

MD Life

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Contents in This Issue

Why Physicians Need to Become More Educated About Alternative Pain Treatments
How to Spot Fake Reviews on Amazon and Other Sites Online
Why Climate Change Threatens Our Children's Future: Hurricanes, Floods, and a Call to Act
2024 Best Modern Gifts for Tech Lovers
Sick and Tired of Practicing Medicine? Burnout, Disappointment, and Low Income
Thanksgiving Appetizer Ideas
Dr. Davidoff on How Value-Based Specialty Care Rewards Quality Over Quantity
Leveraging Your Medical Career for Long-Term Wealth Building
Holiday Travel Tips to Keep You Sane and Happy
10 Promising Advanced Healthcare Technologies in Practice
Ten Ways to Showcase Your Luxury Home with Landscape Lighting

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Why Physicians Need to Become More Educated About Alternative Pain Treatments

By Cindy Perlin, LCSW

All indications are that pain care in the United States is in crisis. There is an epidemic of prescription opioid-fueled opioid addiction and overdoses (over a million dead and millions more addicted) as well as an epidemic of chronic pain. Estimates of the prevalence of pain indicate that from 21 percent (2021 National Health Interview Survey) to 56 percent (2021 Harris Poll) of Americans have chronic pain, and about 7 percent have high-impact pain (pain that limits daily activities on most days or every day). Forty percent of doctor visits are due to pain, and chronic pain is the leading cause of disability in the United States.

At the same time, a 2018 systematic review of pain medicine content in medical school curriculums in the United States found that the median number of hours dedicated to pain medicine was nine hours. This was an increase from a 2013 study that found that the average amount of time dedicated to pain education was less than two hours. Surveys of primary care physicians have found that most physicians do not feel competent in their ability to treat pain. Overzealous overreach and prosecution by the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) of even legitimate doctors treating legitimate pain patients with



opioids has left many doctors fearful of treating pain patients with one of the few tools they have been told is effective. Pain patients frequently complain that they get little help from their physicians, who treat them like drug seekers and frequently abruptly taper or cut them off from opioids without regard to withdrawal issues and without offering other options. When pain patients lose their doctors due to relocation, physician retirement, or loss of licensure, they often cannot find other physicians willing to take them on.

The tools that conventional physicians have access to are primarily pharmaceutical or surgical and fall short for most patients due to poor effectiveness or side effects. Opioid addiction risks are high (10-12 percent of those prescribed), and that is not the only problem. More than 50 percent of patients prescribed opioids find the side effects intolerable or the drugs ineffective. Opioids also lower immune response, contribute to traffic accidents and fatalities, increase the incidence of falls in the elderly, can cause psychosis in vulnerable individuals, and can increase pain levels over time (hyperalgesia).

All other pharmaceuticals prescribed for pain have limitations in terms of ineffectiveness, serious side effects, or risks. Gabapentinoids, including gabapentin and Lyrica (pregabalin), provide pain relief in less than 25 percent of patients, according to patient surveys, while many report intolerable side effects, including fatigue, brain fog, anxiety, depression, mood swings, memory problems, suicidal thoughts, addiction, and more. Recent studies have found that gabapentinoids increase the risk of dementia. NSAIDs can cause life-threatening gastrointestinal bleeding, kidney damage, and an increased risk of heart attacks and strokes with chronic use. Immunosuppressant drugs increase the risk of infections and cancer. Antidepressants have not been shown to be effective for chronic pain, and side effects include drowsiness, dizziness, weight gain, heart rhythm problems, confusion, agitation, hallucinations, insomnia, increased eye pressure, and much more.

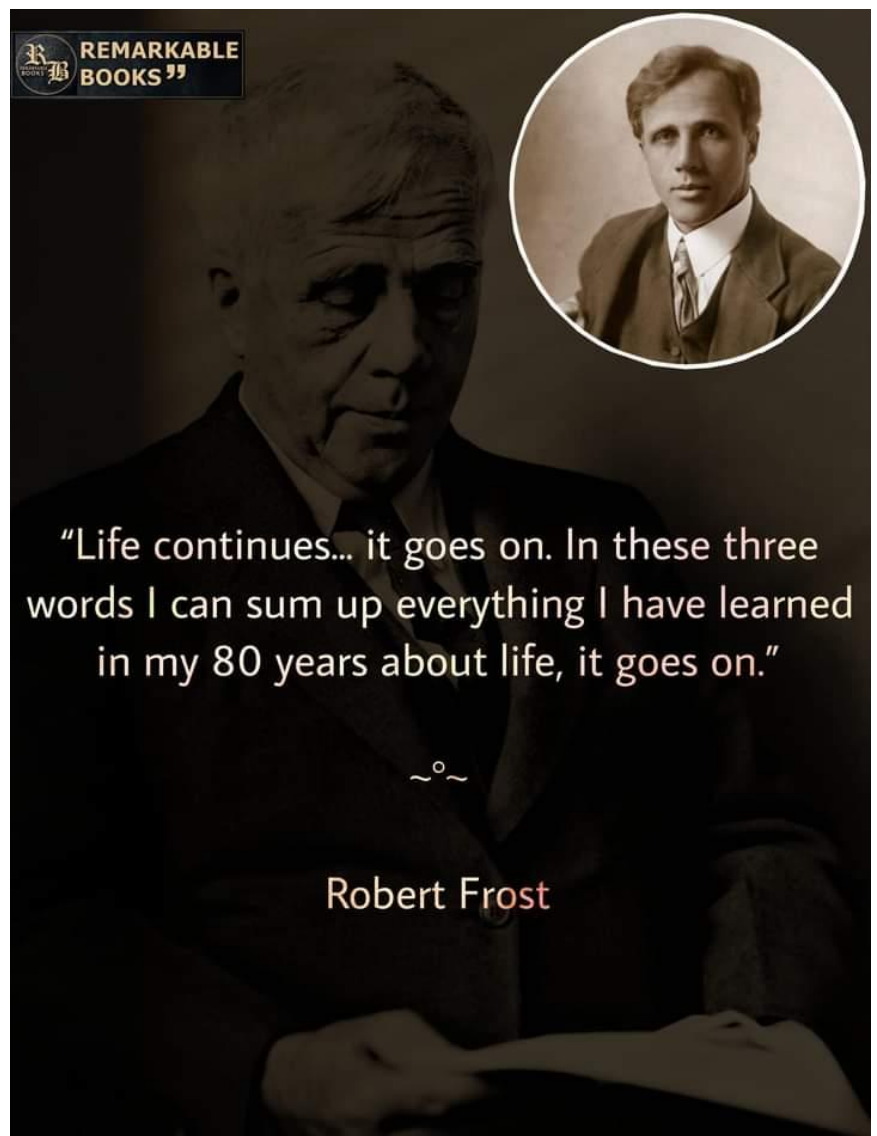
Surgical procedures are often misguided and cause harm. This is particularly true of back surgery, often based on a false premise that disc issues such as degenerated, bulging, or herniated disks are the cause of back pain. MRI studies going back as far as the 1990s found that most people, particularly as they grow older, have “disc disease” and often have no pain, leading researchers to conclude that findings of disc abnormalities may be coincidental and unrelated to the pain. Back surgery often makes things worse, resulting in failed back surgery syndrome, often treated with spinal cord stimulators that are often ineffective, poorly tolerated, and cause more harm.

Beyond the issues of ineffectiveness and serious side effects, the problem with conventional pain treatments is that they do not get to the real root of the problem, so patients do not get better. Common causes of chronic pain include nutritional deficiencies, muscle weakness, spasm, stiffness or imbalance, chronic inflammation, poor posture, toxic exposures, chronic stress, or unresolved trauma.

There is growing evidence that alternative pain treatments are effective in treating and often eliminating chronic pain by treating the underlying causes. These interventions include nutritional medicine (provided by functional and integrative MDs, nutritionists, and naturopaths), exercise, mind/body approaches (including meditation, psychotherapy, particularly trauma-informed, biofeedback, and neurofeedback), chiropractic, massage therapy, physical therapy, herbal medicine, cannabis, and more. There are also a variety of noninvasive devices that reduce pain and inflammation and accelerate healing, including red/infrared light therapy, pulsed electromagnetic frequency therapy (PEMF), frequency-specific microcurrent therapy, neuromuscular electrical stimulation (NMES), infrared heat therapy, hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBOT), Calmare Scrambler Therapy, and more. These interventions tend to be very safe. The only “side effects” are improved overall health and well-being.

By becoming more educated about alternative pain treatments and making appropriate recommendations and referrals, physicians can vastly improve their pain patients’ quality of life as well as improve their own satisfaction with their work.

[Cindy Perlin](#) is a social worker.



How to Spot Fake Reviews on Amazon and Other Sites Online

By Kim Komando



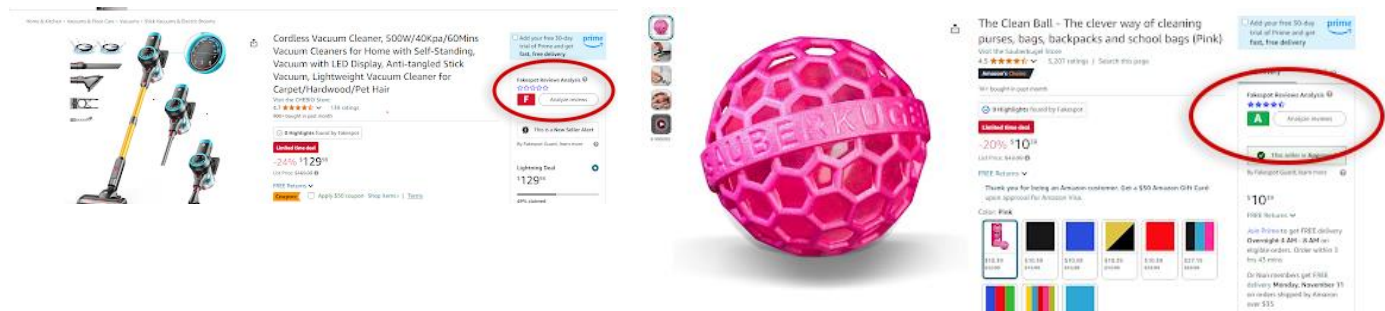
© Sharaf Maksumov | Dreamstime.com

With the holidays around the corner, I'm gearing up for a whole lot of online shopping between now and Christmas. And while I'm glad the FTC is finally cracking down on fake and paid reviews, let's be real — it's not going to catch every bogus review out there.

So, here's my go-to guide for spotting fake reviews and finding the real deal before you hit "Buy Now."

Step 1: Use a site that does it for you

[Fakespot](#) vets reviews on Amazon, Walmart, eBay and lots of other sites and shows you how they score. I love that it gives you a letter rating. Anything graded C or below screams "Walk away!" to me. The best part? Fakespot's free.



There's another site like Fakespot called [ReviewMeta](#). Instead of a letter grade, ReviewMeta shows an adjusted rating for the product, removing what it considers to be fake reviews.



You can use it for free by simply pasting the Amazon URL into ReviewMeta's website or installing their browser extension.

(Btw, I love [those Souper Cubes](#)! They make a great gift, too.)

Step 2: Use your noggin

Fakespot and ReviewMeta aren't foolproof. The AI they use is getting smarter, but so is the AI churning out sham reviews. Here are some tricks to try:

- **Look at the dates:** Fake reviews normally drop in waves. A bunch of positive reviews left in one day is a big red flag.
- **Check the reviewers' profiles:** On platforms like Amazon, you can click on a reviewer's name to see their profile. If they've reviewed tons of similar products or a lot of items within a short time frame, it's a sign they might be part of a paid review network.
- **Filter by verified purchases:** Amazon and some other sites label reviews from customers who actually bought the item as a "Verified Purchase." Fake reviews often aren't verified since the "reviewers" aren't really purchasing the product.
- **Look at the rating distribution:** Genuine products often have a mix of ratings (four and five stars, with some three-star reviews or lower). If you see a product with mostly five-star ratings and very few critical ones, the positive reviews were probably bought.
- **Turn on your AV:** Antivirus doesn't find fake reviews, but it *does* help protect you from scammy retail sites.

Spot a fake review online?

Do your part and report it to the FTC at reportfraud.ftc.gov. Sham testimonials, AI-generated comments, bots inflating follower counts — anything sketchy. The FTC's penalty? Up to \$51,744 per violation.

🙄🌊 I saw a review of a phone charger that said, "It changed my life!" I thought, "Really, a phone charger changed your life. You seriously need to get out more."

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- **Proven Tax Strategy Successes:** Our most recent assessment found \$234k – \$975k in tax savings for our clients.

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Why Climate Change Threatens Our Children's Future: Hurricanes, Floods, and a Call to Act

Sheetal Khedkar Rao, MD

As Valencia, Spain, reels from devastating flash floods and the U.S. Southeast recovers from hurricanes Helene and Milton, I, like many other parents, look at my own kids with increasing concern about the ailing world they will inherit.

If a [climate haven](#) like Asheville, North Carolina, lying 2,000 feet above and 300 miles away from the ocean, can be swept away by a single catastrophic storm, how can we possibly keep our children safe?

Scientists have shown that ocean warming due to climate change [contributed to 50 percent more rainfall](#) during Hurricane Helene. But ocean warming is just one of [several](#) examples of climate change that scientists see intensifying now and into the future because of human-driven fossil-fuel pollution.

I worry about future generations, not just as a mother but also as a primary care physician who has spent over 15 years treating patients. When I'm not in the clinic, I teach graduate students about the health impacts of climate change and work to ensure that our future doctors understand how the environment affects patients and communities.

A growing number of medical professionals share my concerns. In fact, climate change is recognized by the World Health Organization and 200 medical journals around the world as the "[greatest threat to human health](#)." The American Medical Association, the National Academy of Medicine and [several other medical societies](#) also acknowledge climate change as a public health crisis.

Children's health, in particular, is deeply intertwined with that of their environment, which means protecting the planet is an important part of caring for our kids. Children [breathe more, are more sensitive to temperature extremes, and haven't finished developing](#). So illnesses and exposures in childhood can carry forward throughout their life.

What's more, kids are among those who will suffer the most from climate change. A [report](#) from the World Bank states, "A 10-year-old in 2024 will experience three times more floods, five times more droughts, and 36 times more heatwaves over their lifetime compared to a 10-year-old in 1970." Extreme weather isn't the only climate-related health threat kids face: My colleagues and I are also seeing an uptick in allergies and asthma due to [higher pollen](#) counts as well as more [mosquito and tick-borne illnesses](#) like West Nile.

The health effects of climate change aren't just physical. We know kids' mental health thrives on stability and routine, but wildfires, heat, and flooding have already led to [school](#) closures here in the United States and throughout the world. Even as I write this, many schools in North Carolina [remain closed](#) weeks after Hurricane Helene's landfall, with no clear timeline for reopening. While remote learning was an option for some during the COVID-19 pandemic, the technology doesn't quite work without power, phone or internet.

If we don't act to limit global warming now, it will continue to intensify with profound implications for every single aspect of our kids' lives. Future generations will see more [food and water shortages](#), more poverty and



less stability and security. Put simply, the climate will increasingly determine how our kids learn, what they can eat, what sports they can play or if they can be outside at all.

Despite the established scientific consensus that [climate change is real](#) and that [humans are causing it](#), over [one-fifth of Congress publicly denies its existence](#).

In previous national crises, like the COVID pandemic, we saw how the decisions made by our elected leaders, both locally and nationally, impacted the safety of our communities. The pandemic also taught us that we cannot begin to address a problem until we acknowledge it, and the most vulnerable among us do not have the luxury of debating the existence of something they are too busy surviving.

While the science is clear on the health impacts of climate change, it is also clear that, with immediate action, [we can still prevent](#) the worst outcomes. Next month's election is a historic opportunity for all of us to decide whether we will prioritize and protect the health of future generations by electing climate champions or hand our kids a world that is less safe, less predictable, and incompatible with many of the things we grew up taking for granted.

We don't have time for elected officials who peddle conspiracy theories about [weather control](#) or refuse to accept the reality of climate change. Our kids deserve better.

Come November 5, we can either stick our heads in the sand or stand up for our kids and face our collective crisis by voting for climate champions. If you aren't sure where your candidates stand on this issue, you can start with the League of Conservation Voters [scorecard](#).

For many in the U.S., Hurricanes Helene and Milton were a wake-up call, but climate change has been devastating communities around the world for years. How we recover as a nation and how we prevent future disasters will have a lot to do with the outcome of this election.

It is our parental duty to show up and choose carefully.

[Sheetal Khedkar Rao](#) is an internal medicine physician.



2024 Best Modern Gifts for Tech Lovers

By Christian de Looper

The holiday season is upon us, and that means it's time to find the perfect [gifts](#) for the tech enthusiasts in your life. But what do you get for someone who loves both cutting-edge technology and sleek design? Don't worry – after a year of curating the latest and best in tech, we've rounded up a selection of standout devices that go beyond just high performance. These picks are crafted with thoughtful design and innovative features, sure to surprise and impress even the most discerning tech aficionado. With a range of price points and functionalities, there's something here for everyone on your list.



[Terra Kaffe TK-02 \\\ \\$1,595](#)

Who has the time to spend valuable minutes making coffee every morning? After all, five minutes per day equates to over 30 hours per year – that's right, more than one full day (for the calculator junkies, that's over 100 days in an 80-year lifetime). The Terra Kaffe TK-02 will save the coffee-lover in your life a whole day of time, while looking great. It's a fully automatic espresso machine, with a dedicated app and the ability to integrate with a coffee subscription. That will allow the user to save even more time, by automatically ordering coffee beans when they're needed.



[Samsung Music Frame Speaker \\\ \\$399.99](#)

Samsung is all in on frames. On top of the Samsung The Frame TV, the company also makes the Music Frame Speaker. It's actually a pretty smart speaker, disguised as a picture frame. The underlying speaker supports AirPlay, Alexa, Google Home, and Chromecast, plus it even supports decoding Dolby Atmos audio, and you can integrate it with your home theater setup, if you use a compatible soundbar. The image itself isn't smart – you'll use a real-life 8" x 10" or 8" x 8" photo. But, for many, that's a good thing, considering the more realistic image. Maybe one day, Samsung will blend the technology in its Frame TV with that of the Music Frame Speaker.



[XGIMI Portable MoGo 3 Pro Projector \\\ \\$449](#)

A portable projector may not replace your TV completely any time soon, but it certainly might reduce how often you use your TV by allowing you to watch anywhere you want. The MoGo 3 Pro is one of the better portable projectors out there, offering a 1,080p resolution, with a 450-lumen brightness. Sure, that won't compete with much more expensive stationary projectors, but those projectors don't have a super-portable, flexible design that lets you project on a surface at any angle (even the ceiling!). The MoGo 3 Pro can be bought with a tripod that allows for even more versatility in placement. It has Google TV built into it, lets you stream content from your phone, and has dual 5W speakers for decent sound.



[Lexon Tamo Mini Bluetooth Speaker \\\ \\$39.90](#)

Speakers that blend into their environment seem to be a trend. The Lexon Tamo Mini is a tiny portable speaker looks kind of like a little salt shaker, or at least a little tabletop ornament. It allows you to quickly and easily pair your phone with a tap, and it has a three-hour battery life, which isn't huge, but is pretty good for a speaker this size and price. And, it has a bright aluminum finish to help make it look even more premium.



[KM5 CD Player with Speaker CP2 \\\ \\$199](#)

Why should your CD collection sit there and gather dust? Available from the MoMA Design Store is the aptly named “CD Player with Speaker CP2,” which, yes, is a CD player that has a built-in speaker, preventing the need for external speakers. It’s minimalistic and stylish, and puts the CD you’re listening to on full display. And, it’s reasonably high-tech, with Bluetooth connectivity as an output and a USB-C port for charging, on top of the headphone jack.



[Steelcase Eclipse Light \\\ \\$279](#)

Give your desk or another space a modern flare with the Steelcase Eclipse Light. This light is highly adjustable, both in terms of placement, and in terms of illumination, with its dimming capability. It goes beyond just being a light though, with a copper tinted mirror to check yourself, and a wireless charging pad, to keep your compatible phone juiced up. It comes in three colors, including Pearl Snow, Matte Black, and Pewter.



[Beast Mini Blender \\\ \\$99](#)

My wife blends smoothies in the morning, and I don't. The result? With our standard-size blender, she has to either blend for the whole week, or we have to clean the whole giant blender every day. The Beast Mini Blender gets around that. It's as powerful as a full-size blender, but blends single servings, so you can flip the canister around and have it double as a cup when you're done blending. The system comes with lids and straws, and its 600W motor is more than strong enough for most blending needs.



[Amazon Echo Pop \\\ \\$39.99](#)

The Amazon Echo Pop is the cheapest speaker in the Amazon Echo lineup, but that doesn't make it any less smart. Like every other Echo, it has the same Alexa capabilities, so you can use it to search the web, control smart home devices, and more. Unlike some other Echos, it comes in super fun colors, including Lavender Bloom and Midnight Teal. Its speaker may not be as impressive as the full-size Echo, but it still sounds fine for casual listening.



[TAG Heuer Connected Calibre E4 \\\ \\$1,250](#)

Smartwatches and luxury watches don't often cross over, but when they do, they can be pretty impressive. The TAG Heuer Connected Calibre E4 is a perfect example of that. It has the TAG Heuer aesthetics that you know and love, coupled with a bright and vibrant OLED display and the Google Wear OS smartwatch operating system. That will allow you to use it to manage notifications, interact with Google Assistant, and more. And, with a built-in heart rate monitor and other fitness sensors, it can track your day-to-day fitness. The TAG Heuer Connected Calibre E4 starts at \$1,250 for the 42mm model, but ranges up depending on the size, style, and accessories you want.



[Courant MAG:3 Dual-Device Charging Tray Charger \\\ \\$200](#)

Most people with a modern smartphone can use a wireless charger, but a wireless charger can be much more than that. The Courant MAG:3 Wireless Charger has two Qi charging areas (perfect for your phone and earbuds), plus it has an extra USB-C port that you can use to charge something else. On top of that, it has space for other bits and pieces, like jewelry, your keys, and so on. Perhaps the best thing about it, compared to other wireless chargers, is the build-quality. It boasts Italian leather or Belgian linen, and it looks stunning. For an additional \$15, you can get it monogrammed for your gift recipient.

Sick and Tired of Practicing Medicine? Burnout, Disappointment, and Low Income You Can't Seem to Overcome?

Curtis G. Graham, MD



Noticing the local physicians who practiced in your area, stayed for two years or so, and then moved to a “different place to practice” (cover story—meaning they never made enough income to stay in practice in your area) involves thousands of physicians across our nation annually, which has led to the physician attrition crisis today. Not enough money or income is most often the cause.

You may not know that you are among the 98 percent of physicians who graduate from medical school who are business ignorant. The problem started about a century ago when some brilliant medical scholars who lacked business education decided to eliminate any course or curriculum teaching medical school students business knowledge. In today's business world, that decision was insane.

ADVERTISEMENT

That one fact has persisted, unchanged, for over 12 decades, and nothing has been done to upgrade the quality of business knowledge of physicians in our rapidly changing business environment.

Much worse, every medical school in the USA has been warned to refrain from mentioning or discussing the value and benefits of a business education with medical students, which leaves all medical students thinking that a business education is useless to them. Is it the intention of medical schools to keep physicians ignorant of the financial issues they will face in private practice?

Four reasons you may have considered for quitting medicine

1. You eventually learn that you are business ignorant because you don't know how to increase and grow your medical practice business persistently.

2. Unfortunately, you have been led to believe that you never needed a business education to practice medicine. That myth has led to thousands of physicians losing their practices annually.

3. You don't know how to earn money using the business principles that all successful and wealthy commercial business owners have known for decades.

4. You remain entirely ignorant of how to manage a business profitably and how to market your business effectively—two critical issues that don't pop into your mind suddenly.

If it is still your decision to reject a business education, you might be interested in learning more about what a business education can do for your medical practice career success. Learning that you can increase your practice and income 20 times more than you are today may be of little importance or interest.

Experts know the truth in the world of business. An ideal comparison is made between the financial outcomes physicians face in their careers in private practice and the financial outcomes that commercial small business owners face in their businesses when business education is absent.

It has been proven, for example, that 95 percent of small business owners fail within five years of starting their business. The cause is a lack of effective business management and marketing—meaning, no business education.

After about five years in practice, all private medical practice physicians commonly discover that their incomes flatten out. The boom at the beginning, fostered by all the new patients who want to check out the new physician in town, shortly wears off. By then, most physicians understand the importance of increasing the number of patients required to increase their incomes. And that is the only one all physicians know they need.

The problem then becomes a second flattening of income because most physicians don't know how to market to new patients—they have no business education. Beyond that is the difficulty of creating significant management changes in their offices to meet increased patient flow. Do you know how to do that effectively? Do you know how to continue doing it for the rest of your career profitably, persistently, and effectively?

Some physicians figure that having an MBA solves all those business education problems, only to discover that an MBA is far too superficial to be of adequate value to physicians in private medical practice—especially if a physician expects a significant income in the future.

Thinking points to consider that may change your mind

With an academic business education—such as a two-year on-campus business education—there is no limit to the amount of medical practice income you can earn whenever you choose, for whatever reason.

- The cost is from \$40,000 to \$60,000 at top universities.
- You would need to stop practicing for two years.
- The cost is added to the educational debt you owe at graduation.

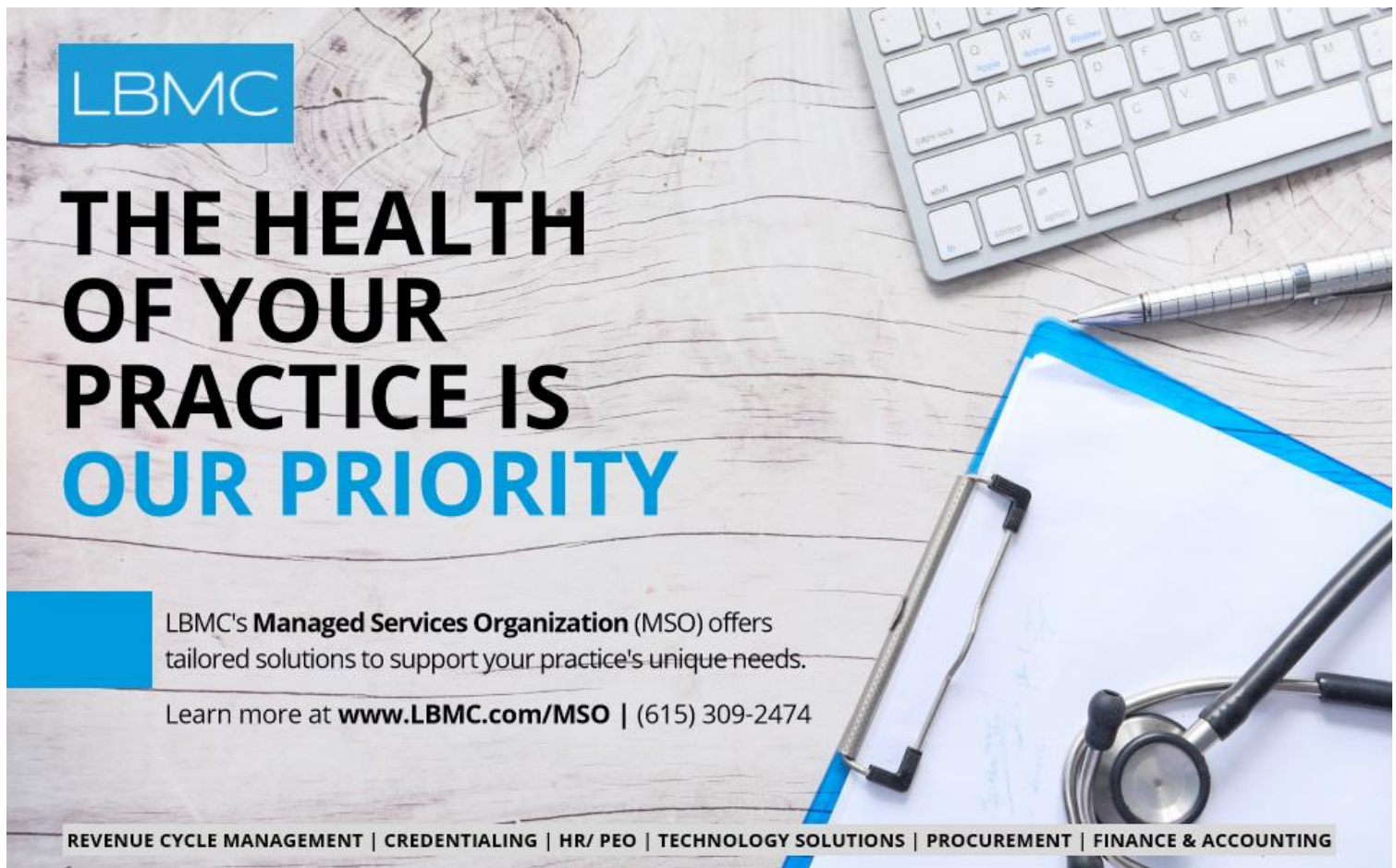
Medical schools do not offer an academic business education. Some medical schools (about three or four) do offer an MBA. Some premeds attain an MBA before medical school. I do not recommend an online MBA.

- Smart medical school students should demand that the school provide a business education. Most refuse to do so.
- The ideal time for your business education is while you are a medical student in a significant learning venture. I believe any medical school could provide digital academic business education for about \$2,000 if they choose to.
- The absolute failure of colleges that offer pre-med advice and support could offer a business education while in college and do not. At least they could indoctrinate premeds in the value and benefits of business education.

Business education is critical because its functional aspects involve constantly adapting to new and better ways to get what you want or need, both in management and marketing. This means you will become involved in these processes daily in your practice. It requires your attention daily for as long as you practice medicine—to remain on the cutting edge of your profession.

- Business education is far easier than memorizing the origins and insertions of every muscle in the human body.
- You do not have to know all about business education—you may discover one or two methods or strategies you are comfortable performing (or a staff member is)—forget the rest. If one doesn't work, try another.

[Curtis G. Graham](#) is a physician.



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Thanksgiving Appetizer Ideas

Cookingwithnonna.com

Stuffed Sicilian Artichokes - Carciofi Ripieni alla Siciliana



Ingredients

For 4 Person(s)

- 8 medium sized artichokes
- 1 pound plain bread crumbs
- 1/4 pound grated Grana Padano or Parmigiano Cheese
- 2 Cloves finely chopped garlic
- parsley
- extra virgin olive oil
- salt & pepper

Directions

1. Clean the artichokes by removing the harder outer leaves and cutting the stem and the top part of the leaves as they may have thorns.
2. Wash and drain the artichokes well.
3. In a saute` pan put the bread crumbs and the garlic. Saute` until the bread crumbs are lightly golden. Let cool off.

4. Add to the bread crumbs the finely chopped parsley, salt & pepper as desired, a bit more finely chopped garlic, the grated cheese and some olive oil.
5. Mix the ingredients very well until the oil is evenly absorbed.
6. Take each artichoke, open the leaves as much as you can and insert among the leaves the bread crumb mixture.
7. Place the artichokes in an oven pan and add 1 1/2 inches of water.
8. Place the pan on the stove and cook for 15 mins.
9. Finish off by putting the pan in the oven for 15 more mins. at 400 F.

Sauted Escarole and Cannellini Beans



Ingredients

For 4 Person(s)

- 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 3 garlic cloves, sliced

- 3 anchovy fillets (optional)
- pinch of red pepper flakes
- 1 large head of escarole, washed, trimmed and cut into 1 1/2 inch strips
- 3/4 cup chicken broth
- 16 ounces cannellini beans, rinsed

Directions

1. Put a large saute` pan with a lid over a medium flame and heat the oil. Add the garlic and cook for about 30 seconds. Add the anchovy and red pepper flakes and saute` until the anchovy breaks down.
2. Add the escarole to the pan and stir until the wilted, about 2 minutes.
3. Add in the chicken broth and beans and place the lid on the pot. Cook for about 10 minutes or until some of the liquid is reduced.
4. Uncover and cook for an additional 2-3 minutes while stirring with a wooden spoon.

Zucchini Fritters



Ingredients

For 2 Dozen(s)

- 1 medium zucchini, finely minced
- 3 large eggs
- 1 small onion, minced
- 1/4 cup 2 tablespoons grated Pecorino Romano cheese

- 2 tablespoons plain breadcrumbs
- 2 tablespoons all purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons fresh parsley, finely chopped
- salt and black pepper as desired
- oil for frying

Directions

1. In a mixing bowl combine the zucchini, onion, cheese, breadcrumbs, parsley, eggs and flour. Mix well with a spoon until all the ingredients are fully combined. The batter should be thick enough to drop spoonfuls.
2. Put a large sauté pan over a medium-high flame and heat the oil. Drop the batter into the hot oil by spoonfuls.
3. Fry until the fritters are golden brown. Serve hot.

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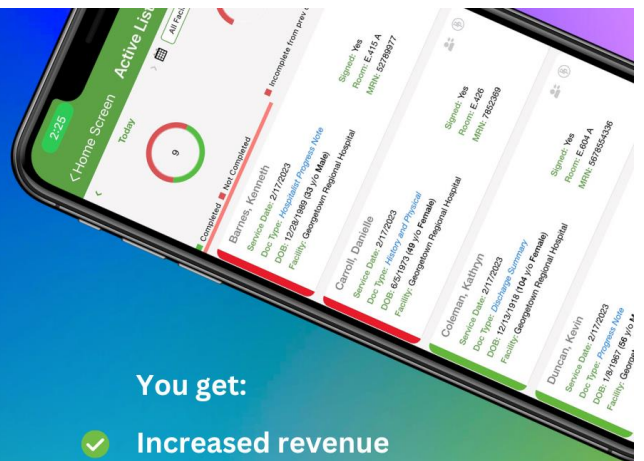
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Dr. Davidoff on How Value-Based Specialty Care Rewards Quality Over Quantity

Courtesy of Permanente Medical Group

Ramin Davidoff, MD, co-CEO of The Permanente Federation, recently spoke about how Kaiser Permanente's integrated, fully prepaid, value-based care model emphasizes and rewards the quality of specialty care and primary care rather than the volume of services delivered. As a result, all Permanente physicians can focus on disease prevention, chronic disease management, and efficient care delivery.



"Specialists fit beautifully into this prepaid model by focusing on outcomes with specific incentives that provide higher and higher quality care," Dr. Davidoff told moderator Don Crane, who is the former president and CEO of America's Physician Groups, at the Virtual First National Specialty Care Transformation Summit.

With its focus on high-quality care and outcomes, Kaiser Permanente's commercial and Medicare plans were rated highest or tied for highest for overall treatment, prevention, equity and patient experience in every geographic region they serve, according to the 2024 National Committee for Quality Assurance report.

Related value-based care story: Ramin Davidoff, MD, on the benefits of integrated, value-based care

In Kaiser Permanente's integrated, physician-led care structure, primary care physicians typically serve as quarterbacks who lead and direct care in direct collaboration with specialists. They evaluate patients, close care gaps such as missed mammograms or cancer screenings, and consult with specialists for expert advice on how to best meet a patient's specific needs. Primary care physicians make their referral decisions based on a combination of collaboration, the most up-to-date research, knowledge, clinical expertise, and the patient's values.

Related value-based care story: Dr. Ansari shares keys to leading in a value-based care organization

"If a primary care physician sees a patient with a renal cyst that was found incidentally on an ultrasound of the abdomen ... that primary care physician is able to make a decision about whether that patient needs to see a urologist or a nephrologist," said Dr. Davidoff. "We think it's important for that touchpoint with the primary physician to occur for the appropriate referral to the correct specialist."

Both primary and specialty care physicians make their decisions with support from the patient's electronic health record (EHR), which provides a comprehensive view of a patient's medical history. The EHR also prompts physicians and care teams to look for care gaps and makes it easy to order screenings or other laboratory tests. This level of integrated care and technology helped Kaiser Permanente achieve breast and colorectal cancer screening rates that are among the nation's best.

"We depend on our specialists to help close care gaps, too," Dr. Davidoff said. "So as a urologist, I can see in the electronic medical record the prompts that tell me a patient is due for a mammogram, a colonoscopy, or some other care need. And I talk to the patient about the need to get that screening."

In addition, a “doctor advice” function allows a primary care physician to send a message to a specialist about a patient and ask them whether the patient needs a referral. If a referral is needed, the primary care physician can also ask the specialist whether any laboratory tests or screenings are required ahead of the patient’s visit and order those tests or screenings if necessary.

“Our model, supported by technology, allows for a much more coordinated and streamlined approach to care,” Dr. Davidoff said.

He added that as the U.S. population ages, multiple specialties will need to coordinate to manage the chronic and acute diseases that typically accompany aging, including chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, and cancer.

“We believe that by being more efficient, by producing high quality care and focusing on value — value to the patient — that we ultimately reduce the cost of care,” Dr. Davidoff said. “And that truly is the answer for health care in the United States.”



Leveraging Your Medical Career for Long-Term Wealth Building

Amir Baluch, MD

As physicians, we spend years mastering our craft—learning how to diagnose, treat, and care for patients. But there's another area that demands mastery if we want to secure our futures: wealth building. The truth is, despite the high earning potential that comes with a medical career, far too many doctors retire with less than they imagined. Why? Because earning is one thing, but building sustainable wealth that lasts is an entirely different skill set.



The good news? You can leverage your medical career to build the kind of long-term wealth that provides not just for your family, but for future generations. You don't have to leave the operating room to do it, either. Here's how you can get started without sacrificing your passion for medicine.

The unique position of doctors

Physicians are in a unique financial position. Most of us begin earning at a later stage in life, often with substantial student debt. But once that hurdle is cleared, we enter the prime earning years, where we have both high income and, in many cases, a stable financial base to build from. This is the time to think about leveraging those earnings into long-term assets.

Yet, despite these advantages, many doctors fall into common wealth-building traps. We're over-reliant on stock portfolios or default to saving in traditional retirement accounts, hoping for slow, steady growth. While these are important, they often aren't enough to secure the financial future most of us envision. With health care reforms, inflation, and the volatility of the stock market, the safety net we thought we were building can start to look more like a tightrope walk.

Diversification: the key to stability

You've likely heard the term "diversification" before, but what does it really mean in the context of building wealth as a doctor? Diversification isn't just about spreading your money across different stocks or index funds. True diversification involves allocating your capital into different asset classes that aren't correlated—meaning they don't rise and fall together.

As someone who works in a high-risk, high-reward field every day, it's easy to forget that financial risk can be managed. Investing in assets like private equity, real estate, and private credit can offer stability and growth that traditional markets may not. These types of investments also tend to perform well even in times of inflation or when interest rates are rising—two factors that directly affect every doctor's income and lifestyle.

For example, many doctors I've worked with have significantly de-risked their portfolios by adding private real estate or private credit investments, which provide consistent, predictable returns without the same exposure to market volatility. These investments also offer the potential for tax advantages that further enhance overall returns.

Leveraging your medical income

Doctors, with their high earning potential, are well-positioned to take advantage of investment opportunities that might not be accessible to others. For instance, private equity deals often require accredited investor status—a threshold that many physicians meet easily. This gives you access to investments with high return potential, but without needing to leave medicine behind to become a full-time investor.

By setting aside a portion of your income into these alternative investments, you can create multiple streams of income that work for you while you continue doing what you love. Many doctors start by dedicating a small percent of their income to alternative investments, gradually increasing their exposure as they see the returns come in.

The result? A well-rounded financial plan that doesn't rely solely on the stock market or a retirement account but gives you control and predictability. Imagine building passive income streams from real estate investments that yield monthly cash flow while your primary focus remains on patient care.

Time: your greatest asset

One thing most doctors feel they don't have enough of is time. Between patient schedules, administrative duties, and personal responsibilities, it's easy to feel like building wealth requires too much time and effort. But that's where leverage comes in.

By making strategic investments in assets that provide passive income or long-term growth, you can make your money work harder than you do. Instead of spending your evenings worrying about financial planning, the right investments—whether in private equity, real estate, or other assets—can grow steadily over time, providing the freedom and security you've worked so hard for.

Smart wealth building is about more than money

Building wealth as a doctor isn't just about maximizing income or making a few lucky stock picks. It's about creating a system that works for you over the long term. It's about financial security that allows you to maintain your lifestyle, take care of your family, and eventually, retire on your own terms.

Investing in alternative assets can seem intimidating at first, but you don't have to go it alone. By working with experienced professionals and diversifying your investments, you can take control of your financial future without stepping away from the career you've worked so hard to build.

Conclusion

Medicine is your passion, but it doesn't have to be your only path to wealth. Leveraging your medical career and high earning potential, coupled with strategic, diversified investments in assets like private equity, real estate, and private credit, can set you on a course for long-term wealth that extends far beyond the operating room.

Start small. Learn. Diversify. And watch how leveraging the same principles you apply in medicine—patience, strategy, and expertise—can transform your financial future.

[Amir Baluch](#) is an anesthesiologist.

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HOLIDAY TRAVEL TIPS TO KEEP YOU SANE AND HAPPY

By Caroline Makepeace

The holiday season is ahead of us, otherwise known as the Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday seasons! It's the most magical time of the year, but possibly the busiest time to travel. Only the most fearless and brave will walk up to the airline counters and through those security gates. I bow down to you.

Me – the frequent traveler – will be cozied on down in mountains of North Carolina with my red wine and throw blanket after a couple of hikes and small town wanderings. You can have those holiday crowds.



But we're no strangers to traveling during the holidays, and to help you get through your next trip smoothly, we've prepared these holiday travel tips to keep you sane and happy. Travel during this holiday season is so very different from the last time we were free to roam in 2019, but as long as you follow these holiday tips, you're in for an incredible time!

1. Be Prepared. Accept. Embrace

Enter the holiday travel season with the understanding it's going to be chaotic and possibly filled with problems. Accept this is the case and choose to willingly travel despite this. It puts you in a much better position to handle the lines and the delays.

You're already prepared for it. And you might get a nice surprise and not have the worst case scenario. Breathe deeply and use the long queues as an opportunity to catch up on emails on your phone, or swap stories with the strangers around you – helping them to feel at ease at the same time – make it part of the journey.

2. Consider Holiday Packages

The competitiveness of the holiday season means you might find some great deals on hotel and flight packages. Choosing packages not only saves you money, but it alleviates some of that stress. You do need to plan ahead to find these deals, though.

3. Check Alternate Airports

You can often experience fewer delays and get cheaper deals by taking flights from different airports. And it's not just on flights, but on rental cars and transfers as well. Check the flight prices from differing airports that you can fly to. For example, in New York City, it might be cheaper to fly from Newark over JFK. In the UK, for example, you might find flights to and from Manchester are cheaper than in London. You can always take a train or bus to the airport if it's a further distance. Don't always go for the obvious ones.

4. Avoid Peak Travel Days

Sometimes this can be hard to do but when you're searching for your flights, click "flexible dates" so that you can find the best price and book your flights according to that period. Flying over the weekend tends to push prices up. If you can fly mid-week, it will work out better for you. And, there's usually fewer crowds in the airport.

5. Early or Late Flights are Best

Most people don't like to fly at this time, so you have a better airport experience and experience fewer delays as well.

6. Leave for the Airport with Plenty of Time

Even if you have an unusual surprise and the lines aren't long, at least you'll make your flight and you can relax at the gate with a good book. There is nothing more stressful than almost missing your flight. I once flew home from Austria via Munich on the busiest day of the year. I had two hours to get to my gate, and almost didn't make it.

I only made it because I begged the airport guy to slip me through on the fast lane of the security line and he only did it because I was solo and my flight was leaving in 15-minutes. The crew of young men who tried to follow me were denied and they would have missed their flight for sure. Being the holidays, you'll struggle to get on the next flight, or even get a flight at all.

7. Fly Direct to Avoid Possible Connection Delays

If you can fly direct, do it. If not, plot your connection routes carefully and bear in mind weather conditions that might cause delays. It's also a good idea to pack hand luggage only when taking connecting flights, as this is usually where bags get lost. If you're worried about your checked bag getting lost, I highly recommend you get yourself a luggage tracker tag from Amazon, which sends a GPS signal to your phone and tells you where your bag is.

8. Avoid Airline Counters If You Can

Check-in online and print off your ticket. Check your bags in curbside. Research beforehand to find out. If you are traveling internationally as well, sometimes this doesn't work. I couldn't do it flying home from Munich for some reason because of my United States visa.

Important note: this doesn't always work. It infuriates me when I check in online, yet arrive at the airport and have to do it again anyway to get my bag tags and then I line up for hours. American Airlines are pretty bad for this.

9. Reserve Airport Parking

Reserve airport parking ahead of time to ensure a spot and you can sometimes get good deals online. But, do run the numbers to see if it's cheaper for you to park your car, or just catch an Uber or bus to the airport. OR, find a friend to drive you.

10. Travel on Christmas Day

You can get great prices and some airports may just be the ghost town of your dreams. If the celebration of the big day isn't a big deal for you, you can find pretty good deals on this day. The same goes for New Year's Eve, as it's not a popular day to fly.

11. Use Your Membership Reward Points

Cash in those reward points for flights, accommodation, or upgrades. This is what you've been saving them for! Do your research well in advance and book as soon as you can. It is the holiday season so many people may be trying the same strategy.

Be careful that you are getting the right value for the use of your points. For example, in New York, although we had Airbnb credits we could use, we realized we were better off paying for two nights' accommodation

that was decently priced, instead of using our credits. It was a \$400 difference and those credits would stretch much further in a cheaper destination. And, as we were out exploring every day, we couldn't really utilize the benefits of an Airbnb stay, for example, the kitchen!

12. Take Advantage of Crazy Holiday Sales

Now, I am not a shopper, but I was kinda getting into it in New York with those insane deals. We saved over \$200 at Macy's in New York purchasing some good winter coats for all of us, and two gorgeous outfits for the girls to wear to the Lion King. We combined those savings with in-store sales, online coupon codes (which you can use in store) AND my Amex card offers.

13. Packing Gifts

My best tip is to not fly with gifts. Send them by post instead, give gift cards, or have Amazon deliver them! Craig's Mum (in Australia) shops for presents at Walmart and has them delivered to our door. Or, just forgo gift-giving and focus on memory-making.

If you must:

Don't wrap the gifts, security could very well unwrap them to take a peak. Pack and pad them well in your suitcase. Be sure not to carry on any gels. If you are flying internationally, be aware of the rules about bringing in food or plants. Most countries will confiscate them.

14. Pack Light

It can be a bit hard with all that winter holiday gear. #theworst. If you can get away with just a carry on, do it. You can always buy things when you get there. For example, soaps, shampoo, conditioner and toothpaste are not essential to pack. I can guarantee that anywhere in the world will have those supplies in a supermarket – or you can book a hotel that offers free toiletries!

15. Be Prepared

With snacks, entertainment, water etc. for your flight or drive. You just don't know what sort of delays you may experience. Better to be prepared. Get yourself a neck pillow, travel socks, eye mask and ear plugs. Be prepared to settle in, even if it's not a long journey.

16. Be Phone Ready

Make sure your phone is charged and has all relevant phone numbers, itineraries, and apps installed. We love the TripIt App Pro version. It automatically imports all bookings and itineraries from my email into the app. It lets me know of any flight changes or delays and tells me what gate I am arriving and departing from – super handy if I have to do the mad dash for my connecting flight.

17. Take a Road Trip

Better still, avoid flying altogether. Throw all the gifts in the car and as much luggage as you want and do it old style! You get more flexibility and freedom, less hassle and stress, and quality time with your loved ones, and it will often be much cheaper! Driving to New York saved us about \$800 in flight expenses.

18. Have Alternate Routes Planned If You Are Driving

Google Maps is quite good in that it will constantly update and divert you from traffic so you always take the faster route. Another great app to use when driving



Skyline drive, Shenandoah National Park

is Waze, which is a really great SatNav app. Again, avoid peak times. We left on our road trip to New York on the Sunday at the end of Thanksgiving weekend. Hello, traffic jams.

19. Stay Local

Rent an apartment in a destination close to home with a bunch of friends or family and just have a cheaper and more relaxed experience closer to home. We love Staycations. Last year we visited Boone, North Carolina for Thanksgiving, Bryson City for Christmas fun, and then Beaufort on the Crystal Coast and Outer Banks over the Christmas school break.



20. Get Up Early

If your holiday travel is centered around exploring and visiting tourist destinations then get up early. You will beat the queues as most people won't get up early! We had no wait to go to the top of the One World Observatory and only a short one for the 911 Museum recently in New York as we arrived at the opening. When we walked out the lines were snaking around the building. However, we did arrive at the Empire State Building in the middle of the day (could not be helped) and we had an hour wait. It would have been longer if we did not have the Sightseeing Pass which helped us skip the ticket queues.

21. Get a City Sightseeing Pass

If you plan on visiting several tourist attractions in a city, then grab a city sightseeing pass. Not only will they save you money on attraction fees, they sometimes give you fast pass access. New York was the first time I used one and I'm now a big fan. City passes are the bomb.

22. Be Nice

If something goes wrong, just smile, be patient, and be kind. That's the best way to get help. No one is going to help you if you flip your lid at them. I understand why you might want to, but it's not the best solution. Be understating of the hell the person behind the counter may be going through if there are travel dramas. Sometimes it may be quicker if you phone the airline directly if you have a flight issue.

23. Choose Memories and Moments Over Possessions This Holiday Season

Trade the gift-giving for a memorable travel experience. For example, for many years we have chosen to not give gifts but to do something special on Christmas. We had Christmas Day in Victoria falls in Africa and Christmas in New York and experienced Christmas fun in New Orleans, Huntsville, and Myrtle Beach. And we'll never forget riding the Polar Express in Bryson City, NC. All of these are unforgettable holiday memories.



FAQs About Holiday Travel Tips

Here's what people usually ask us about traveling over the holiday season.

What should I do 3 days before my trip?

Three days before your trip you should check you have all your documents ready **and printed**. Confirm your bookings if you need to and then check the weather forecast. This will give you an idea of what to pack.

What do I need to know before going on holiday?

You should know what documents you need to enter a country, such as visa, passport requirements (some require you to have six months validity) and insurance coverage.

How do I leave my house when on holiday?

If you're worried about leaving your house when on holiday, ask a friend or neighbor to keep an eye on it. Leave a spare key with someone you trust and have them swing by from time to time to make sure it all looks ok. Or better yet, get a house sitter.

What are your best travel tips?

Our best travel tips are to pack light; lay out everything you want to take with you and then half it. Travel carry on only when you can (it's cheaper and you won't have to worry about losing your bag).

Final Words of Advice

So there you have it, those are our top travel tips for traveling over the holidays. It might seem overwhelming and stressful, but it doesn't have to be.

Our main piece of advice is to **plan ahead with plenty of time**. If you're thinking of traveling last minute, you can expect chaos, but if you prepare in advance, it should run smoothly. You should also make sure you are well prepared, both with all your documents and your mentality.

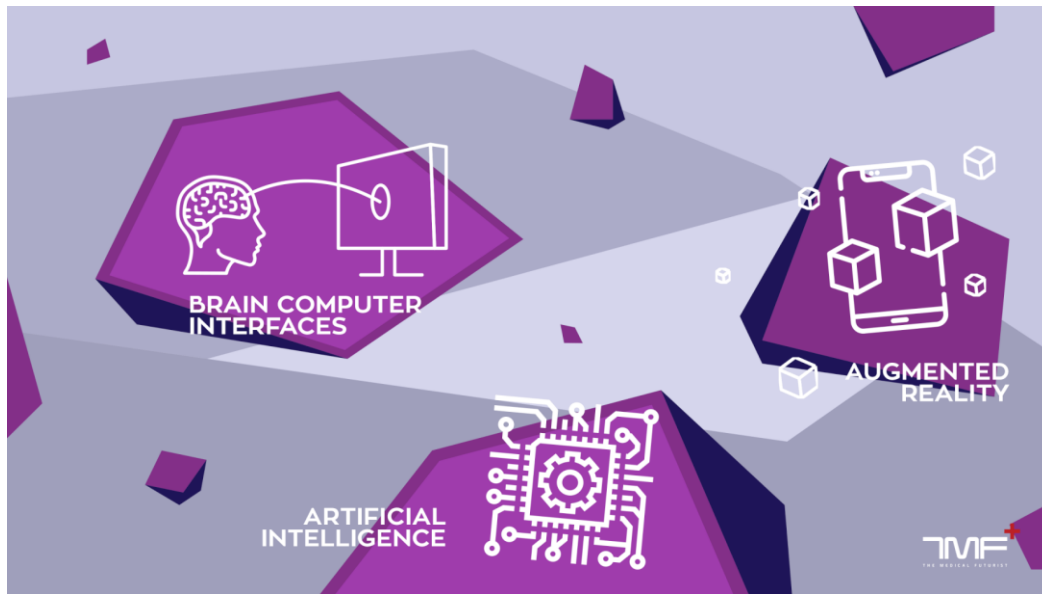
"By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail"
Benjamin Franklin

The journey may be perilous, but the destination will make it worth it.
Happy travels!



10 Promising Advanced Healthcare Technologies in Practice

medicalfuturist.com



As futurists, we have constantly been exploring what the future of healthcare holds for medical professionals and patients alike for years. With the rate of [...]

Key Takeaways

Technologies that were only concepts some years ago are now real options to be used in healthcare practice.

From wearable ultrasound to custom-made splints, we share a collection of 10 advanced healthcare technologies that are ready to be used in practice.

As futurists, we have constantly been exploring [what the future of healthcare holds](#) for medical professionals and patients alike for years. With the rate of technological development, what were promising concepts a couple of years ago are now real options in healthcare practice. In this article, we share a collection of 10 advanced healthcare technologies that are ready to be used in practice.

1. Wearable ultrasound: handy, portable diagnosis

Back in 2018, we reviewed two portable ultrasounds, namely [the Clarius](#) and the [Philips Lumify](#). Since then, the technology has progressed further to make them smaller and more portable. This has resulted in a wearable ultrasound system, developed by startup [Sonologi](#).

Their technology provides automated, hands-free, continuous ultrasound imaging technology in real-time. The wearable, along with AI-powered analytics, provides clinicians with actionable insights to aid decision-making and improve patient outcomes.

With such a device, patients can wear it while medical professionals view the imaging as it happens, and the AI software compensates for movement to maintain image stability. This can allow better and real-time assessments of cardiovascular health and heart conditions.

2. Assistive exoskeletons: reduce fatigue and injury risks

For years, [German Bionic](#) has produced [exoskeleton suits](#) to aid manual workers in carrying heavy weights, especially in industries such as construction, manufacturing, and logistics. The company is now expanding its expertise to the healthcare sector with the [Apogee+ power suit](#).

This exoskeleton provides healthcare professionals with mechanical support to assist them in their day-to-day work on the ward. For example, it can aid them in lifting patients from beds and wheelchairs and can provide relief when working in unergonomic postures.

“Our improved Apogee+ exoskeleton brings together strength and intelligence in ways that directly benefit healthcare professionals,” [said Armin Schmidt](#), CEO of German Bionic. “As the healthcare sector faces growing challenges with staff shortages and physical demands, the Apogee+ is a timely solution that improves worker safety, operational efficiency, and overall well-being. We are excited to support those on the frontlines of healthcare with technology that truly makes a difference.”

3. Virtual reality in the intensive care unit: helping patients feel better

Virtual reality (VR) has found successful applications in [various medical domains](#); and it is also proving beneficial in the intensive care unit (ICU). The technology can help patients better manage the trauma of waking up in an ICU, help their recovery, or even help young patients to visit magical worlds while staying at the hospital.

For example, the UF Health Shands Hospital in Florida has [used VR headsets and noise-cancelling headphones](#) to virtually transport ICU patients to remote beaches and hillsides. Researchers in The Netherlands [have also employed the technology](#) to walk patients through their current environment and how things work in an ICU.

4. Mixed reality in the operating room: interactive medical scans

Mixed reality (MR) headsets offer science fiction-esque experiences by superimposing virtual, interactive elements onto the physical environment. This technology has practical applications in healthcare and can be useful in the operating room.

[apoQlar medical](#) has developed MR applications for surgeons, medical students and patients alike for years. Their VSI HoloMedicine software has been designed for surgical planning. It allows surgeons to interact with data from medical scans and real-life images of the patient. By transforming 2D scans into 3D holograms, the MR software helps surgeons better understand and interpret individual patient cases.

5. Robots in lungs: safer lung biopsies

Lung biopsies are crucial procedures for the assessment of lung nodules and for informing preventative measures in case lung cancer is diagnosed. Traditionally, such procedures would be undertaken from the outside but the [risk of causing lung collapse](#) can deter them from being carried out.

Nowadays, we have the option to perform robot-assisted bronchoscopy to minimize the risk. With the help of a robot arm, physicians can take biopsies from inside the lungs rather than outside. The Cleveland Clinic Florida has been [using such a system](#). This approach has been associated with fewer complications and improved diagnosis.

6. Robots in rehab: human-machine collaboration

Robots have inspired countless creative endeavors in the entertainment industry and their usefulness [extends to the healthcare sector](#). Take for example Robert from [Life Science Robotics](#), which the company terms as a co-therapist for physical rehabilitation of patients. By attaching the robot's arm to the patients' arm or leg, it helps move the joints and muscles according to a healthcare professional's instructions. Robert memorizes that instructed motion and can perform it independently as required.

Such functional training is key to the healing journey of the patient and to avoid complications. By automating it, the heavy workload for the therapists is significantly reduced. Such a collaboration means that robots are not replacing professionals but are enhancing their work while improving patients' well-being.

7. 3D printed anatomical models: from medical education to preoperative planning assistance

Access to anatomical models is crucial for medical training and preoperative planning alike. For medical students, access to such models are often limited to teaching hours. [Digital Anatomy Simulations for Healthcare, LLC](#) (or DASH) addresses this need by 3D printing accurate and realistic anatomical models.

DASH prints a range of models from dental components to skulls that can assist surgeons in preoperative planning. Moreover, those models can also be used for patient education before they undergo a procedure.

8. Teledentistry: increasing access to dental care

[Teledentistry](#) enables dental care access remotely; thereby making the patients the point of care. This can increase dental care access for patients with special needs or the elderly in nursing homes.

[DentalMonitoring](#) offers remote oral observations through their AI-powered platform. Patients can take and send images with the company's ScanBox app. These images are then analyzed by an AI algorithm and sorts them for the dentist to consult.

9. Mixed reality in medical education: enhanced training

Another MR application in healthcare is in medical education. By displaying virtual holograms at will with a headset, the technology can ease the process of learning complex and challenging subjects such as anatomy or pathology. [ANIMA RES](#) has created MR models of human organs that can be viewed with an MR headset or even a phone.

While the technology is promising, the cost remains a barrier. MR headsets remain costly that only medical schools with adequate resources can afford. Nevertheless, ANIMA RES does offer some of its models for free that can be viewed from a smartphone.

10. Customized 3D-printed splints: a personal fit

Long-term splints are often worn during physical therapy or even for chronic conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis. However, the traditional ones might not be the most comfortable or offer a good fit. This can be an issue for patients if they need to wear them for extended periods of time.

Dutch company [Manometric](#) offers customized, 3D-printed hand braces and splints. By first scanning the patient's hand, the company can create a personalized splint within a few weeks. The custom product promises to be more comfortable and impedes less on daily activities.

We hope that you have found this collection to be insightful. Are there any other advanced healthcare technologies that you have seen in practice and are not featured in this article? If so, do share them with us!

Written by Dr. Bertalan Meskó & Dr. Pranavsingh Dhunnoo

Ten Ways to Showcase Your Luxury Home with Landscape Lighting

www.thepinnaclelist.com



Whether you are trying to sell your home or are simply tired of driving up to a darkly lit lawn and garden, you can easily learn how to showcase your home with landscape lighting. Curb appeal is more important than you can ever believe if your home is for sale, but if not, at least you can learn how to light up your grounds so that your home stands out in the neighborhood. Here are ten ways to showcase your luxury home with landscape lighting.

1. Understand the Basics of Landscape Lighting

Before beginning your landscape lighting project, it is imperative to understand a few basics. Not only will you need to learn about the kinds of lights available for outdoor use and the difference between lumens and wattage, but you also need to decide what you will be lighting. You can find a great deal of information by visiting [this site](#), in which you can learn the basics of outdoor lighting, but you also need to consider the exact areas you want to showcase before setting out on your project.

Are you going to light your drive and walkways, or will you be focusing on showcasing trees, shrubs, and plants? This all makes a huge difference when plotting out your lighting, so take the time to learn a few basics before drawing up your plans.

2. Sometimes More Is Better

Some homeowners settle for a few solar LED garden lights, but that won't showcase anything! You will most likely need to do some underground wiring, especially if you are going to showcase a large outdoor area. By all means, power some with solar energy, but when you use LED lights, they are not expensive to operate, so light up as much as you need to in order to get the effect you are looking for.

3. Calculate How Much Space You Need to Light

Before looking at the [difference between lumens and wattage](#), you must calculate how much area needs to be covered. There is a real difference and just because a light is higher powered in terms of wattage doesn't necessarily mean it will be brighter in lumens. This is an important calculation so that you buy the right kind of light with the power you need.

4. Whenever Possible Opt for LED Lights

As mentioned above, whenever possible, choose LED lights. They are not only less expensive to power but being [solid-state technology](#), they are longer lasting. Many homeowners shy away from LED landscaping lights because the initial cost of each bulb is more. However, other kinds of lighting like halogen lights burn out quicker, needing to be replaced much more often. Now you have savings in terms of energy used to power them, as well as a reduction in replacement costs over time.

5. For Optimum Results Do Your Positioning in Hours of Darkness

While you may be tempted to get out during daylight hours to work in your yard, that is not the best time of day to position your landscape lighting. For the best results, get out there in the darkness so that you can see where those lights are actually shining. There is no way to get the full effect during daylight hours because obviously, the sun will overpower any light you could possibly install!

6. Use a Good Variety of Lighting Techniques

There are actually three main types of lighting techniques you should consider when planning a landscape lighting project. If you want to light an entire area, you would use something known as 'overall lighting.' However, if there is a botanical or architectural element you want to showcase, you would use what they refer to as 'ambient lighting' in the industry. This kind of lighting is often used for an ethereal effect and why you often see it used in pool or garden areas. If you need to light a specific area, such as for safety, you would use what they refer to in the industry as 'task lighting.' That light has a task to perform, such as keeping foot traffic safe, and hence the name, task lighting.

7. Avoid Misdirected Lighting

Sometimes referred to as lighting pollution, misdirected lights can be a real nuisance, especially for passersby or neighbors. Make sure your landscape lighting is directed exactly where you want it to shine and always make sure that ambient lighting isn't polluted with task lighting or overall lighting. Just as noise pollution would interfere with your ability to enjoy your favorite music or television program, light pollution can ruin the effect you've worked so hard to create.

8. Use a Healthy Wattage that Doesn't Overwhelm

One of the most difficult calculations to make when planning your landscape lighting project is in determining the amount of wattage you need each bulb to be. You can quickly overwhelm an area with wattage that is too strong for the area you want to light up, so this is something you may need a bit of help with. Some homeowners use the trial and error method, which works well if the store will accept returns on bulbs you can't use, but if not, don't buy too many bulbs until you ensure you will not be overwhelming the area you are trying to light.

9. Set Your Timers by Season

One of the things we tend to get lazy with is in setting our timers, often as the days get longer and shorter. If you purchase digital timers, it isn't difficult to do and some timers on the market today can even be set remotely with an app through your smartphone. You may not even need to be at home to set your timers so that they light your grounds when it gets dark and turn off when the day is bright enough not to warrant landscape lighting.

10. Choose Your Lighting for Optimum Effect

Now that you have an idea of the different kinds of landscape lighting you can use, along with techniques and strength of bulbs, it's time to think about the effect you are trying to create. Every area you are lighting is being designed to create an effect, and so it is necessary to put all these elements together to achieve that effect. Do you want ambient color in your lighting scheme or are you purely looking for shades of white? Are you looking for task-oriented lighting to keep foot traffic safe or are you looking to add a mystical appeal to your Zen rock garden? Each and every step along the way will be based on the effect you are after, so plan carefully and you will have the exact lighting you need to showcase your property.

It doesn't matter if you are trying to sell your home or are simply looking for the best visual effect in nighttime hours. What matters is that you achieve the results you are after and that could mean spending time planning, designing and learning. However, once the final light is in place and you hit that switch, wouldn't it be nice to have the one property in your neighborhood that stands out from all the rest? That's curb appeal at its very best and that is what you can do with landscape lighting.

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