

## Leveraging Smartphone Technology in your Retina Practice



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Your phone is more and more becoming an integral part of your life and, by extension, your retina practice. We are using smartphones to manage our personal lives, improve our productivity and communicate like never before. In our practice, we are using smartphones with our image management software, our electronic health records, and even to capture images of the anterior segment and fundus. Here is an easy list of 10 categories of apps to help you implement and use this technology more effectively in your personal life and in your practice.

1. **Cloud Storage:** Apps like [Google Drive](#), [OneDrive](#), [Dropbox](#), [Box](#), and [SugarSync](#) are all commercially available cloud storage programs with a mobile interface. I mainly use Google Drive and Dropbox. Google Drive allows for collaborative document editing, and its word processing and spreadsheet editing allow work to be done on the computer or from your mobile device on the go.

These are really nice features to use when you have a shared document that you and a colleague or group of colleagues are working on and you have that brilliant addition that you want to insert into the document when you aren't by your computer. Mobile signing and scanning are also important features. You can scan your next important document to the cloud, buy a house or sign your pending employment contract with programs like [DocuSign](#) and [Dotloop](#).

2. **Mobile Banking and Mobile Payment:** Deposit checks using your phone, view account balances and transactions, and transfer funds remotely. You rarely need to visit the bank anymore. [Apple Pay](#), [Google Wallet](#), and [Samsung Pay](#) are a few of the mobile apps becoming popular to pay at retailers. Will we need plastic at all in 5 years? There are also many free apps designed to allow you to pay online or transfer and receive funds from other people, for example [Venmo](#).
3. **Mobile Shopping:** [Alibaba](#), [Amazon Prime](#), [eBay](#), and a host of other mobile shopping platforms offer apps that save you time and allow good price comparison when you are in a store and unsure if the price tag is reasonable. Just scan the barcode with the Amazon app and see what you might pay for it online. [Amazon Prime Pantry](#) makes it simple to buy and receive even common household items.
4. **Travel:** [Triplt](#), [Delta](#) and [Southwest](#), [Google Maps](#), [Uber](#), and [VRBO](#) (Vacation Rentals by Owner) are just a few of the travel-related apps available to help you plan your destination, your flight, your ground travel, and hotel or VRBO rental. There is an app for every part of your trip-planning process. Expensify makes it easy to capture and record business travel expenses. [MileIQ](#) has a simple interface

to record and store your business travel.

5. **Health and Sport Apps:** Mobile health apps are extremely popular. [Apple Health](#), [Strava](#), [MapMyRun](#), as well as integrated wearable health devices like [Fitbit](#), Samsung, and [Garmin Smartwatch](#) all have large followings. Are you a golfer, hunter or cyclist? Your outdoor hobby likely has a number of specific apps to enhance the sporting experience you already love.
6. **Reference Apps, Notes, and Reminders.** [Eye Handbook](#), Wills Eye Manual, Epocrates, and [Drugs.com](#) can be your second brain when it comes to prescribing and working outside the office. These are all well-designed apps with robust data interfaces.

Digital notetaking apps and reminders are also a godsend. Input and send the digital notes of your next important meeting to the cloud and then take 1 second to tell your phone to remind you of something important to do later when you have more time.

7. **Artificial Intelligence and Personal Efficiency:** [Siri](#), [Amazon Echo](#), and [Google Home](#) are the new trend of computers integrating our lives with our phones and apps like never before. Call someone, play music, read the news, set reminders and alarms all from your armchair or while brushing your teeth.
8. **Social Media and News:** [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), [Vine](#), and [Snapchat](#) all have apps. Most everyone uses some form of social media to stay abreast of news and other developments. Integrate them all with [Hootsuite](#) to post to all platforms simultaneously and keep your practice Facebook account trending.
9. **Image Management, EHR/EPM and Patient Education:** Almost every electronic health record has an interface to allow viewability on a mobile platform. You can access patient records from anywhere you can get access to a Wi-Fi signal. [Axis](#), an image management solution made by Sonomed/Escalon, has tablet and web interfaces that make viewing of pre-procedure OCTs, FAs, and B scans easy.

In addition, to be compliant with incentive programs, most EHRs offer digital solutions for patients to access their own health records. There are also patient-facing interfaces that allow patients to populate EHR data before an office visit, which can save time in the lane. [Phreesia](#) and many others are designed to do just this. [Healthvault](#) and [Yosicare](#) are apps to keep your own personal medical information on the cloud and easily accessible. There are hundreds of patient education apps. Choose the one that fits your patients' needs and benefits them and you.

10. **Smartphone Imaging:** There is a huge trend to leverage the imaging and computing power we carry in the palm of our hands to take pictures of the eye. Many companies worldwide are targeting this area. Using available attachments, we can now take quality pictures of the fundus and the anterior segment with relative ease. I suspect, in the not-too-distant future, we will see a flood of these devices become readily available in the marketplace.

If you aren't leveraging the power of mobile computing to increase efficiency and productivity in your personal life and practice, you are behind the times. Often we find there are multiple solutions that do the same thing. Choose one that suits you and take advantage of the features that help you do what you do best.