

What a TMS course involves

Assessment, visit schedules, side-effect questions and follow-up planning.

Updated October 29, 2026

A TMS course starts with clinical assessment. The team needs to check your history, current care and device-related risks. TMS is not an emergency service. Ask the clinician how to get help if your needs change before or during the course.

Assessment and mapping

NICE describes a coil held against the scalp to induce electrical currents in the cerebral cortex. It says the procedure can take place as outpatient care without anaesthesia. The clinic chooses settings and the target. Ask how it checks the motor threshold and whether mapping is included in the quote.

Tell the clinical team privately about implants and your seizure history. Ask about medicines and hearing protection. Do not decide from a general checklist that an implant is safe near a TMS device.

Visits and time

NIMH's March 2024 overview describes typical sessions of 3–40 minutes and daily visits on 5 days per week for 4–6 weeks. That schedule gives a planning span of 20–30 weekday visits by arithmetic. It is not a prescription or a promise of the number your insurer will fund. Mapping, waiting, taper visits and follow-up can add time.

NICE's December 2015 overview describes sessions of about 30 minutes for 2–6 weeks. The difference shows why you need the clinic's actual protocol. Accelerated schedules require separate discussion.

Risks and follow-up

NIMH lists scalp discomfort, headache and other local discomfort, and describes seizures as a rare serious risk. NICE's safety section also records seizure reports. Ask how the team screens risk, monitors you and responds to an adverse effect. Do not assume a shorter visit has fewer risks.

Before the last visit, ask who reviews the course, what the follow-up plan is and how further care would be funded.

Sources

- NIMH, *Brain Stimulation Therapies*, reviewed March 2024. <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/brain-stimulation-therapies/brain-stimulation-therapies>. Fetched 2026-10-29.
- NICE, *Repetitive transcranial magnetic stimulation for depression*, published 16 December

2015 as IPG542; now HTG396. [Procedure](#) and [safety](#). Fetched 2026-10-29.

Confirm suitability, protocol and cost with a qualified clinician.

Frequently asked questions

Can this guide decide whether TMS is suitable for me?

No. Confirm suitability, protocol and cost with a qualified clinician.