

Using social media successfully

Love it or hate it, social media is here. While some take to it quite naturally for promoting their practice, we know many are hesitant how to start. Digital marketer Chris Dann, shares his insights and tips.

Social media is an increasingly popular way to market your practice, but many osteopaths feel it's an uphill battle. But what are the keys to using Facebook to connect with your patients?

As a digital marketer, I've been lucky enough to work with some of the best social media marketers around and learn from their approaches. However, I wanted to learn exactly how osteopaths were using social media to help their patients, so I reached out to two of the most successful and asked them to share their strategies.

Sam Hall, Sam Hall Osteopaths, Windsor

Facebook.com/SamHallOsteopaths

Sam works with his wife Eve, offering osteopathy and massage services in the Windsor area. He has over 1700 Facebook followers and gets a very high level of engagement from his posts, with many likes and comments. Around three-quarters of his new patients hear about him through Facebook, meaning Sam can use it not just to help his patients but as a cost-effective marketing tool.

I started following Sam when he was training for the Windsor half-marathon in 2021. I'm a runner and gym-goer myself, but I'm not an osteopath and have no healthcare training. It's easy for people like me to think that osteopaths, personal trainers and other 'professionals' have it all figured out, but Sam's posts were inspirational and relatable. Like me, he doesn't always hit his training goals, must take forced days off and try to remain positive through the frustration when things aren't going to plan.

Sam mixes up posts about his own training journey with gentle and broad advice such as posts on the importance of stretching and of listening to your body instead of always trying to power through problems. The overall feel is extremely human, someone you can relate to and who genuinely

understands the problems and frustrations you may feel with your own body. Posts don't always contain a lot of text and might just be an empathetic slogan or meme.

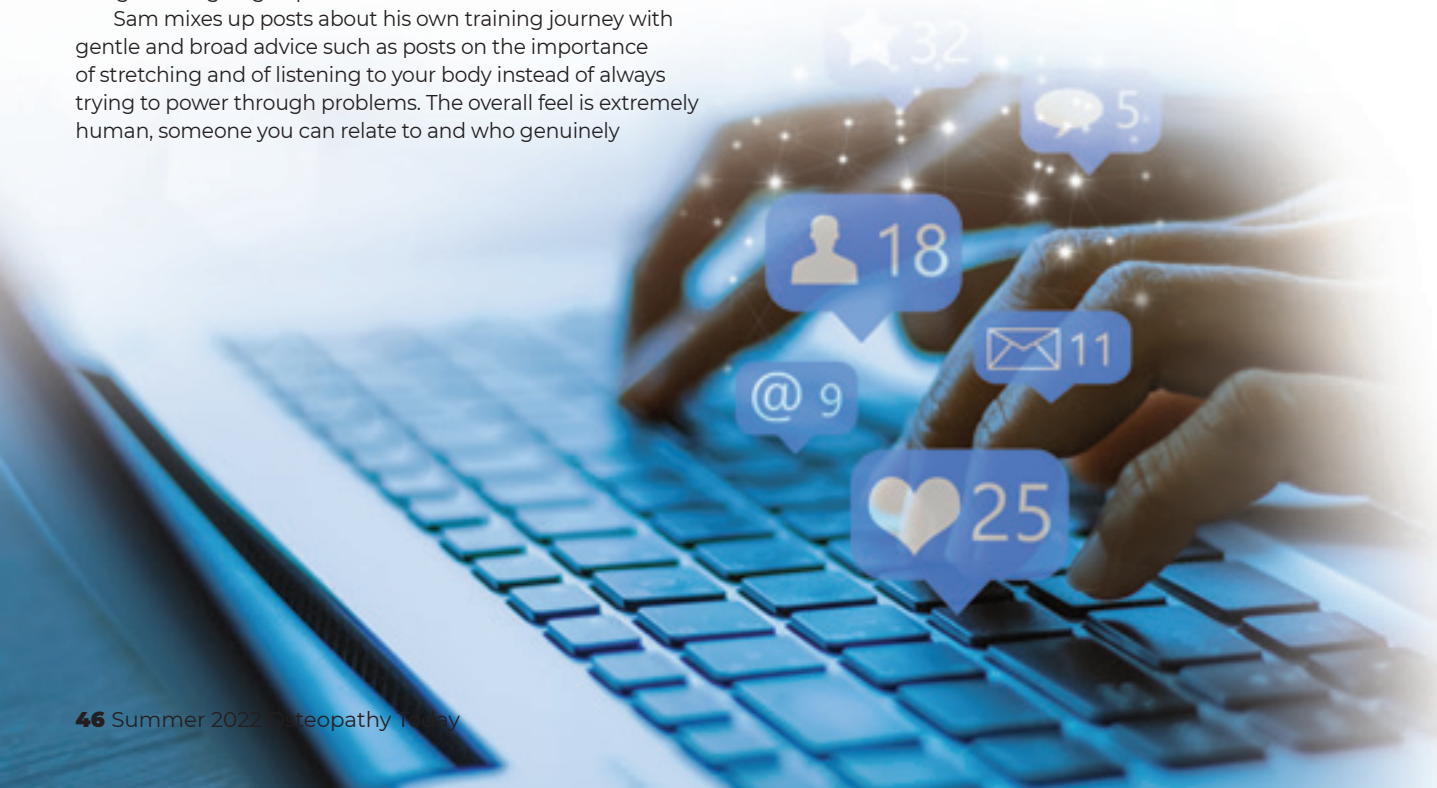
Sam told me that his intention from the start was to be authentic and to connect with his patients on a human level. He has a lot of competition in Windsor and using social media has helped him to add value and retain his patients by always being in touch and relatable.

Shaun Tyler, Shaun Tyler Osteopath and Personal Trainer, Colchester

Facebook.com/ShawnTylerOsteo

Shaun is an osteopath and personal trainer in Colchester, Essex, and specialises in staying fit and healthy over the age of 50. With over 2000 Facebook followers, he is one of the most popular osteopaths on the platform and, like Sam, gets around three-quarters of new patients via his social media.

Shaun shares lots of information and articles that will be useful to his followers, such as Why Resistance Training is Important as You Get Older and How Long Will My Back Pain Last? What makes Shaun's posts stand out is the way he focuses on the human side of the issue, getting straight to the emotional point rather than the medical. For example, he introduces an article on back pain by saying 'It's really scary having back pain'. It's this empathetic side that's important if you're going to reassure and connect with patients on social media.



Shaun mixes this up with personal stories about what he's up to, such as running bootcamps and giving advice on Radio Essex, and occasional information about the clinic. He shows that he genuinely understands what his patients are going through, and it's clear that he sees the person behind the problem, rather than a bag of bones and muscles waiting to be fixed.

Shaun told me that his strategy has always been to put himself in his patients' frame of mind, to meet them where they are and to offer helpful information and advice. Also very popular is that he reads articles for professionals and sums them up briefly on social media in his own words, allowing his followers to stay included in the latest research and information.



Chris Dann

Chris Dann is a digital marketer for healthcare clinics specialising in websites and search engine optimisation.

He is based in London, is the author of the Manual Therapy SEO Reference Guide and the founder of Market Your Clinic Online www.marketyourcliniconline.com

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Five rules for social media success

- Post regularly - keep in touch with your followers by posting approximately three to five times a week
- Show your human side - your website is the place for a more formal presentation of your services, whereas on social media you should aim to come across warmer and allow your personality to show through. It's for this reason I recommend my clients to do their own social media if they can, and only outsource it to an agency or freelancer if they're a larger clinic
- Keep it light - people use social media to decompress and connect, and want to be entertained, uplifted or informed in bite-size chunks. Think 'if I were on a 10-minute coffee break, would I enjoy this post?'
- Content balance - as a guide, if you were to post six times, you would post three times with useful health-related information, twice with interesting personal stories about what you're up to, and once promoting a service at your clinic
- Give it time - social media is a long game. Don't be discouraged by low engagement or if you can't find the right 'voice' straight away
- Lastly - how to grow your social media following
 - It doesn't matter how good your posts are if no-one is following you, and for many people, the first hurdle will be building an initial following. Of course, ask your existing patients to follow you on Facebook, but another proven way is to reach out to people who are already active on your social platforms
 - Start by making sure that what you do is clear in your social media name or handle, e.g. 'Jane Smith Osteopathy' then find online communities where you can join in the conversation and be useful. For example, you might find online sports groups, local interest groups or local groups for conditions like fibromyalgia or arthritis
 - Now just turn up, fit in and help out. As you become known in the community more people will 'like' you, growing your presence with organic, interested and genuine followers. You can also invite people to follow you by sharing helpful posts from your own page, prompting them to follow you for more of the same.