

## What's in a Soap Note- Part 5 – Plan

The plan section of your daily soap consists of quite a few components (or it should contain a number of important aspects). Years ago a plan was likely to just read “return as needed” with no more details. Now that just doesn't meet documentation standards.

While your plan doesn't have to be complicated, it does need to have a few parts to it:

1. How often are we seeing them and what are we doing?
2. Are we doing any home therapies or home instructions?
3. What are the goals for improvement (this one is a big one today).

Ensure you cover 1 & 3 for your plan. Below is good example of how to quickly cover all three.

### **Plan:**

- Spinal manipulation to lumbar spine 2x times per week for 3-6 weeks.
- Hot packs to lumbar region as needed to reduce swelling and improve blood circulation.

### Home Therapies

To continue the use of cold and heat and the proper application of alternating cold/heat as needed for lumbar pain.

### Short Term Goals

Improving low back pain to improve ability to do housework and go shopping 50% within 10 weeks.

Your assessment is where you cover your true functional improvements; however your plan should contain the goals that match the things you are also documenting in your assessment.

Make sure to match up plan items to the given condition when you are working with more than one condition. For example, if you are doing electrical stimulation for the low back, make sure you indicate that in your plan. If you just have one primary condition, this is not critical since a reviewer can see that you just have neck pain or LBP or a single condition.

Remember: plan your work and work your plan. Without a good plan your entire span of patient visits could be in jeopardy if you were to have them reviewed/audited.

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This concludes our soap note series.

In our next newsletter we will send a copy of the entire lesson series for you to print and keep on hand for periodically review.

Next I will tackle re-exams, follow ups, and new conditions.

Please stay tuned!

Thank you,

Alex Niswander

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Sources: <http://www.cms.gov/> <http://www.acatoday.org/>

Author, Alex Niswander, is a soap notes expert with over 10 years focusing on clinical charting and proper noting procedures. He has reviewed charts in hundreds of clinics throughout the country and continually reviews new requirements by Medicare and major insurance carriers.

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515-967-3002

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