

The Ultimate
Social Media
Guide to Instagram





Instagram has ignited interest among 100 million users over the past two years and captivated the attention of social media giant, Facebook, who purchased the company in 2012 for a whopping 1 billion dollars.

Because social media users interact with images 50% more than plain text, visual networking platforms, like Instagram, have become the ultimate marketing strategy for social media advertising.

Getting Started

To start your Instagram profile, you must first download the app on your iPad, iPhone, or Android device.

- Log into the App Store or Google Play to download Instagram.
- Once the app installs, open Instagram and click the "Register" button.
- Choose a username and password. Your username will be visible by all Instagram users so we recommend choosing something that represents your practice in a professional manner.
- After inputting your name and email address, click "Register" to complete account creation.

Tip: You can skip adding contacts from your phone or Facebook by clicking "Skip" at the bottom of the screen; and, you are not required to follow any "Suggested Users".

Instagram Glossary

- **#hashtag** – a word or phrase (without spaces) preceded by the pound sign (#). Hashtags have been adopted by social media sites (namely Instagram and Twitter) to append keywords to and categorize social media posts. More on hashtags is included later in this guide.
- **@handle** – a method of referring to another Instagrammer within a comment by appending the "@" sign before their username. When you mention someone's handle, they receive a notification that they were mentioned.
- **Comment** – feedback that Instagrammers leave on your photos. You can comment on your own images as well.
- **Explore** – images that are trending (recently popular) on the IG social network. The "Explore" section is signified by the compass-looking navigational star.
- **Feed** – the stream of images that appears on your homepage. Feeds are linear and update chronologically, with the most recent posts from those you follow displaying near the top.
- **Filter** – overlays that you can add to your images. Filters include: aged; vintage looks; black and white; polaroid-esque; and high-contrast.
- **Follower** – someone who enjoys your images; their feed is updated every time you post a new image.
- **Following** – admiring someone's images by having your feed updated every time they post a new photo.
- **Geotag** – tagging images with the geographical coordinates referencing where they were taken.
- **Gramming** – the act of "Instagramming".
- **Home/Homepage/Feed** – an up-to-date linear display of images from the IGers you follow. Your IG homepage displays your feed and is signified by the house icon.
- **IG** – shorthand for "Instagram".
- **IGer(s)** – refers to an Instagram user or a group of IG users.
- **Instameet/Instawalk** – public Instagram events where IGers get together and take images of local scenery. Instameets are a great way to gain local followers and spread the word about your practice.
- **Like** – a virtual sign of admiration for your image, signified by the heart symbol. To "like" an image, double-tap on the photo or tap the heart icon just below the image.
- **News** – notifications about the most recent activity revolving around your profile, as well as activity performed by the IGers you follow. The "News" section is signified by the speech bubble with the heart inside.



- **Photo Map** – a world map that displays where your images were uploaded. In order to display images on your photo map, you must allow IG to access your GPS location.
- **Profile** – Your profile, noted by the I.D. card icon, showcases all of your images and gives you access to your photo map, followers, following, and a search feature.
- **Search** – accessible from within your profile by clicking on the navigational star icon. Allows you to search for users based on their @handle or real name, also allows you to search for #hashtags.

Optimizing Your IG Profile

Help users easily learn more about your practice and brand by optimizing your IG profile. To get started, go to your profile by tapping the icon that resembles an I.D. card. Located next to your person-silhouette avatar, you will see "Edit your profile"; click on this.

Here, you can add a link to your website, a short 150-character biography, a profile photo, your gender, and birthday. The essential information you should include is your website URL, a profile image, and a biography. And remember, because Instagram is a community of quirky and fun artists, you'll want to keep your biography as entertaining as you are!

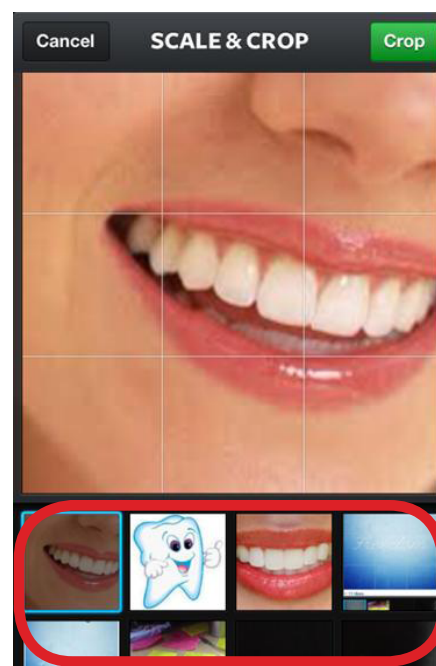
How to Share Images

The Instagram app enables users to take photos using a camera within the app or allows you to upload any photo that you may have stored in your mobile device. Depending on whether you are using an iPhone or Android device, the process of sharing images will vary slightly.

iPhone Users Option 1

Starting on your home feed page, hold the center camera icon for 2-3 seconds. This will take you to a page where you can scroll through images that are stored on your phone.

Select the image that you wish to share on Instagram, and resize it on this screen to fit Instagram's 1:1 square ratio.





iPhone Users Option 2

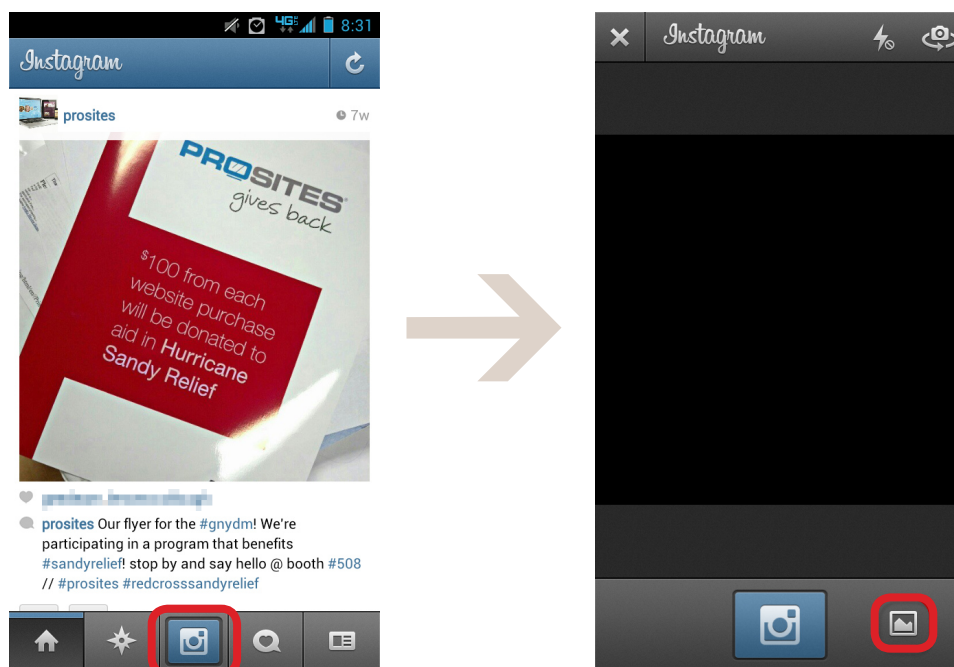
Starting on your home feed page, quickly "tap" the center camera icon.

To upload an image that is already on your phone, tap the square icon next to the camera button to view your phone's photo gallery.



Android Users

To upload a photo, tap the center camera icon in the middle of your navigation menu. Then, tap the image icon to the right of the camera button to select an image that is already stored on your phone.





Both iPhone and Android users

Both iPhone and Android users can take new photos directly through Instagram as well. To do this, simply press the camera icon in the middle of your navigation screen, and your camera will appear. To take a picture, tap the middle camera icon again, and you will be directed to the filters page.

Choosing the Right Filter

Instagram has numerous built-in filters to alter or enhance the look of your images. What initially made IG so popular is the nostalgic feeling it gave modern-day photos, and users still enjoy viewing images with that sentimental quality. The following is a list of Instagram's current native filters and what each is best used for:

Filter	Description	Works Best With...
	Leaving your image filter-free, au-natural.	Any image.
	Adds light towards the center of an image.	Dark photos or photos you want to age.
	Adds a vintage warm glow and increases contrast.	Scenery with warm hues, such as sunsets or bright photos.
	Similar to Amaro, but gives a warmer overall glow, brightening the entire image.	Dark photos, cool colored photos, or photos that you want to age.
	Adds a wintry, iced feel to images, dulling colors and warmth.	Photos of architecture or textural images.
	Smooth's and dulls colors, giving a soft vintage appearance to images.	Photos of nature or outdoor scenery.
	Transforms image into warm, vintage black-and-white.	Nature photos, portraits, and high contrast images.
	Adds warmth to images and saturates colors, giving them a vibrant pop.	Most images, particularly those with blue, green, or metal tones.
	Similar to X-Pro and adds bold black shades, dark shadows, and rich color to images.	Photos of food.



Filter	Description	Works Best With...
	Gives images a faded appearance, with an emphasis on beige and yellow tones.	Any image you want to give a super vintage vibe.
	Makes images appear almost smoky with heightened browns and purples.	Images of coffee, teas, or anything else deemed "artsy" and cool.
	Increases the exposure of images while darkening the edges (called "vignette" in the photography realm).	Summery images (e.g. concerts, gardens, BBQs, picnics, etc.).
	Gives photos a dark, metallic, Inception-like feel.	Architecture; images that are too bright.
	Turns a color image into a black-and-white.	Images where the colors don't work well together – or – you want the focus to be on the contrast between the light and shadow.
	Makes photos appear washed-out with subtle bluish haze.	Bright photos or photos taken in open sunlight.
	Adds a bit of haze to images, increases contrast, and highlights golden-yellow tones.	Photos you want to add vintage 1960s flare to, or increase the color contrast.
	A 1980s faded Polaroid filter.	Photos you want to give an antiqued-look to.
	Frames images in vintage filmstrip and adds magenta-purple tint.	Photos that evoke a sort of nostalgia and are more yellow-orange to begin with.
	Makes images look as though they were from the 1970s.	Photos you want to give a very dated appearance.
	Gives images a vibrant, bright appearance but can be too harsh for some images.	Extremely dull colored images.

After you start to build your brand on Instagram, you will develop an image style, and you will find that not every filter fits your style. In fact, you may avoid using filters altogether!



Editing Your Images Outside of Instagram

Once you become fairly active in the Instagram community, you may notice that many IGers have these stunning, award-worthy images in their profile. You may also be scratching your head, wondering how they managed to create such an image using only their mobile device and Instagram's native filters. The secret is – they didn't. The most successful IGers enhance their images using external editors and then upload their images to Instagram after they are done editing. These editors can be downloaded in the App Store for Apple devices and in Google Play for Android devices.

Popular External Photo Editors for iPhone	Popular External Photo Editors for Android
Snapseed	Snapseed
VSCO Cam	PicsPlayPro
Diptic	Pixlr Express
Camera+	Perfectly Clear
PhotoForge 2	Little Photo
Slow Shutter Cam	After Focus



Some of these editors are free, while others charge a small fee prior to downloading. We recommend downloading the free photo editing apps first, to establish whether you enjoy using an external editor. If you decide these external editors are something you enjoy using, you can then decide to purchase more advanced ones when you're ready.

Using External Editors for Promotions

When running a promotion or sponsoring a local event, Instagram can be a great platform to let local patients and prospects know of your involvement. The free external editing app Phonto can be downloaded on both Apple and Android devices and enables users to add text to an image. By advertising

your event via image, you can market on Instagram while creating visually engaging artwork.

Describing Your Image

Instagram has become a network comprised of free-thinkers, creators, and philosophers. To accompany images, many craft clever prose, thought-provoking descriptions, or witty snippets. Breathing this imaginative life into your images through the inclusion of crafty descriptions can increase IGer interest and entice more users to follow you.

Additionally, to increase your exposure beyond acquiring likes and followers, appending hashtags to keywords within your description is a smart way to get your images seen across the entire Instagram network.

How to Use #Hashtags

Hashtags are used across various social networks to categorize posts and images, enabling users to quickly and easily find content that piques their interest. To use hashtags in your descriptions, simply append the “#” symbol before a keyword or phrase (without spaces) that you wish to associate with your image. If the hashtag does not already exist, a new one will automatically be generated – there's no creation process!



Remember, hashtags cannot include any punctuation or spaces. Both spaces and punctuation marks break a hashtag, so phrases or tags containing multiple words should be one solid unit (e.g. #nameofyourpractice).

The benefits of using hashtags in your posts are many:

- Other IGers will see your image when searching for photos related to a specific tag (e.g. if one of your patients attends a local charity event your practice sponsored and searches for "#givebackasmile", they will be able to see any image that has ever been tagged with that phrase).
- They increase your exposure by adding you among other users with similar posts and ideas, which allows local and global IGers to view your practice profile.
- IGers searching for your practice across Instagram and other networks will be able to view your images, potentially stimulating their interest in your services.

*Refer to our blog post "[Why #Hashtags?](#)" to learn more about implementing hashtags in your pins.

The Benefits of Geotagging

Whenever you capture an image on a digital device (digital camera, mobile phone, etc.), the device stores a ton of information about that image, including the exact geographical location in which the image was taken; this is called geotagging.

One of the most recent additions to Instagram is the implementation of geotags to user profiles. Now, when images are uploaded to a particular geolocation, IGers can see all images that have ever been uploaded to that specific location.*

To upload your images using geotagging, simply check the "Add to your Photo Map" box after typing your photo's description. After uploading the image to your feed, users will then be able to search that location and find your image, increasing your exposure among local prospects.

Instagram currently uses the social network "FourSquare's" mapping system to track where images are uploaded from. If you are not uploading an image from the location you want to show on the Photo Map, you can click "Name this location". Here, you can search for the location you would like your image to be associated with. This is particularly useful if you are instagramming from home, but want your images to display your practice as their geolocation.

*Try searching for your practice to see if your patients are already uploading images to your location! If they are, follow these users to show appreciation and interest in their images.

Claim Your FourSquare Account

Given the importance of using geolocation, we further recommend that you claim your practice profile on the FourSquare social network, to ensure it displays correct information about your practice. This will enable users to view your practice location and access information, including reviews and driving directions right from their mobile device.

To claim your FourSquare account, visit <http://business.foursquare.com/> and click "Get Started Now". The process of claiming your practice location is similar to creating and accessing most popular social networks. If you don't have a



FourSquare account, you will first be required to create one. Click the link to “Create a personal account”, and follow the steps therein.

After you have created and verified (or logged into your pre-existing account), use the search bar at the top of the screen to search for your practice. Once you find your practice page, on the right-hand navigation menu, there is a link that says “Do you manage this location? Claim here”. Click this link to claim your profile. In most cases, you will be required to answer a verification phone call and wait for a postcard in the mail to complete the claiming process.

Claiming your FourSquare account prevents others from falsely moving your location on the Instagram map and/or posting inaccurate information about your practice, which could prevent new or current patients from driving to the wrong location.

Seamless Social Networking

Because images have a 50% higher rate of interaction than plain text social media posts, you may consider uploading your Instagram images to other social networks. By uploading your Instagram images on other social media sites, you can increase interaction among followers across all of your networks and spread the word about your practice's Instagram account. After selecting your geolocation and typing your image description, the same screen within Instagram allows you to upload the image to your Facebook, Flickr, Twitter, FourSquare, or Tumblr accounts.

After checking the box next to each social network you wish to upload your image to, you will be prompted to input your username and password.*

*Note: you will only need to enter this login information the first time you upload to your other social networks. Every time thereafter, you will only need to check the network's box, as Instagram will store your usernames and passwords.

Responsible Gramming

As numerous businesses implement social media marketing strategies, it's important to realize the difference between adding to the social network and spamming it. Most social networks are free, and while that may benefit your marketing budget, you want to be sure you add to the network in an interesting way:

- Try to take photos at fascinating angles. Even the simplest subjects can look more artistic when viewed from a new perspective.
- It may be tempting to continually post images of your practice and practice-related tools, magazines, etc., but what about those flowers just outside your office? Or that vintage Lincoln Continental that is always parked outside? Try to think of images that would not only spark interest, but would also help others identify your practice when walking by or would make your practice an inspiring place to be.
- Don't crowd your feed with images of your practice logo, front office, or staff. Of course these types of pictures are applauded occasionally, but if they're the main event, users will see you as a spammer and won't find your feed interesting enough to follow. Variety is key.
- Some IGers attempt to gain followers by requesting a “shout-out” or ask others to “Like” their images, but such tactics are frowned upon and are seen as desperate. If users want to follow, like, or comment on your images, they will. Begging to be noticed will only annoy other IGers and make you look less appealing.





- If another IGer mentions you in a comment by using your handle, you will receive a notification of the comment. Conversely, if you wish to mention another IGer in your photo's comment, use their handle. We recommend thanking IGers who comment on or mention you, to politely acknowledge their admiration. This keeps the social network an interactive community and makes you appear more friendly and approachable to other users.

IG Idea Bank

- Take numerous photos of the same subject before choosing which image is best to upload. Many popular IGers admit taking 5-10 images of the same subject, at different angles, before choosing which is most visually stimulating.
- Take the ordinary and make it extraordinary. X-rays, dental drills, veterinary stethoscopes, weight scales – whatever the item – play around with objects and try to give IGers a perspective they haven't seen before.
- Consider textures. Does the base of your weight scale have a really cool grooved texture? Is your dental pick made of shiny steel? Take up-close (macro) images of these items to share these unique textures.
- Take images at a local event and input a hashtag with the name of the event in your description.
- If you go to a tradeshow or conference, share the sights you see(!), especially if you're visiting a large city such as New York or San Francisco with tons of unique photo opportunities.
- Macro photos of unique X-rays.
- Office reading materials at unique angles.
- Attend an Instameet or Instawalk.
- Take images whenever you have time or see something worth sharing. Images can always be accessed and uploaded at a later time. This will also allow you to have a stockpile of images to upload, preventing you or your staff from having to take photos daily.
- Have photos give an exclusive, "inside look" at your practice so your IG feed serves as the only place current and prospective patients can view certain details about your brand.

For more inspiration, search for hashtags you may consider using (e.g. #dentist, #veterinarian, #glasses, #optometrist, etc.) to see images that other IGers have posted. Alternatively, check out popular brands to see how they reach their target audience (some recommended brands on Instagram are Starbucks, GE, and Sharpie). If you find any of these images interesting or beautiful, use the same approach in your own photos.

Get Started Now!

Start snapping photos of people, places, events, and things to share with your Instagram community! And don't forget to advertise to current patients that you're now on Instagram (e.g. we recommend putting a sign in your reception area that states "Check out @mypracticename on Instagram!").

Instagram