Twitter is a great tool for concisely communicating news as it happens and building relationships with your followers and other users. If you are interested in having a Twitter presence, you want those users who are interested in your tweet topics to be able to find you. With a little effort, you can optimize your tweets for search.

1. **Use hashtags.** These terms, preceded by a pound sign, are how Twitter searchers find content they want; connect your tweets to the university and subject matter using helpful hashtags:
   - #northwestern: the university hashtag, but still specific enough to be meaningful
   - #NUFeinbergMed: the medical school’s twitter handle is @NUFeinbergMed
   - #[event]: Connect your participation to university events, for example #NUMatchDay or #FeinbergGrad. Check with the Office of Communications to see if an official hashtag is planned first.
   - #[disease]: this will probably bring keywords into play; call attention to new research being done in your department by tagging your tweet with the impacted disease or condition
   - #[awareness]: awareness days or events for various conditions or diseases are an opportunity to inform the public about the research done at Feinberg; search Twitter for hashtags that tie to the work done within your department

2. **Do keyword research.** Build your hashtags in a smart way by researching how people are searching for information like yours. [Google Keyword Tool](https://adwords.google.comryptonite/keywor...dwhl0984632) is a great resource for generating a list of words and phrases that are used in search when looking for content like yours.

   Look for high-volume keywords with low or medium competition, and use the keyword suggestions as hashtags or in your tweet.

3. **Link your tweets to broader stories.** A tweet can be a full thought, but can also be an introduction to more. Tie your tweets to stories, research, and other content featured on the Feinberg site, your lab site, or a blog. Use a URL shortener like [bitly](https://bitly.com) to include the link. Creating these inbound links to your content builds your web site’s legitimacy and improves its placement in search results.

4. **Maximize your bio.** Use keywords and hashtags to describe what your Twitter feed is about. Give users a point of reference as to what they might find. Google uses your bio content as the description for search results, so make the most of it. Don’t shorten your URL in your bio. Using your real URL will boost the trust of your profile viewers and give them a good reason to visit your site.

5. **Tweet smart.** Keep your tweets as regular and on-topic as possible so you remain relevant to your audience. It’s okay to go off-topic occasionally, but keeping your tweets keyword-rich encourages Google to rank your Twitter page higher than others. Use online tools to measure how effective your tweets are. [Klout](https://klout.com) and [Retweet Rank](https://www.retweetrank.com) offer free analytics to help you get the most from your tweets.

6. **Include relevant media.** Images and videos are popular on Twitter (and other social media sites) and consistently get higher clicks than text-only content. When uploading photos to Twitter, it’s advisable to give the image files keyword-based name separated by dashes (Feinberg-Graduation-2013.jpg). You can still use a link shortener like [bitly](https://bitly.com) when uploading but these keywords will make the media more valuable. Video resources such as [Vine](https://vine.co) and [Instagram](https://instagram.com) are available to upload short, six- or 15-second, videos. 92% of mobile users share video content. You can influence your followers by using these short videos as a stepping stone to your website.

Make your Twitter presence known through use of thoughtfully developed keywords. For assistance on assessing your need and developing your social media presence, contact Nicole Mladic at 312-503-2314.