Twitter Tips

By no means is the following list all inclusive, but instead, just some of the more important tips that I feel I have learned along the way as both a physician blogger and Twitter engager.

1) Getting started
   - use your real name
   - write a short bio that represents how you want to be seen on Twitter
   - include caption ‘tweets are my own’ or ‘does not constitute medical advice’ (if necessary)
   - include a real picture of you in your profile (don’t be an ‘egg’)
   - start following like-minded physicians and organizations
   - ‘observing’ before tweeting might be a good first step

2) Some basics to consider
   - the @ symbol comes before your username, a.k.a your Twitter handle
   - hashtags are denoted by the # symbol - they allow you to be part of a conversation, categorize tweets and add flare to a tweet
   - general rule of thumb - maximum of 3 hashtags per tweet

3) What constitutes an ideal tweet?
   - if you look at some of the most retweeted content, you quickly realize that no hard-fast rules exist
   - in general, when sharing educational material, a few words followed by the title of the article (unless otherwise displayed), the URL, the relevant Twitter handle(s), 1 to 3 hashtags and a picture (if applicable)
4) **Frequently asked questions**

- Who should I follow? Only follow who you want to follow - just because someone follows you, you do not need to follow them back (being choosy is better)
- What is the perfect number of tweets per day? Social media frequency has been researched and analyzed, but the bottom line revolves around 3 key factors - consistency, quality and personality. To each his own, but I aim for 3 to 5 ‘quality’ tweets per day.
- What do I do if someone is harassing, defaming or bullying me? I have never had to do this but you can report a Twitter violation through the [Twitter Help Center](https://support.twitter.com/)
- When should I retweet versus like a tweet? If you like something, but don’t want to necessarily retweet it, just click ‘Like’ (you can look back on these tweets later). If you love a tweet, you may want to both retweet it and like it. Your likes might show up in your follower’s feeds as well under ‘You Might Like’.
- How do I reply to a tweet? Click the ‘arrow’ at the bottom of the tweet.

5) **General rules engagement**

- if you have any concerns about maintaining professionalism, keep your personal tweeting separate from your professional tweeting
- if you are using a professional profile, remain transparent sending your messages to the medical community and society (no role for anonymity) - Twitter is a public platform and the true benefits come from identifying yourself
- don’t say anything online that you wouldn’t want your name attached to
- tweet mindfully - pause before you hit “Tweet”
- Twitter is no place for venting - period
- don’t be so afraid of potential pitfalls that you avoid being a relatable human - you can easily add humanity without crossing the line
express gratitude and share - if people can get to know and identify with a real person behind the tweets, you are more likely to find other like-minded people to engage with

6) **Having a conversation**

- if you want to start a conversation with another user via their Twitter handle, you can start the tweet with either @ or .@ - the former will be selectively visible while the latter will be visible to everyone
- if you want to start a private conversation with another user who you follow and who follows you back, you can direct message (DM) them through the ‘Messages’ icon on your dashboard

**Finding Healthcare Hashtags**

A great starting point is [symplur.com](http://symplur.com) - the healthcare hashtags project. Symplur has created an easy way to find relevant healthcare hashtags, trending hashtags, tweet chats (scheduled “live” tweet events), and conferences (such as this one #cfpcfmf).

Some highly engaged hashtags and tweet chat examples include:

- #MedEd
- #HealthXPh
- #hcsm
- #HCLDR
- #FOAMed
- #hcldr

**Some benefits of joining a Tweet chat include:**

- connecting with other physicians and leaders in healthcare social media
- observing how to engage on Twitter professionally
- curating new information and staying up to date
Relevant Resources


CMPA (2014). Top 10 Tips for Using Social Media in Professional Practice

