



How to Engage Older Adults in Digital Care

By MedBridge



Overview

Did you know that older adults spend half of their leisure time online?¹ Data shows that older adults are increasingly online and using smart devices in their daily lives, yet many are being excluded from digital care due to a misconception that they won't be able to access, relate to, or benefit from it.

In this guide we'll cover:

- Why technology use is rising significantly in older adults.
- What's preventing your older patients from successfully accessing digital healthcare tools despite their growing comfort with technology.
- Why it's so important to engage older adults in online care and how to do so successfully

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Technology Use Is Rising Significantly in Older Adults

Due to a combination of factors—from the COVID-19 pandemic to the demographic trend of global population aging—adults over 50 are using technology at higher rates than ever before. In fact:

- Smartphone ownership has increased dramatically in recent years in adults 50 to 65 to 96 percent and for adults 65+ to 75 percent.²
- Three in four adults over 50 say they rely on technology to stay connected, and one in three adults says they're motivated to learn technology to maintain their independence.
- 92 percent of adults over 50 use text to stay connected with others, 90 percent use email, 78 percent use social media, and 70 percent use video chat.³
- 36 percent of caregivers use technology to check in on their loved one with an app, video, wearable device, or other remote monitoring.⁴



The Silver Tsunami

The general population in the U.S. is not only getting older but also living longer, with Medicare spending expected to more than double over the next decade due to increased enrollment and health care costs. As a result, digital care will become even more important as a tool for managing this older patient population and ensuring proper access to care.⁵

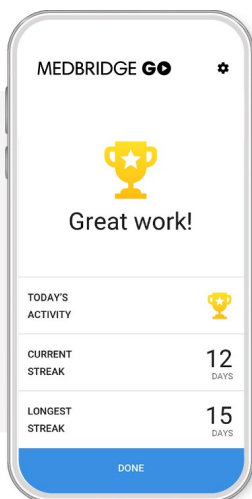


More Engagement—But Not Always a Good User Experience

Even though older adults are using technology more frequently, they still experience frustration and even obstacles to access when they encounter technology that isn't made with them in mind.

According to a research study by Nielsen Norman Group, “Digital products still discriminate against seniors. Content written for and by older people is difficult to find—and when this content is available, it often treats seniors as a niche interest group rather than a diverse and growing demographic.”

To better engage this population, the study concludes, organizations can **“embrace both accessible design and an inclusive content strategy.”**⁶



Many new technologies and accompanying help content are designed by those on the younger end of the spectrum. Successfully engaging older adults in new technologies requires stepping into their shoes with design elements that accommodate an aging population such as **clear language, large fonts, and images illustrating steps.**



Key Benefits of Digital Care for Older Adults

Making it as easy as possible for older patients to access health technologies is worth the effort, as research shows many benefits for this population:

- Technology use in older adults is associated with **better self-rated health, higher subjective well-being, lower depression, reduced loneliness, and improved social connections.** ^{7,8,9}
- Access to digital care tools in particular can also result in benefits such as:
 - **Improved outcomes** due to **easier access to care**, especially for patients who aren't as mobile.
 - **Higher patient satisfaction** due to a more convenient care experience and greater autonomy.⁹



"Regular telehealth visits can profoundly help fight ageism as a social determinant of health by making care easier to access and more patient-centered and comprehensive than a short in-person visit. Together, providers and patients can spend time assessing medications, mobility, mental awareness, and so much more."

— "Older Adults Embrace Digital Health & Telehealth," *Today's Geriatric Medicine*, January/February 2022

Best Practices for Engaging Older Adults in Digital Care

To help your older patients engage with—and stay engaged with—digital technology, it's important to ensure that your digital care tools and accompanying help materials are as accessible as possible for them. Here are some best practices for doing so:

- Give every patient who you think would benefit from digital care the option to engage online.
- Explain to your patients which digital tools are available to them and what their benefits are, both in person and with educational materials.
- Provide instructional materials that are concise, clear, and accessible.
- Use easy-to-understand language without technical jargon. If you direct users to access additional content via QR codes or app stores, be sure to also include clear explanations for how to do so.
- Incorporate images to help explain and illustrate steps.
- Increase font size.

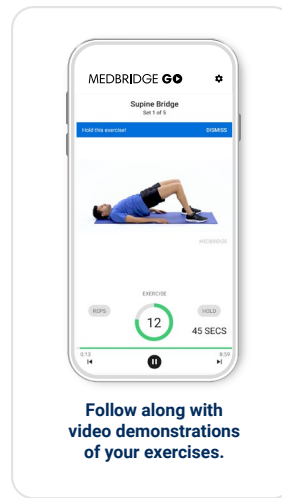
A Look Inside: How MedBridge Designs Educational Resources for Older Adults

MedBridge Patient Education is designed to clearly explain what patients need to know using easy-to-understand language and animations. To make it even easier for older adults to understand care plans and access digital care, our instructional materials for this population incorporate the usability principles outlined above. Here are some examples:

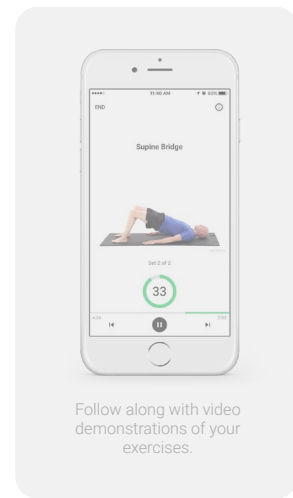
Take a look on the next page...

A Look Inside: Continued

Larger, bolder fonts



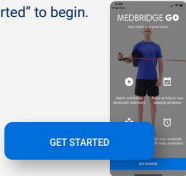


Follow along with video demonstrations of your exercises.



Follow along with video demonstrations of your exercises.

Clear images to help explain and illustrate steps

- 1 Open your camera, point it at the code to the right, and tap the website link that appears on the screen. Tap on the App Store or Google Play icon to download MedBridge GO. 
- 2 Once it's downloaded, open the MedBridge GO app by tapping the icon. 
- 3 Tap "Get Started" to begin. 

- 1 Download MedBridge GO from the Apple App Store or Google Play Store. Scan the QR code to the right with your smartphone to get started.
- 2 Once it's downloaded, open the MedBridge GO app by tapping the icon.
- 3 Tap "Get Started" to begin.
- 4 Enter in the access code provided by your care team.
- 5 Follow the prompts to verify your identity.
 - a. Enter your first and last name as your care team has it in their system. For example, you may need to enter "Matthew" instead of "Matt" depending on how your care team has captured your information.
 - b. Enter your email address.
 - c. Enter your date of birth.
 - d. You can optionally enter your cell phone number if you would like to receive updates about your program via text message.

Instructional materials that are concise, clear, and accessible

Download examples:
[Account Setup Guide](#)
[QR Code Flyer](#)
[Easy-Print Instructions](#)

Download the mobile app designed to help you recover faster.

STEP 1

Download MedBridge GO free from the App Store or Google Play.

STEP 2

Enter the access code provided by your clinician and tap GO!

Download the mobile app designed to help you recover faster.

1 Download MedBridge GO free from the App Store or Google Play



2 Enter the access code provided by your clinician and tap GO!





How MedBridge Can Help

MedBridge Digital Patient Engagement Solution

Better meet the needs of your patients of any age with the comprehensive MedBridge Digital Patient Engagement Solution for **Hospitals & Health Systems** and **Private Practices**. Our best-in-class virtual patient engagement tools and evidence-based clinical and patient education are designed to improve communication and access to care, enhance patient self-efficacy, and increase patient activation and adherence.

MedBridge Remote Therapeutic Monitoring Solution

The MedBridge RTM Solution helps keep patients engaged in their care with robust engagement and patient monitoring tools combined with powerful, intuitive analytics and reporting. Designed to allow clinicians to get reimbursed for remote monitoring of Medicare patients, our RTM Solution is an effective, easy-to-use tool for **improving engagement and outcomes in older adults while increasing patient retention and revenue.**

Organizations partnering with MedBridge have experienced:

- ✓ 47% reduced costs per episode of care
- ✓ 1,100% increased patient engagement
- ✓ Faster access to care by 2.5 days for first appointments
- ✓ 12% increased FOTO effectiveness
- ✓ World-class NPS® ratings
- ✓ 15% fewer no-shows and cancellations
- ✓ Higher patient satisfaction, adherence, and loyalty
- ✓ More referrals

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ABOUT MEDBRIDGE

Founded in 2011, MedBridge is an innovator at the intersection of healthcare technology, education, and patient engagement. We have helped more than 2,500 healthcare organizations grow their business, elevate their workforce, and deliver exceptional patient experiences. For more information, visit medbridgeeducation.com.

See how MedBridge can help your organization.

[Contact us to request a demo.](#)