

# realself UNIVERSITY

## How to Ask for Reviews and Actually Get Them

Doctors hate asking for reviews. It can be awkward and uncomfortable, but on the flipside, a positive review can be immensely rewarding. Did you know that RealSelf patients put more weight on reviews than experience when it comes to deciding which doctors to contact?

Reviews create trust. According to our most recent data, 68% of patients consider a doctor more trustworthy based on his/her reviews vs. just 15% who look at board certification and/or education.



If you're not racking up reviews, you could be getting passed over for those who have more comments online. We also found that patients are more likely to contact doctors

who have a greater number of 4.5-star reviews than doctors who have fewer 5-star reviews.

With these few simple tips, you, too, can be gathering great word-of-mouth online in no time.

### **Find a Way to Ask That Fits Your Style**

*“It feels awkward asking for reviews.”*

A distinguished Seattle surgeon found it uncomfortable to verbally ask for reviews, so he came up with a great fix. He handwrites 10 or 15 short thank-you notes on his stationery and leaves room at the top to personalize it for each patient.

When a patient expresses happiness at a post-op appointment—the “wow” moment—the doctor retrieves a thank-you note from his desk, fills in the patient’s name, and gives it to him or her. His patients feel special and are more than happy to write a review.

### **There’s Nothing to Fear**

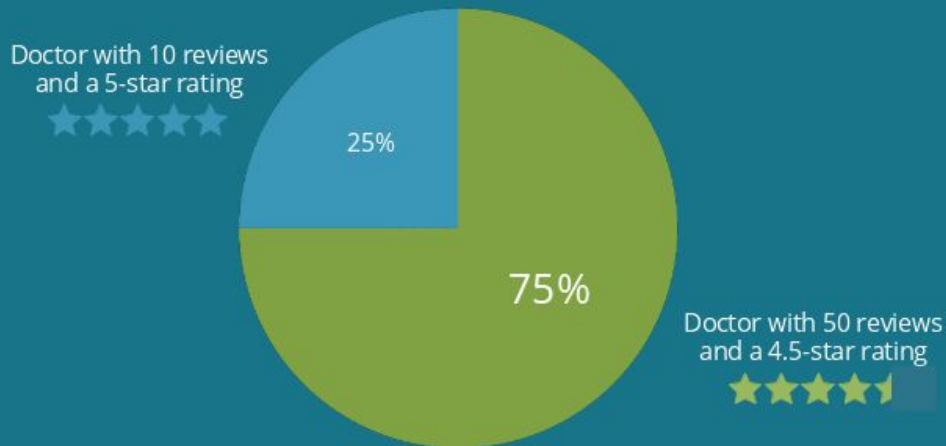
*“I’m afraid of a bad review.”*

Patients primarily write reviews to help other patients, and the majority of reviews for medical professionals are overwhelmingly positive.

You can expect that about 95% of your patients will give you either 4 or 5 stars. Through our research, we have found that you actually don’t want perfection. The reason will surprise you: Practices with 4.5 stars receive **two times as many inquiries** as those with 5 stars.

# Trust & Negative Reviews

Which of the following doctors would you be more likely to contact?



RealSelf Consumer Survey, May, 2016, (n=186)

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## When Is the Best Time to Ask for a Review?

If timed well, we have found that there are three points when the request fits nicely:

### 1. When the patient books the procedure.

Thousands of patients on RealSelf share their experiences, from initial consult through years post-op. They also continue to remain active in the RealSelf community and help other patients with their journeys. Often, these powerful reviews are so extensive detailed that we hesitate to even call them “reviews,” as they are more like journals or diaries.

### 2. The “Wow” Moment!

Many patients have that moment when they’re overwhelmed with happiness and full of gratitude for their results. This is the moment to ask for a review. Whether you simply make a verbal request, hand them a card, or send them their before-and-after photos via email (another great tip), do not miss this window of opportunity.

3. Build the request into a fixed point in the post-op process.

Although this can be highly dependent on the procedures you offer, if you follow a standard post-op process, you can include a review card or a reminder in your protocol to standardize the request. Don't be afraid of negative reviews, just ask every patient.

### **Where Should I Ask Patients to Write Reviews?**

RealSelf, of course! Unlike other review sites, patient anonymity is guaranteed, and their contributions will have the greatest impact on future patients. We are dedicated to providing up-to-date, transparent information, so patients can make confident decisions.

The other two sites you might consider include Google Maps and Yelp, which you should only recommend if the patient found you through Yelp.

### **Should I Email Patients to Ask for Reviews?**

Sure!

*"I send an email to the patient with a link to our RealSelf review page along with a digital copy of their photos for uploading—sometimes I plead. That's the secret sauce for achieving 400!" – [Dr. Eric Joseph](#), West Orange, N.J.*

The "Patient Engage" tool located in your RealSelf doctor dashboard makes this easy.

A word of caution: Do not send the email request in a big blast to a giant list. "Patient Engage" only allows 50 emails to be sent at a time, and only once per patient every 30 days.

## Can I Have Patients Write Reviews While They're Still in the Office?

It's not ideal. In your office, they're not in the best mind-set to give you a long, thoughtful review. While in the office, it's better to simply ask them to sign up for an account on RealSelf.

Reviews with 500-plus words have:

- +178% more page views.
- +140% more time spent interacting with the page.
- +39% longer time on the doctor's profile.

Another risk is that these reviews would come from the same IP address, making them look like fakes to the algorithm and human moderators. Sometimes we see office staff try to help patients by interviewing them and writing their reviews. This isn't authentic and shouldn't be done.

## Find Your Style

1. Distinguished: Prepare thank-you notes and save them for the "wow" moment.
2. Always ask: Approach the patient at the "wow" moment and email their photos to them.
3. Not me, never: Have a trusted staff member ask, email your patients, or rely on other tools.

## What to Do If You Get a Bad Review

1. Stop! Don't over-react or respond right away. Take a break and wait a day to act.
2. Drop: If and when you respond, have a friend or trusted staff member read your response, and drop anything that sounds defensive or irrelevant.
3. Roll: Remember that negative reviews add credibility to your positive reviews. Work on getting more reviews to diminish the negative and roll with it.

Read more: [Negative Review? Stop, Drop, and Roll](#)

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