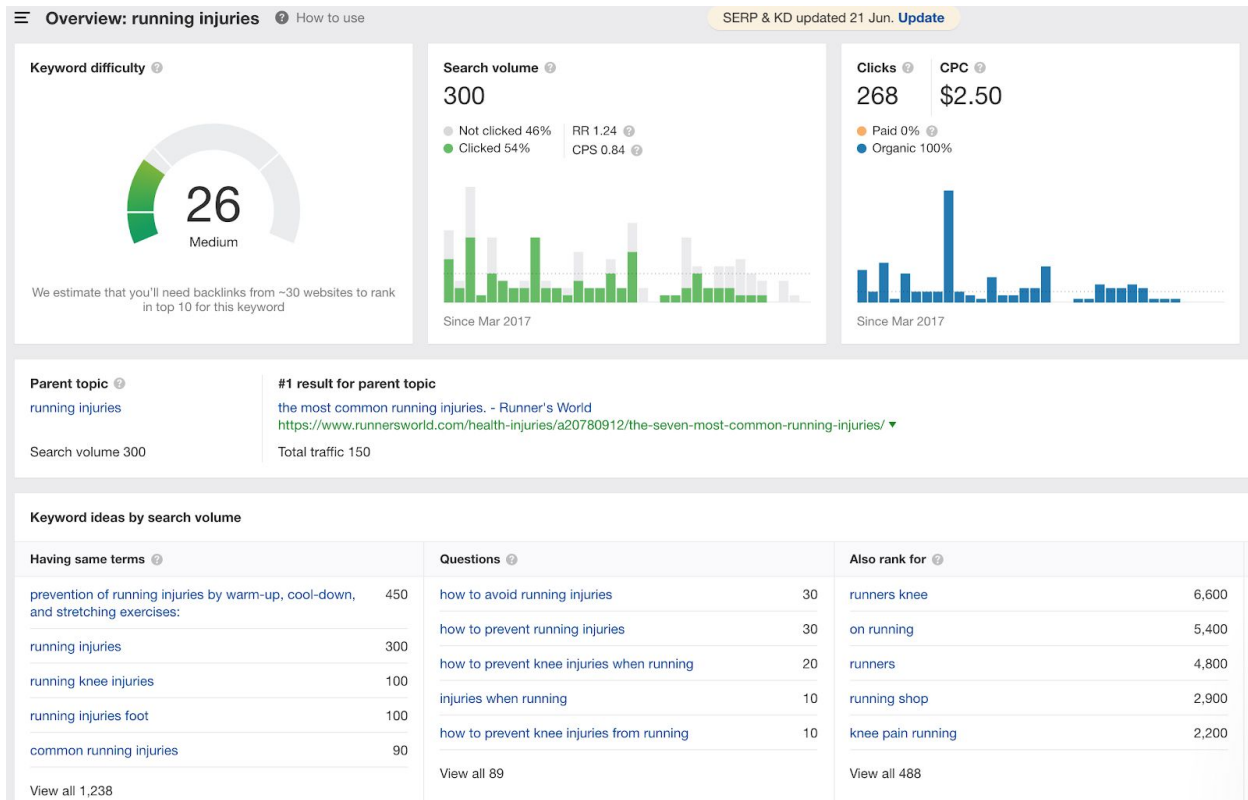
Let's start off by looking at how we'd target people regardless of location, and then how we might do things differently to target people more local to us.

### **National / International Content Marketing**

In the last guide on SEO, we looked at how we'll choose the search terms we'll target based on what users are searching for in our area and the competition to rank well for those keywords, then try to build inbound links to raise our webpage in the Google rankings.






This is exactly the same thing we'll do when we're creating blog articles that will rank high to a national/international audience. In the last guide we used Google Keyword Planner to find out what people in our area are searching for. If we're hitting a wider audience and our local area is less important, we might use an SEM tool instead, giving us more information on what people are searching for nationally and worldwide. Here we're going to use Ahrefs, but there are others, just search for "SEM tools".

Typing "running injuries" into Ahrefs gives us some information on the volume of searches for the keyphrase and how difficult it might be to rank:



We can see that the monthly UK search volume for “running injuries” is 300, which although it’s not amazing might still be worth us targeting. However, we can also see that “knee pain running” gets 2,200 searches a month, and “runner’s knee” gets a massive 6,600 searches a month, so we’ll come back to these in a minute.

First though, let’s take a look at how hard it might be to rank for “running injuries”. Ahrefs estimates that we’ll need links from around 30 websites to rank for this term, but also shows us who is in the top 10 spots and how many inbound links they have so that we know what we’re up against:

SERP overview for "running injuries" 					
 Top stories  People also ask  Sitelinks  Thumbnails					
Search result	AR	DR	UR	Backlinks	Domains
<b>1</b> the most common running injuries. - Runner's World <a href="https://www.runnersworld.com/health-injuries/a20780912/the-seven-most-common-running-injuries/">https://www.runnersworld.com/health-injuries/a20780912/the-seven-most-common-running-injuries/</a> ▼	4.1K	85	41	4,265	210
<b>2</b> ▶ People also ask					
<b>3</b> Running Injuries A-Z - our comprehensive guide to running ... <a href="https://www.runnersworld.com/uk/health/injury/a760199/running-injuries-a-z/">https://www.runnersworld.com/uk/health/injury/a760199/running-injuries-a-z/</a> ▼	4.1K	85	24	54	27
<b>4</b> Common Running Injuries: Causes, Prevention, and Treatment <a href="https://www.webmd.com/fitness-exercise/guide/running-injuries-causes-prevention-treatment">https://www.webmd.com/fitness-exercise/guide/running-injuries-causes-prevention-treatment</a> ▼	278	92	37	232	130
<b>5</b> Treat and Prevent Your Running Injuries - Runners Connect <a href="https://runnersconnect.net/running-injuries/">https://runnersconnect.net/running-injuries/</a> ▼	129K	67	25	357	29
▶ 3 Sitelinks					
<b>6</b> Knee pain and other running injuries - NHS <a href="https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/knee-pain-and-other-running-injuries/">https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/knee-pain-and-other-running-injuries/</a> ▼	398	91	28	194	33
<b>7</b> 7 Most Common Running Injuries - pt Health <a href="https://www.pthealth.ca/blog/the-7-most-common-running-injuries/">https://www.pthealth.ca/blog/the-7-most-common-running-injuries/</a> ▼	602K	51	17	13	10
<b>8</b> Common Running Injuries - Sports-health <a href="https://www.sports-health.com/sports-injuries/running-injuries/common-running-injuries">https://www.sports-health.com/sports-injuries/running-injuries/common-running-injuries</a> ▼	431K	54	17	13	8
<b>9</b> Running Injuries - Cleveland Clinic <a href="https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/articles/8765-preventing-running-injuries">https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/articles/8765-preventing-running-injuries</a> ▼	2.4K	87	30	180	64
<b>10</b> Running Injuries - Ten tips on preventing running injuries <a href="https://thephysiotherapyclinics.com/running-injuries/">https://thephysiotherapyclinics.com/running-injuries/</a> ▼	4.2M	29	13	133	16

We can see that the top result is from Runner's World, with a high domain ranking of 85 and an incredible 4,265 backlinks. WebMD and the NHS also rank high, both very high authority websites that will be difficult to compete against. We might eventually be able to break into the top 10 for this search term, but it will take a lot of outreach and work. Unless we have some way of converting the visitors from outside our area into sales, the work we'd put in to rank on the first page simply doesn't translate into new business at a rate that would make it worthwhile.

What about "knee pain running"?

#### SERP overview for "knee pain running"

 Image pack  Top stories  People also ask  Sitelinks  Thumbnails

Search result	AR	DR	UR	Backlinks	Domains
<b>1</b> 4 causes of knee pain and how to fix them - Runner's World <a href="https://www.runnersworld.com/uk/health/injury/a773762/4-causes-of-knee-pain-and-how-to-fix-them/">https://www.runnersworld.com/uk/health/injury/a773762/4-causes-of-knee-pain-and-how-to-fix-them/</a> ▼ ▶ 3 Sitelinks	4.1K	85	28	134	44
<b>2</b> ▶ People also ask					
<b>3</b> Knee pain and other running injuries - NHS <a href="https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/knee-pain-and-other-running-injuries/">https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/knee-pain-and-other-running-injuries/</a> ▼	398	91	28	194	33
<b>4</b> ▶ Top stories					
<b>5</b> Runner's Knee: Symptoms, Causes, and Treatment - Healthline <a href="https://www.healthline.com/health/runners-knee">https://www.healthline.com/health/runners-knee</a> ▼ ▶ 2 Sitelinks	517	91	33	154	87
<b>6</b> How to Know When It's Safe to Run Through Knee Pain and ... <a href="https://www.self.com/story/knee-pain-running">https://www.self.com/story/knee-pain-running</a> ▼	3.3K	86	24	58	27
<b>7</b> How to Treat and Prevent Runner's Knee   ACTIVE <a href="https://www.active.com/running/articles/how-to-treat-and-prevent-runner-s-knee">https://www.active.com/running/articles/how-to-treat-and-prevent-runner-s-knee</a> ▼	1.7K	89	27	125	95
<b>8</b> Runner's Knee: Symptoms, Pain, Causes, and Treatment <a href="https://www.webmd.com/pain-management/knee-pain/runners-knee">https://www.webmd.com/pain-management/knee-pain/runners-knee</a> ▼	278	92	44	867	354
<b>9</b> Knees Hurt When Running? Here's Why—and What to Do ... <a href="https://www.shape.com/fitness/cardio/training-tips-prevent-knee-pain-running">https://www.shape.com/fitness/cardio/training-tips-prevent-knee-pain-running</a> ▼	4.3K	85	24	32	20
<b>10</b> The Runners Knee Diagnostic Checklist - Pain Science <a href="https://www.painscience.com/articles/diagnose-runners-knee.php">https://www.painscience.com/articles/diagnose-runners-knee.php</a> ▼	52K	73	31	336	247

Once again, Runners World, NHS and WebMD all rank. Although we could eventually rank in the top 10, we'd need a lot of links to compete with these websites, which would take a lot of time.

If we were content marketers trying to find articles to write to draw in an audience to our website, we'd probably do better to look for more niche terms with less competition, unless we have some fantastic link builders and a profitable webpage that will make some real money once the hard work of building up links is done.

If needing to have a high authority website with tons of backlinks in order to get on the first page of Google all seems a bit dispiriting, don't worry. As a local business, we can be a bit smarter, and take a more guerilla approach.

## Local Content Marketing

Let's say we've seen that knee injuries when running is a popular search term and we've written a fascinating article on it. As wide area marketers (i.e. national/international), we now have



some serious work cut out building those links. We could contact health websites, running websites and blogs, and ask them to link to our article, and slug away at it gaining what links we can until our page becomes visible on the first page of Google.

As local marketers though, our goal can be different. Although it won't harm us at all to rank well on Google, what we really want is to *get our article read by interested local people*. Getting our information and advice in front of the members of the local running club is worth a million times more to us than someone 500 miles away finding our article on Google, so it's that local promotion and readership that is our focus.

And here we have a HUGE advantage. If I'm an Edinburgh-based content marketing firm and I contact Dover Running Club to ask to share our article on running injuries, I'm just link building and they know it. When Dover Osteopathic and Sports Injury Clinic contacts Dover Running Club to share their article on running injuries, that's seriously useful. That's a local specialist giving out useful information, someone that their members can contact to ask advice or go to directly for treatment. It's a great information share and local networking for the club, and they're really likely to do it.

We can use this as a way in to build a relationship with that club. Maybe we'll mention that their members are welcome to contact us for advice, or even offer a discount on their first session or to go and do a brief talk and Q+A at the club. At the very least, we'll keep them supplied with fresh, useful content for their members. It doesn't matter if our article never ranks well on Google, what matters is we've got ourselves bang in front of our market, and that our market has access to expert advice from a local person who they can talk to and go to receive treatment from.

So if you want to become a content marketing superstar and rank high on Google that's great, but for a local business it's this guerilla approach that will give us the most benefits for the time invested. Write useful articles based on what people actually search for, and use them as a way to approach our local market by giving them useful content from a trusted local authority.


# Writing your Content

Now you know what you're going to write about, it's time to write our content.

## Strong Title and Description


We discussed the title and meta description in the last guide. The meta description tag can be edited from within your web design program and will display in Facebook or Google when the article is previewed.



Snippet Preview

 <https://www.redballoonweb.com> › the-5-best-stretches...

**The 5 Best Stretches for Winter Running**

It's crucial to stretch well when running in the winter. Osteopath David Smith shows you how to stay safe with these top running stretches.





Edit snippet

SEO title Insert snippet variable

Title Page

Slug

the-5-best-stretches-for-winter-running

Meta description Insert snippet variable

It's crucial to stretch well when running in the winter. Osteopath David Smith shows you how to stay safe with these top running stretches.

Close snippet editor

Take the time to think of a strong and engaging title and meta description for your article. When someone sees your article shared on social media, the title, description and image will be all they have to decide whether to click through and read it, so they're worth getting right.

Good titles engage the reader directly and on their level, so things like “how to avoid running injuries in winter” or “running and your spine” are better than “the benefits of manual therapy in rotator cuff injury”. Lists are also popular: “the 7 best winter running stretches” or “the 3 most common running injuries”, and so on.

The description should be engaging and draw people in to read more whilst giving them an idea of what is contained in the article.

## **Images**

Make sure you use at least one image as the ‘main’ image for the article which will show when people share it on social media and when the user navigates to the page. Try to find an image which sums up the meaning of the article, it confirms to people what they're looking for and sets the tone for the page.

Having images throughout your text *with captions* is really helpful. Remember that attention is a scarce commodity on the internet, and we tend to scan articles, particularly the images and captions, to see what the article is about before committing ourselves to reading. Try ‘reading’ your article as just the title, images, captions and description. If you can pretty much get the idea of what the article is about from that, you're doing well.



*Images with captions can help readers scanning the text to quickly understand what it's about.*

You can get images from Google image search (be careful of copyright) or from image libraries - free and paid. You might have to think outside the box to find the image that's right for you. For example, if you have an article about ankle sprains, a woman howling in pain as she twists her ankle might be descriptive but not set the right tone, whereas a cartoon person slipping on a banana skin might be just right.

I have an image library subscription for Websites for Osteopaths, so if you can't find the image you need, drop me a line and I'll help if I can.

## **Structure**

Again we don't just sit and read things, we scan them, and lots and lots of text with nothing to break it up will put off a lot of readers.

Use plenty of subheadings to break your text up into clear chunks and to show users the structure of the article when they scan through. You might even want to include your

subheadings at the start of the article like a table of contents, so users can quickly see what the article contains.

## **Length**

Some people write very long blog articles and some write very short articles, there really is no “ideal length”. That said, try to write at least 500 words, and if you look like going beyond a few thousand then think about splitting it up into more than one article. Don’t be afraid to go in-depth if you can do so whilst maintaining interest, as it will help you build up trust with your market.

## **Style**

Again there’s no need to worry too much about style. Some people write very informally and some write much more formally. My advice would be to write the way you would speak to a patient.

Don’t worry if your first draft is confused or rambling, just get it all out on the page and then go back and rewrite it later. Hardly anyone can write clearly and succinctly straight off the bat, we all need to edit our work.

## **Plug**

At the bottom of each article (or maybe in the middle for longer articles), include a photo of yourself and a paragraph along the lines of “I hope you found this article useful, if you would like to discuss your problem and make an appointment...” - with a link to your contact page or information pages - to grab people who are reading the article and may want to make an appointment. After all this is really the point of writing the blog, so don’t forget to plug yourself.

## **Disclaimer**

Make sure you add a disclaimer to your articles saying that your article is for information only, it doesn't take the place of a professional consultation and you can't be held liable for any injury resulting from your information.

With both your plug and disclaimer, your web developer should be able to automate these so they appear at the end of every blog post without you having to include them manually.

## **Promoting your Content**

Once you've written your article, it's time to get people reading and (hopefully) sharing it. Expect to put at least as much time into 'marketing' your article as writing it, if not more.

### **Make a list**

Begin by making a spreadsheet of everyone you can think of who might be interested in your content. Look for local sports groups, community groups and anyone else it might be relevant to. If they have social media, so much the better as they can share your article on their social.

Keeping a spreadsheet also allows you to keep track of replies and useful contacts when you write your next article.

### **Contacting**

It makes most sense to contact people where you want them to share the article. So if you want them to share it on their Facebook then contact them through Facebook, whereas if you want them to include it in their monthly email, contact them by email.

Don't be shy in asking for a share, you're doing them a favour in giving them useful content for their members so be direct, say you've published an article which you think their members might find useful and would they be interested in sharing it.

Once your article is shared on their social media, it's a great opportunity for you to respond to anyone asking questions in the comments to the article, which adds value for the organisation sharing as well. Make sure you're a member of the group or page it's shared to (you might need permission to join as an exception if you're not a member of the club or group that run the page) and make sure you respond to comments and questions, it will show that you're human and happy to engage with people, and make them much more likely to contact you.

## **Your own Social Media and Mailing List**

If you're blogging, curating your own social media presence and followers and keeping a mailing list is a sure way to get the word out to your existing fans. You can ask your patients if they're interested in being added to your mailing list to keep up to date with information and advice, and encourage them to follow you on Facebook as well (if you put a sign about your social media in your waiting area many people will follow you on their phone while they're waiting). You can also put a Facebook 'like page' button and emailing list signup form on your website.

## **Guest Blogging**

Many blogs curate interesting content for their readers by allowing guest bloggers to share an article. If you know of or follow a blog that you think might find your content useful, drop them a line with a link to your article and asking if they accept guest posts. Bloggers get asked this all the time, so don't be shy and remember you're doing them a favour. If it's a larger blog with a big readership, you might also want to offer to write a post exclusively for them, rather than just sharing the article from your site.