

# CASH-BASED PHYSICAL THERAPY - THE ULTIMATE GUIDE -

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# PART I: GOING CASH

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So you're a new grad and you want to start a cash-based PT practice. You probably have a lot of thoughts about whether this is possible. You question if people will pay to see you. You question if you are worth \$100+ dollars an hour. Most of all, you wonder where to start. This guide to starting a cash-based PT practice will get you started.

My name is Will Gonzaba, and I am the owner of Physio2Geaux (formerly NOLAPHYSIO), a mobile cash practice in New Orleans, LA. I'll be honest: Physio2Geaux is not my full-time job. I have a PRN that I work Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. I see patients in my practice on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and Monday, Wednesday, and Friday evenings. When I first started, I was only seeing 1 - 2 clients a week. At this point, I am consistently seeing 10 visits / week, which is not bad for a side hustle. My goal is to continue to grow Physio2Geaux to the point where I can do this full-time.

You can easily create a similar side hustle that puts an extra \$1000 in your pockets every week. That sounds pretty nice, right?

I began studying the cash model my first year in PT

school. I started with the work of Jarod Carter PT, DPT out of Austin, Texas. I read his cash PT book and listened to almost all of his podcasts. From there I began following Paul Gough out of the UK, who owns three profitable cash PT clinics, even though all other PT clinics are completely FREE to the public. Most recently, I completed Aaron LeBauer's CashPT® Blueprint course to help me set up my company.

I will be honest, going cash is hard. Telling patients I was out of network was actually not the hardest part for me. Rather, the most difficult aspect has been keeping tabs on all of the little things that go into running a business.

I'll tell you this much. For as hard as it is to get started, it is totally worth it. I remember the first time a patient handed me \$120 and said "Thanks, I really enjoyed this. I can't wait till the next session."

I remember smiling from ear-to-ear as I drove home. It was more rewarding than any work I've done as PT. After landing the first patient, I wanted to replicate this feeling again and again. Every time



I have a new patient I get this same feeling. It's something I could never feel when I was working for a big outpatient clinic.

***It's rewarding because I was responsible for the entire process: the marketing, the social media, the phone call, the scheduling, and the explanation that I was out of network.***

It's rewarding because I am running a cash-based PT practice when many people said it could not be done. Most importantly, it's rewarding because my patients are getting better faster. They are getting more attention. And, for once in their lives, a healthcare company revolves around them and their needs.

I am fairly new to having my own practice. I am going through the growing pains, and the struggles that you too will go through when you start. I want this guide to make your start much easier. I want this guide to show you that it is possible to own a cash-based physical therapy practice, even as a new grad. I want you to have a successful cash practice, be it large or small, because I believe it gives patients the best results.

Most importantly, I want you to have a successful cash practice because you worked too hard academically to be stuck with a crammed outpatient schedule your entire working career.

So if you're ready to start, let's dive into the world of Cash PT!

## THE CASH MINDSET: WHAT IT MEANS TO GO OUT OF NETWORK

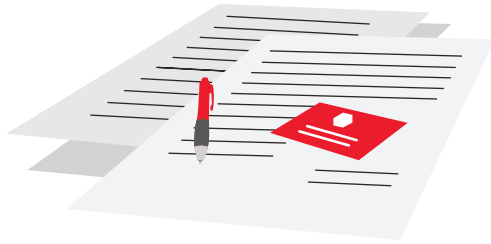
Cash-based physical therapy is a hot topic right now. But what does it mean to be out of network? Let's look at a couple of different cash PT business models:



### 1) The All Cash Model:

As the name implies, the all cash model means that companies will accept cash, checks, debit/credit cards, health savings accounts, and flex spending accounts. With this model, patients will pay the full price for a session at the time of service. Usually, the PT company will give the patient a superbill, which contains the treatment codes used for the session. The patient then has the option to submit this bill to their insurance company, and the insurance company can directly reimburse the patient, based on the patient's out of network benefits.





## 2) Hybrid Cash Model:

Clinics that use the hybrid cash model may be in-network with some insurance companies—like Medicare, for example—and out-of-network with other companies. This is common in clinics that may be transitioning to an all cash model. You will also see practice owners choose this model because there are some insurance companies that reimburse well, causing the owners to choose to have a contract with them.

***Other times, clinics will choose be all cash, but accept Medicare because they do not want to exclude the Medicare population from their patient population. (You cannot charge Medicare patients cash for PT. More on this to come).***

When you are starting out, it's much easier to set up as an all cash practice. You do not have to negotiate insurance contracts. There is less red tape. Generally, all you have to do is have a method to accept payment to start seeing patients.

So the first thing you need to do is decide what kind of model you want to have:

- A** Cash Model
- Or
- B** Hybrid Model

I recommend going all cash, which is what this rest of this guide will be centered around.

### Justifying the cost of cash-based physical therapy

One question I often get from PTs who are thinking of going cash-based is, “How do you justify the cost of charging people cash when they could be seen in network for only a copay?”

The answer is quite simple.

The quality of care they receive from going out of network is so much higher than being seen in network. Being one-on-one with a PT who can focus on doing manual interventions for an entire session gets patients better faster. The patient ends up needing fewer sessions overall. Patients usually get more convenient scheduling. They get the same PT every session. And, at least in my practice, they get 24/7 access to me via email/call/text if they ever have any issues or questions.

In a lot of cases they actually end up SAVING money by going out of network!!

Check out this example.

I used to work for an outpatient clinic that strongly pushed me to prescribe my patients a frequency of 3x/ week x 4 weeks. Most of my population was between 25 and 40 years old. I worked in a direct access state, so many times patients came directly to the PT clinic. Since it was generally a healthy population, most of them did not use much of their deductible by the time they got to me.

This meant they would have to pay me \$125 a session until their deductible was met (Deductibles are crazy high these days, too . . . like \$2000 - \$5000). In this situation, a patient may have to pay \$375 a week to only see a PT for a total of 1.5 hours per week if they were lucky. In many clinics, the patients would get little face time with the PT.

If this same patient saw me out-of-network, they would pay \$150 for the eval, then \$100 for every session after that. They would only need to see me once a week for 4 - 6 weeks. This patient is going to save a ton of money, take less time off work, have more efficient treatments, and ultimately get better faster.

Do I explain all of this to every patient? No, not at all.

I only make sure they understand what the value is in going out out-of-network and how it can actually help them get better faster.

## WHO IS YOUR PERFECT PATIENT?

Aaron LeBauer, who created the CashPT® Blueprint course (it's excellent; I just completed it a couple months ago) refers to knowing your perfect patient. This means knowing everything about the clientele you want to serve. This keeps you from trying to be everything to everyone.

When you know your perfect patient, it's easier to direct your marketing because you know exactly who you are talking to.

Think about the following when describing your perfect patient:

What does your perfect patient look like? What is their age? Sex? What is wrong with them? Have they had PT before? Is their condition chronic? Have they had failed surgeries? What are they trying to achieve?



Once you identify these characteristics, you want to serve this ideal patient. You want to be everything to them. Sure, there will be others who seek you



out, and that's great too. But you need to focus on an ideal client and serve them.

My ideal patients are busy cyclists and runners who want convenient treatment by someone who understands their sport.

Do I see people who don't fit this category? Of course I do. However, this is the group I speak to through my social media.

One mistake I made when I first started out was picking a perfect patient that did not fit the messages I was putting out.

Originally my perfect patient was people over 45 years old who wanted solutions to their pain that did not involve surgeries or pain medication. There isn't anything wrong with this perfect patient. However, all my videos on youtube spoke to cyclists and runners. All of my original patients were cyclists and runners. I realized that I needed to focus solely on this group as it better fit me as a clinician.

Your perfect patient should have characteristics that you enjoy working with. For example, if you don't like treating high school athletes, you shouldn't speak to this group in your messaging. Likewise, if you're really good at treating a certain condition and you enjoy doing it, that condition could be a characteristic of your perfect patient.

## Realize it's OK not to serve everyone

As PTs, we inherently want to help everyone. However, when you establish yourself as a cash-based practice, there will be people who do not want to work with you, or with whom you cannot legally work. And that is OK.

When prospective clients tell me they want to stay in network and use their insurance, I do not try to change their minds. People pay a lot of money for insurance and I don't take it personally when they want to use it. You shouldn't either.

I do educate them on what the pros and cons are of staying in-network vs going out-of-network. If they decide they want to stay in-network, I make sure I refer them to great PTs who do accept their insurance.

At the end of the day, we need to make sure that patients get a great PT experience, no matter where they go. The last thing I want to happen is for someone to have crappy PT treatments and tell their friends that "PT doesn't work."

## WHAT DO CASH-BASED PRACTICES LOOK LIKE?



## 1) Brick and mortar

When I mention brick and mortar practice, I am referring to practices that have a stand-alone location. This would be most traditional PT practices and also many cash-based PT practices. They rent or purchase commercial space for their company. As a cash-based clinic owner, you probably do not need a ton of space, and can find a small office to rent for a reasonable price.

The benefits to this are:

- You get a physical clinic location
- Your company will look very professional
- In some circumstances, a group of small offices may share a common waiting room and restrooms, which makes your company look legit.

The drawbacks to a brick and mortar practice are:

- It will cost more up front.
- You probably won't utilize it 40 hours a week when you are first starting, so you'll be paying for a space that you aren't using.



## 2) Sublease space

Subleasing space from a gym, spa, dance studio, or yoga studio is a great option when you're first starting out. These arrangements are often more flexible and have more room for negotiation.

When subleasing, you can pay-per-use to operate out of other businesses' facilities. For example, you can arrange a deal with local yoga studio to use their space for \$20 an hour when it's available.

***The major benefit is that you only pay to use space when you use it. It also gives you access to the clientele of the business you rent from, and the chance to collaborate with other business owners.***

The downside of this arrangement is really more a risk when you first start. I would not rush into making an arrangement like this before getting to know the owner and staff very well. You do not want to come off as wanting to try to make money off of a company they worked hard to build. Rather you should want to add value to their company and assist in making their customers happier.

Here are some suggested steps to follow if this is the route you want to go:

- **Form a relationship with owners you would like to rent from.** Become a member at their gym or studio and be a regular there.
- **Talk to the owners and staff about what you do.** Tell them you are working on opening your own practice. I've found that business owners want to help other business owners. You'd be surprised where this conversation might take you.





- **Schedule a time to discuss the possibilities of renting space from them.** Most likely they will want some time to think on it and come up with a rental price. But go into the meeting with a suggested rental price, and what you would bring to their company.

Here are some examples of arrangements you can make:

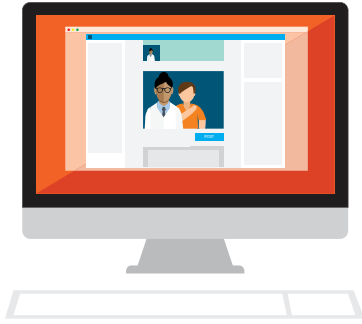
- An hourly rate that you pay per patient. A good rate could be \$20/hour with full access to the equipment in the gym.
- A flat monthly rate. This rate could vary greatly. Somethings to consider is how many hours a week you will be spending in the facility and using the equipment. Do you get your own space to leave your treatment table set up? Can you set up signage throughout the facility letting members know about your services? All of these should factor into the price. The more permanent and more time you spend in the facility, you should expect to pay a higher monthly rent.

### 3 ) Mobile practice

The mobile practice is definitely the easiest way to start. As a mobile practice, all you need is your treatment table and a vehicle to get around town. This is actually a very common model in dense urban cities on the east coast.

I've heard from several practice owners who have built very successful practices using this model. Some even have several therapists that work for them!

***I chose to use this method because it was a low cost to start, and I found that my patients loved the convenience of me going to their homes. A lot of times this added convenience was enough for them to justify going out of network and pay cash.***



# CASH PAY NICHES

## 1) The niches

It is important to have niche population you want to serve. This prevents you from trying to be everything to everyone all the time. It also allows you to focus the message that you send to prospective clients. Your niche should overlap with your perfect patient.

My niche is cyclists and runners, and my perfect patients are busy cyclists and runners who want convenient treatment by someone who understands their sport.

Here are some of the niches I've come across in my study of Cash-based PT:

- Chronic pain
- Low back pain
- Running
- Cycling
- Triathletes
- CrossFit
- Baseball
- Dancers
- Women's health
- Parkinson's disease
- ACL post-op rehab
- Moms
- Pediatrics.

The list can go on and on.

## 2) How to define your own niche

I use to think you had to take a bunch of courses in a certain field before you were considered an expert in a niche area, but that is not the case. As a PT, you are already a musculoskeletal expert, and there will be certain patient populations that you gravitate towards and enjoy treating. When you begin to speak to this, your niche may naturally reveal itself.

For example, I mainly treat cyclists, triathletes, and runners. As an athlete in each of these sports myself, I found it easy to ask questions and develop treatment plans to show my clients that I understood what they were going through. At this point in my career, I have not taken advanced courses in treating runners or cyclists, but participating in both myself, I better understand the needs of this population.

The same can happen for you. Think about the ideal person you'd like to treat, and tailor your message to them.

## 3) How to become an expert in your niche

The best way to become the expert in your niche is to develop free content for community. This could be:

- Blogs
- Videos
- Articles
- Facebook posts
- In-person presentations, etc.

As a PT, you have a wealth of knowledge. Once you begin to share it, your credibility will grow. When prospective clients look at your blog, Facebook, and website and see a collection of blog posts, videos,

and pictures, they begin to develop trust in your ability to treat them.

When I first started my company I tried to do one video a week showing a stretch, mobility drill, or strengthening exercise. I targeted the message to runners and cyclists.

***The first three videos I posted to Facebook all led to getting a new patient!***

That was definitely an exception. However, every since I've been making these videos, members of the cycling or running community have been asking me questions about different aches and pains they have.

A lot of people in the cycling community knew I was a PT, but it wasn't until I made these videos that people began asking me for advice on what to do about their pain. I am now becoming the go-to guy on treating cyclists, just because I shared the knowledge I already had.

Do not trick yourself into thinking that you do not know enough to be an expert on a subject. Even as a new graduate, you have so much knowledge that can greatly help the community you want to serve. Begin sharing this knowledge even if what you're sharing seems like basic knowledge. You'll be surprised what sharing your knowledge can bring you.

## HOW TO MAKE IT WORK FINANCIALLY

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Two of the biggest fears holding young PTs back from launching into the world of private practice are cost, and fear of losing mentorship. I worried about both when starting out.

Allow me to put your fears to rest.

There are several ways you can start your cash practice. You may decide to continue working full-time for an employer and see patients after hours and on the weekends. Or you may decide to work part-time or PRN while you get your practice going. Each of these has pros and cons.

### **Working full-time while starting your practice:**

Working full-time will allow you to make a good salary while you begin your practice. You can save some money to fund your start-up costs.

***While the extra money is great, there are some drawbacks. One drawback is potentially stepping on toes at the clinic you work for. Another drawback is the time commitment.***



Personally, when I was working full-time, seeing 70 patients a week, I had zero energy to do extra work outside of what I was doing for my employer.

Pros:

- More revenue
- Easy to supplement start up costs

Cons:

- Potentially stepping on stepping on toes at work
- Full time work can take up all of your energy

### **Working Part-Time or PRN while starting your practice**

Working part-time or PRN is a great option to get started in your cash practice. It allows you to have consistent income (if it's part-time) while you build your caseload on the side. You will have more time and energy to spend on your business.

The drawback, of course, is that you make less money than you would working full time. However, it is a totally feasible option with proper financial planning.

This is the option that I chose. I stepped down from my full-time position and transitioned into a PRN role with the same company. I also took a PRN job with a local hospital, which gave me more consistent shifts.

The way I calculated it, I needed 10 PRN shifts a month in order to make it financially while I started my company. I was definitely living lean, but it was worth it to be able to work on accomplishing my goal of having a thriving practice.

Pros:

- More time to spend on company
- More energy to spend on company
- If working part-time you will have a consistent paycheck
- If working PRN you have the ability to pick up shifts when your business is slower (hopefully that doesn't happen much)

Cons:

- Make less money than working full time



# PART II: THE SET UP

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Ok, so you're convinced you want to start a cash-based PT practice. Now, it's going to take at least \$50,000 to get started.

Just kidding. Let me show you how to launch a low-cost PT practice!

## Business formation

First let's talk business formation. You will need to set up an official business entity, file for the required permits, and purchase liability insurance. Here is what you need to do:

### 1) Form an LLC

The easiest way to do this is through LegalZoom.com. Legalzoom has an online LLC application. They will walk you through filling out the paperwork online. They will also register your business with your state for an additional fee. Your company needs to be registered with your state so you can get an EIN number. Your EIN number will allow you to open a business account, file taxes, and purchase liability insurance.

To form an LLC and register my business with the state, I paid Legalzoom \$342. They offered a three month plan so it was fairly affordable.

\*Legalzoom will also try to sell you a bunch of additional services when you set up your LLC. These services can get very expensive very quickly. So I recommend keeping it simple when you start and only purchase what you absolutely need.\*



### 2) Check with your state to see if you need a state- or city-specific business license

This will vary state-to-state, and city-to-city, but you need to check with your local business association to determine if you need a business permit for your city. A good place to find information is your local small business association.

### 3) If renting space, you will need to register your facility with your state physical therapy board

If you are sublease space or have a standalone clinic, you will need to register your facility with the state physical therapy board. I would expect to spend about \$100 - \$200 on this. This is an absolute must if you are treating patients out of a facility. Skipping this step could cause the board to suspend your license, which would suck, because you couldn't work.

Even if you are starting a mobile a practice, you should still check with your state physical therapy board to determine if you need to do anything for them.

### 4) Purchase liability insurance

Next, you need to purchase liability insurance. This will be one of the most expensive things you need to get started. But you need to have it.

I purchased my liability insurance through Health Care Providers Service Organization (HPSO). For the year it cost me just under \$800 for basic coverage. They also offer a monthly payment plan that makes it much easier to get started.



### 5) Business Checking Account

Once you've filed your LLC and registered your company with your state, you will receive your EIN. You need the EIN number to open a business account. Usually banks have a specific person who will handle business accounts. You may have to make an appointment to get your account set up. Most banks also have merchant services and have products you can use to capture sales.

**Estimate for Set-Up Costs: \$1500**

## Administrative Tools:

### 1) Website

There are so many choices for designing and hosting your website. I chose Wix.com because I really like their templates, it's easy to use, and they have great pricing. However, after doing some consulting with UpDoc Media, I learned that it is best to use Wordpress for website hosting. Wordpress will allow you rank higher in google searches than other sites like Wix and SquareSpace. I am currently in the process of moving my website to Wordpress.

Your website should do several things for you. Number one, it should fully explain your practice. You should be able to refer patients to your site to answer questions they may have. Number two, it should allow viewers to become familiar with you. If they can watch videos of you, or read your blog they will begin to feel comfortable with you before they even meet you. Number three, you want a way to capture prospective patient information (email,

phone number). You'll want to have patients opt into a newsletter or "sign up to receive updates" from your site. This will allow you to collect their email address and use it for email marketing. If done correctly this should lead to conversions into paying patients.

Use Wordpress. Start with a simple site that includes the following pages:

- About the practice - describe yourself and who your practice serves
- Pricing - have your prices listed with explanations of what patients get for each service.
- Conditions you treat - This doesn't have to be complicated, just a list of common conditions you treat
- Why physiotherapy? - discuss the benefits of physical therapy as if you are talking to someone who has no idea what PT is.
- What to expect - Make a video or describe what patients should expect when they begin treatment with you
- Blog - It can be hard to keep up a blog regularly, but this is a great way to post short articles and videos. Keep things simple and to the point, and try to create useful information to your readers.
- FAQ - a FAQ page creates a resource to refer patients. I constantly copy and paste from my FAQ page into emails. This save my time when getting back to emails.

## 2) Email Marketing System

Having strong email marketing is also really important. Using programs like Active Campaign allows you to set up an email automation series that you can use to market to prospective clients. I purchased the basic membership for Active Campaign and pay \$10/month.

## 3) EMR

The first question to answer is whether you want to use an electronic medical record (EMR) or use paper charting. When you are first starting, paper is a very easy and affordable way to get started. You can make evaluation and treatment templates, and store the information in folders for each patient. This option is basically free, except for the costs of the paper.

There are tons of options if you choose to use an EMR. I looked into a couple different programs (including webPT) but found that they had too many features and were too expensive for my company. When completing Aaron LeBauer's CashPT® blueprint course, I found a great and FREE option... Google Docs!

That's right, you can use Google Docs as a HIPAA-compliant EMR, and it's completely free. Now, there are a couple steps to take if you're doing this to make it HIPAA-complaint. For more information on this, see Aaron Lebauer's HIPPA as EMR training course.



#### 4) Credit card processing system

You probably want to get paid once you start seeing patients, so you're going to need a credit card processing system. There are several out here, but the two most common ones are PayPal and Square. Both are "free," but they charge a percentage of what you collect using their software.

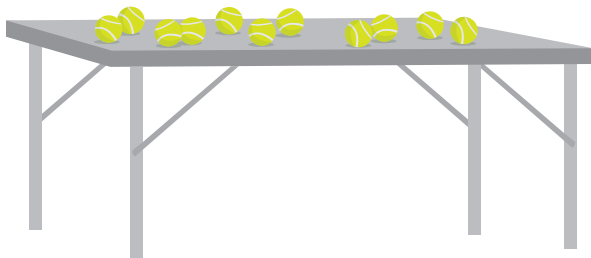
I choose PayPal because almost everyone is familiar with it, and I wanted my customers to be comfortable swiping their cards on the card reader.

#### 5) Business Phone

The geniuses at Google have done it again with another great and free option for a business phone. Sign up for Google voice and you will get a free business phone number. When people call the number, it will go directly to your cell phone. It also comes with a voicemail box and text messaging.

Thank you, Google, for thinking of everything.

**Total Administrative Costs:  
\$30 - \$50/month**



#### Treatment supplies:

Here is a list of treatment supplies that I purchased:

- Portable treatment table - \$150 Amazon

- Cupping equipment/ IASTM Tool / cocoa butter / KTape - \$100 Amazon

- Theraband, tennis balls, lacrosse balls - \$40

This is really all you need to get started. There will be some difference, based on how you like to practice. I like to do cupping and IASTM so those were musts for me, but you might not need those items. I purchased Therabands, tennis balls and lacrosse balls so I could give them to my patients to perform their HEPs.

If you were going to choose one thing to invest a lot of money in, I would choose a nice treatment table. There are some really nice portable treatment tables, but they can easily cost more than \$300. I went with something simple and it has worked fine so far; however, it will need to be replaced sometime down the road.

There might be other items you personally enjoy using to treat, so your list may differ from mine. The main thing I want you to take away is that you don't need a ton of equipment to get started. All you need is your hands and a treatment table.

**Total Treatment Supplies: \$300**



## Office Supplies:

If you will be renting a physical space, then you will need additional office furnishing along with your treatment supplies.

**Estimate on office furnishing: \$500**

**All-in Estimate for Mobile Practice:  
\$1800 - \$2000**

**All-in Estimate for Brick-and-Mortar Practice:  
\$2500 - \$4000 (depending on rent)**

## CASH PT RULES AND REGULATIONS

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Before you dive into your practice, it is very important to become clear on your state practice act and Medicare rules and regulations.

### Direct Access:

All states have some form of direct access. Since a majority of your marketing efforts will be targeted directly to consumers (patients), you need to know what level of direct access your state has.

For example, when I lived in Texas, we had restricted direct access. This meant we could only see the patient for the initial evaluation, but could not begin treatment until the patient had a referral.

Now, I live in Louisiana, where patients have unrestricted direct access to PTs. Our state practice act states that if patients do not make measurable

progress by 30 days, then they must be referred to a medical practitioner.

This difference in practice acts makes a world of difference on how your business is set up. Know your level of direct access in your state, and be able to communicate this to your patients.

**\*\*Note:** If your state requires a referral to treat, you still must obtain a referral even if your patient wants to pay cash **\*\***

### How Patients Get Reimbursed for Going Out of Network

If your patient has a traditional insurance plan, she should have out-of-network benefits. Just like her in-network benefits, she will have an out-of-network deductible.

Let's say her out-of-network deductible is \$1200. This means she will need to spend \$1200 out of pocket, on out-of-network healthcare, before her insurance starts to cover a portion of her expenses.

This is only an example, and this scenario can differ from plan to plan. If your patients would like to go this route, it is best to have them call their insurance company and ask about their out of network benefits.

I will say that in my practice, none of my patients have asked for a superbill to submit to insurance. They just paid cash and were happy to do so :)



## The Superbill:

A superbill is the receipt you give to patients that includes the treatment codes + cost for the session. This is the form they will submit to their insurance company if they want to be reimbursed. The following information must be on the superbill:

- Your credentials, license number, NPI number, signature
- ICD10 codes
- Business EIN / Tax ID number
- CPT codes used for the treatment

Example: 1 hour treatment / costs \$100  
Two units of manual therapy at \$25 each  
Two units of ther ex at \$25 each

- At the bottom of each bill there should be a phrase that says, "Patient has paid for these services in full. Please reimburse the patient directly."

## Cash-based PT and Medicare:

Cash-based PT and Medicare could be a book in itself. In fact, it is.

Dr. Jarod Carter has the most comprehensive guide to cash PT and Medicare. You can find his resource here:

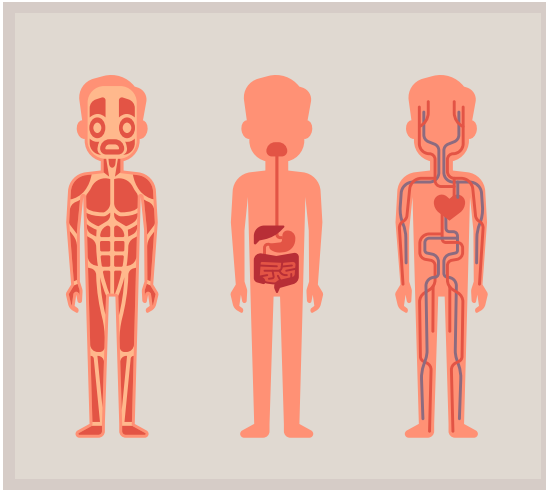
<http://www.drjarodcarter.com/medicare-cash-based-physical-therapy/>

You CANNOT charge cash for medical services that are covered under Medicare. That means that

if a patient has Medicare, you cannot charge them cash for physical therapy services. There are some exceptions to the rule, but this is the policy that I follow.

Reading Dr. Carter's book will outline some of the exceptions to this rule. However, at this point in time, I choose not to work with Medicare patients because it is easier to stay compliant.





## PART III: MARKETING

If there was ever something PTs should learn more about, it's marketing.

As new grads we think we know how to sell physical therapy. We all probably did a project in PT school where we had to sell the idea of PT or come up with a business plan. But in reality, unless you had a professor who deeply understood the intricacies of marketing, you probably didn't really learn how to do it correctly.

Learning how, what, where, and who to market to is so important. It is something I continue to learn as I go through the process of growing my practice.

I am by no means a marketing guru, but I can teach you how to start marketing your small practice.

### 1) Start by sharing your knowledge

I discussed the importance of this in an earlier section, but I will repeat it here.

When you give your knowledge away for free, people begin to build trust in you. It allows them to become familiar with you before you start asking them for money. When the time comes for them to book an appointment they will feel comfortable and confident in their decision to work with you.

Sharing your knowledge is also a great way to show your expertise in a subject area. For example, I race for a local cycling club here in New Orleans. I was on the team for almost a year, and everyone knew I was a physio. Yet no one ever asked me for advice on aches and pains they had. Once I started making short YouTube videos showing mobility drills, I immediately started to get inquiries from the team and other cyclists on issues they were having.

I try to make one short video a week and I share it on my blog, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube channel.

### 2) Meet people in your community

Being involved in your community is probably some of the best marketing you can do. Get involved in local running groups, yoga groups, cycling groups, church groups.

Whatever you're interested in, get involved with that group.

This type of involvement allows you to form organic relationships with people in your community. The

new people you meet ask what you do, and you can begin to share information about your company. This occurs in a very authentic way. You are not marketing to them. You aren't trying to get anything out of them. You are forming a natural relationship with them.

When the time comes when they need advice or treatment, they will remember you. Best of all, they will already be comfortable with you and want to work with you.

### 3) Host Free Workshops

Hosting a free workshop on a topic that you're passionate about is another great way to share your knowledge. You can have a free 30 - 45 minute workshop that discusses something like "Low Back Pain." During the course you can teach people about the anatomy, show them some preventative exercises, and then answer questions.

Make sure you hand out your cards at the end of the workshop and have a sign-in sheet that requests attendees' email addresses. By capturing their email, it will allow you to send them a follow up emails about other workshops, or marketing that you may want to do.

### 4) Social Media

Wow. Where to begin?

Let's start with choosing platforms. There are so many options, but I would choose two platforms (in addition to youtube, email, website/blog) and focus on those.

I chose Facebook and Instagram.

Facebook is great because it is easy to share information with your network of friends. Many of my first patients all contacted me through my facebook page. I also found it easy to share blogs, videos, etc in different facebook groups.

Instagram is useful to share videos and pictures with your audience. I've had several people approach me about videos they saw on my IG account.

In terms of paid advertisement, I am just now starting to pay for Facebook ads. The plan is to funnel people to my website so I can capture their email address.

### 5) Email Marketing - Active Campaign

You need to have a email marketing program. This allows you to write emails in advance and have them automatically sent to customers or prospective customers at certain times.

I recommend Active Campaign for this.

I currently have two email automation campaigns. One campaign is for new patients. Once I have a new patient, I put their email address into the automation. The patient will then get one email a week from me over the next four - five weeks.

The first email will tell them about my practice, the second and third email have healthy tips, and the fourth email is asking for them to write a review on google. The automation will also send a 6 month and 1 year follow up email asking how they are feeling.



My campaign for prospective patients is different in that the emails are discussing different health tips and benefits of receiving manual therapy.

There is a ton to learn about email marketing, but just keep it simple when you're starting.

## 5) Get reviews

You need to get reviews from all of your patients. It is probably the best way your patients can help you grow your practice, aside from sending you another patient.

There are several different platforms to use for reviews, but I ask my patients to write a Google Review.

Patients are more than willing to write reviews, but you'll usually have to ask them to do it. Great reviews online will definitely help attract more patients when they are researching your practice.

# PART IV: COMMON CASH PRACTICE MISTAKES

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## Time Management

When I first started planning Physio2Geaux, one of the hardest things for me to do was to stay focused.

I was able to focus on the business. However, I wanted to skip the all the small back-end work, and

jump right to the fun stuff.

For example, it's easy to spend a couple hours researching the best portable treatment table, picking out equipment on Amazon, and designing a logo, when, initially, you should focus on marketing strategy, establishing a legal business, and learning more about business practices.

The best way to manage your time is to be organized. Know what needs to get done and move in an organized fashion through your list.

Usually PTs are employed when they decide they want their own practice. I've worked full-time in a busy outpatient practice, and know it can be very exhausting. However, if you can dedicate just 30 minutes to 1 hour a night working on your business, you will get so much done.

## The Urge To Spend A Lot Of Money

There are so many awesome business and therapy programs and products out there. I totally geek out over this stuff. But you really don't need many of these products to get started.

When you start your business you will be contacted by sales reps for all sorts of products, be they scheduling software, EMR, marketing opportunities, or treatment supplies.

Each of these reps will likely make you feel as though their product is what will take your business to the next level. But trust me, they rarely are.

If you are going to spend a lot of money on



something, spend it on business coaching. This has easily been my greatest expense, but it has been worth every penny. Getting guidance from someone who has done it is the best thing you can do. You'll avoid many mistakes, you'll get things done faster, and you'll get more patients.

## Not Charging Enough

I've heard from several other therapists who all start by charging \$75 - \$80/session. This sounds great when you're first starting. You'll feel like you just had a huge raise. But you need to factor in several things when setting your rate:

1) What do others charge in your area?

Look at what other therapists, personal trainers, and massage therapists are charging. Then value your service versus what they provide. You should not be less expensive than a personal training session or a massage therapy session.

2) What is your value?

Remember, that you are Doctor of Physical Therapy. You are a musculoskeletal expert, and you are damn good at what you do. You have real answers and solutions to people's pain. Don't be shy about being good.

Another factor in your value is the patient experience you provide. You're giving them personal care, convenient scheduling, less time off work, and return them to their activities faster. There is definitely a dollar sign attached to this.

3) What else does your company need?

The hourly rate that you charge should not only cover what YOU want to make per hour, but it should also cover what your COMPANY needs.

This could be marketing materials, new treatment supplies, paying for continuing education, or paying for business coaching. You need to think about these things when you set your price.

4) Do you want to make more money? Charge more!

Aaron LeBauer and Paul Gogh sent an email to their mailing list the other week and it really got my attention.

The subject was "Want to make an extra \$49,000 a year . . . Charge more!"

Let's say you charge \$80/ hour, and see 10 clients a week. That's \$800 a week, \$3,200 a month. Let's say you do that 10 months out of the year, for a total of \$32,000.

Now, if you charged \$120/hour, see 10 clients a week. That's \$1,200 a week, \$4,800 a month. Do that 10 months a year, and you'll make \$48,000.

That is a huge difference in cash!

Here's the thing: if someone wants to work with you and is willing to go out of network to do so, a \$40 difference per session is probably not going to stop them.

