

Physiotherapy consulting by video

Helping your patients get the most out of their video consultations*

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*Co-designed with clinicians and people with lived experience

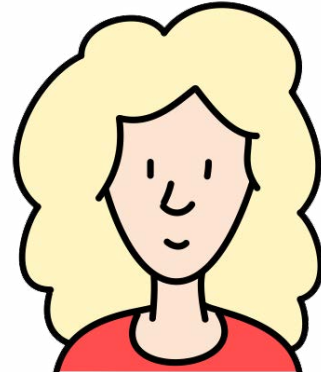
Introduction

Video consulting can be a great way to support your patients without them having to travel, and to save them time, for example, they don't have to take time off work or arrange childcare.


There are five key areas to think about when discussing with patients whether to consult over video:

1. Reason for the consultation
2. Your patient's knowledge and skills
3. Your patient's environment
4. If you can build rapport and trust over video
5. Your own work set up

This resource is designed to help you reflect on when to use video consulting and to support physical assessment and exercises with patients via video.

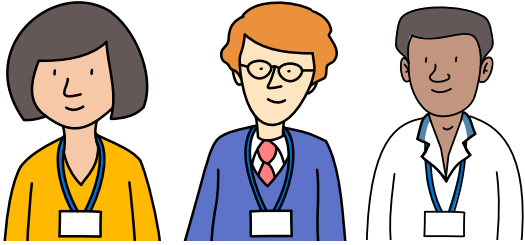


I was pleased that my physio could see what I could do – I found it reassuring.



It's helpful to be able to see your patient's home environment and how they move around at home.

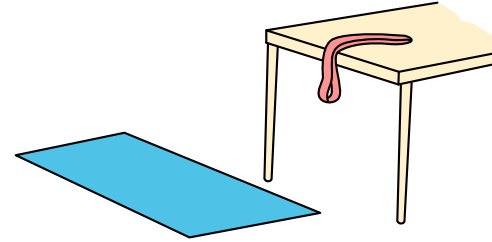
Why choose video consultation?



You can provide high quality care and help patients to access specialists more easily



The appointment can be at a place that is convenient for your patient, saving them time, money and reducing the stress of travelling



You can observe patients using their own equipment and in their own space, when performing exercises and physical assessments



Patients may feel reassured if they can see you or if they haven't seen you for some time

When are video consultations appropriate?

✓ May be appropriate

When you are enabling self-management or providing education and advice

If your patient has the right support, space, technology and equipment

For assessments deemed appropriate for video

When patients prefer video, e.g. due to travel distance, costs, time off work, childcare, etc

✗ May be inappropriate

If you are unable to monitor your patient's condition by video

For assessments requiring specific tests deemed inappropriate for video

If patients don't have access to the required technology, private space, a sufficient data plan or if they lack digital literacy (digital poverty)

Where patients prefer to be seen in-person, e.g. due to social isolation, perceived quality of care

If patients lack capacity to communicate over video

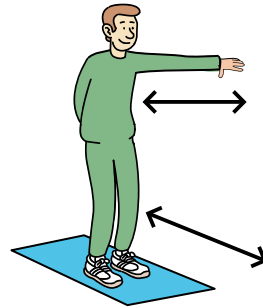
The decision to have a video consultation should always be shared with the patient



Doing the risk assessment before offering video



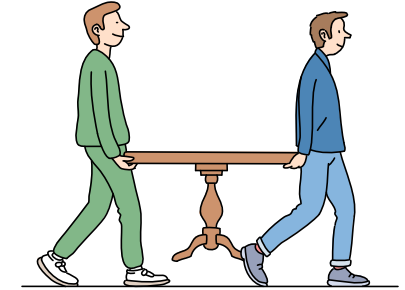
Make sure your patient can carry out exercises or movements alone safely



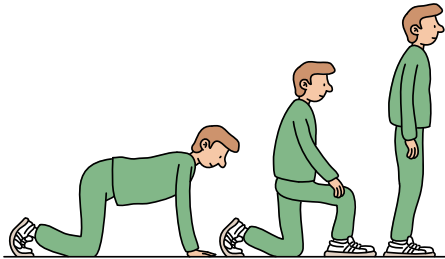
Let your patient know how much space they will need for the consultation



Make sure your patient is confident using technology and moving their device around if needed



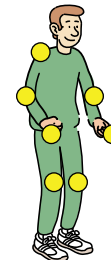
If needed, check that your patient can move furniture safely, or has help



Check that your patient can get back up from the floor during exercises, if needed



Ensure someone is on hand to help your patient use the technology or perform exercises, if needed

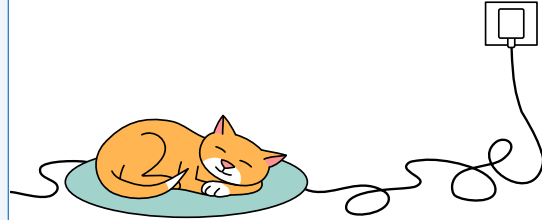


Let your patient know which body parts you'll need to see. Check they are comfortable doing this at home

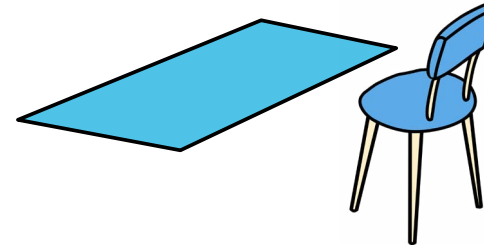
Helping your patient prepare beforehand



Check that your patient has a safe, private and quiet space for the consultation



Ask your patient to remove any trip hazards such as loose cables, rugs or pets



Inform them what equipment they will need, e.g. a chair or yoga mat



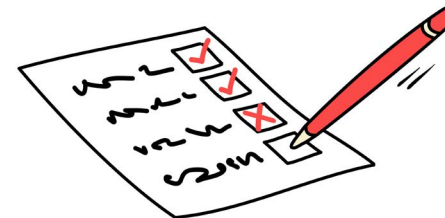
Advise them to test their technology to make sure it's working properly



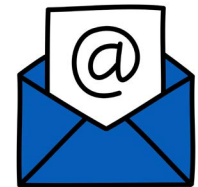
Advise them to wear loose and comfortable clothing so they can move around easily



Advise them to have some water or a drink ready in case they need it

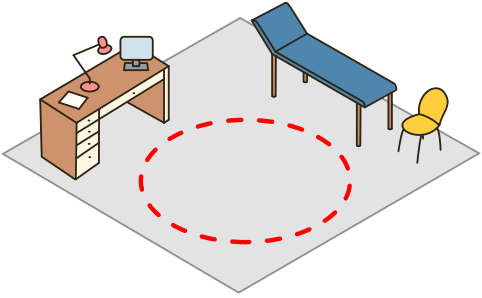


Suggest they have a pen and paper ready to make notes



Send a reminder with a link and information about the consultation by letter, email or text

Preparing for the consultation



Use a private, well-lit space with room to demonstrate exercises if needed



Avoid noise in the background if you can – use a headset if available



Blur your background or add an NHS backdrop

Starting your consultation



Building rapport can be difficult over video. It can help to take time at the start for a personal update



Look at the screen – eye contact is important for showing attention. Patients notice when you look away

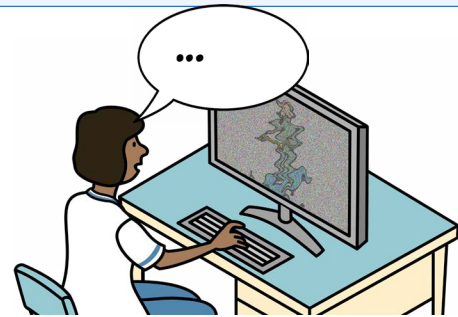


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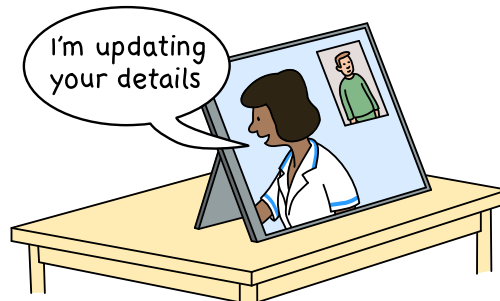
Check your patient's phone number in case you get cut off. Let them know the consultation is confidential



Ask what they'd like to discuss and let them know what they'll need to do during the session



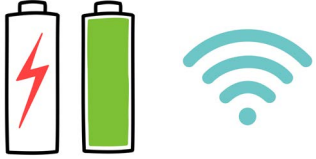
Ask what was the last thing they heard if the video or audio is interrupted



Let your patient know if you need to turn away from your screen, e.g. to write notes



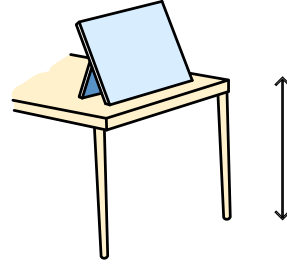
Checking your patient's set up



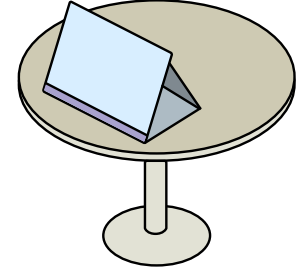
Ask your patient or their helper to check their device is fully charged or plugged in and they have a good internet connection



Provide a number for your patient to phone if they have technical issues. Let them know you'll ring them if you get disconnected

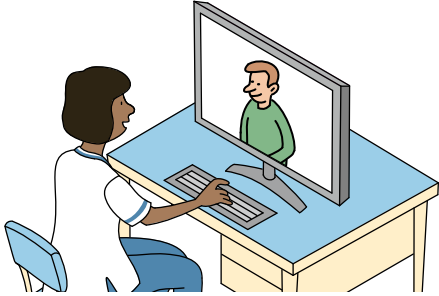


Make sure your patient's device is at the right height so they are comfortable during the consultation



If they are using a phone or tablet ask them to prop it up rather than hold it if possible

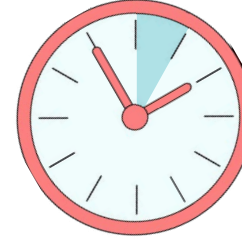
Examination and exercises



Confirm that your patient feels able and confident to follow your advice at home



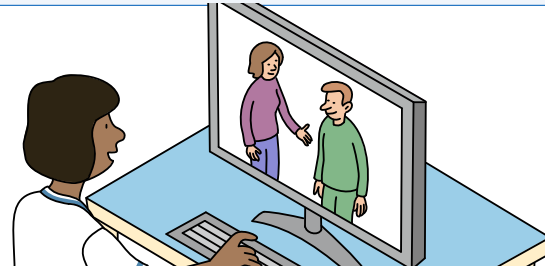
Confirm that they have appropriate support during exercises, e.g. a wall or low table



Advise them that there will be breaks and to let you know at any time if they need one



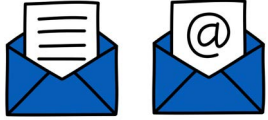
Advise your patient how to move (where to position themselves) or adjust their camera so you can see them



If they have help from a carer, explain when to move the camera or provide support during exercises



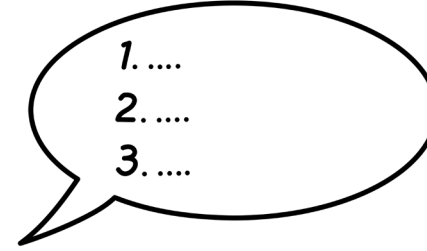
Ending your video consultation



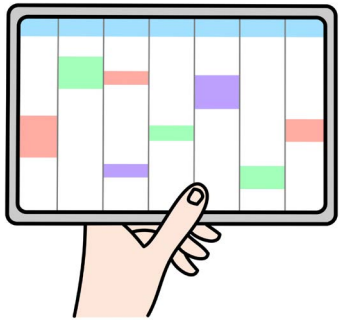
Ensure your patient has the skills, knowledge and confidence to support themselves at home. Agree to share their personalised care plan by post or email



If your patient needs another consultation, agree whether it will be by video, phone or in person



Summarise the main points and ask your patient if they have questions or concerns



Confirm the date for your next consultation if needed

Check that your patient was happy with the session and identify what additional support they may need



This resource has been co-designed with NHS clinicians and people who have had physiotherapy consultations by video. It was informed by a review of existing guidance and research evidence. It is available to anyone considering using video consulting as part of an NHS consultation. It is focused on physiotherapy but is relevant to other clinical settings.

The guidance has been developed as a collaboration between the University of Oxford, University College London Hospitals, the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital and Design Science, with support from NHS England and NHS Improvement. It was funded through the National Institute for Health and Care Research through its Policy Research Programme.

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Development of these resources was led by Dr Lucas M Seuren and Dr Sara Shaw at the University of Oxford.