On-page SEO checklist

Use it on each important page: your homepage, service and product pages, and your best articles. Start with the search result, then the content, then the technical details.

Start here: the 7 steps that matter most

If you only have an hour or two, do these first. The full list, with how to check each one, follows.

1. Write a unique, descriptive title
   The title says what the page offers, leads with the main topic, ends with the brand, and fits in a result without being cut (roughly 50 to 60 characters).
2. Make sure the page can be indexed and has one canonical address
   No noindex; a canonical tag pointing to this page's own final address.
3. Know the one main question the page answers
   You can name the page's main search in one phrase, and no other page of yours targets it.
4. Answer that question near the top
   The first paragraph answers the main question plainly.
5. Cover what the reader needs to decide
   For a service: what, who for, cost, time, area, process, next step. For an article: the full answer with examples.
6. Link to the page from related pages on your site
   At least 3 relevant pages link to it with descriptive text, and it's reachable from the menu or a hub page.
7. Make sure the page works on phones
   Text readable without zooming, buttons easy to tap, no sideways scrolling, same content as desktop.

How to use this checklist

Every step has a priority (**Start here**, **Important**, **When you have time**), who usually does it (**You** or a **developer**) and a rough time. **Done when** says what finished looks like, **How to check** tells you how to confirm it yourself, and **Common mistake** is the slip we see most. Tick the box when a step passes its check.

Steps marked with a free tool can be checked in seconds at rrwebservices.com/tools/. Sources are numbered at the end; every fact was checked against them on November 9, 2026.

Your score: _____ of 21 steps done Date: _____

How the page looks in search

- [ ] **1. Write a unique, descriptive title**

  Start here · You · 10 min

  Google most often uses the title element for the title link, and recommends unique, descriptive, concise titles without keyword stuffing.

  Done when: The title says what the page offers, leads with the main topic, ends with the brand, and fits in a result without being cut (roughly 50 to 60 characters).

  How to check: The SEO Health Dashboard shows length and a preview.

  Common mistake: Titles that repeat the same keyword three times, or that are the same on many pages.

  Check it free with the SEO Health Dashboard · Source 2

- [ ] **2. Write a description that sums up the page**

  Important · You · 10 min

  Google may show it as the snippet. It doesn't affect ranking, but it affects clicks.

  Done when: A unique description of one or two sentences saying what the reader gets.

  How to check: The SEO Health Dashboard shows a Google preview.

  Common mistake: A list of keywords instead of a sentence.

  Check it free with the SEO Health Dashboard · Source 3

- [ ] **3. Use a short address that describes the page**

  When you have time · You · 5 min

  Readable words in the address help people understand where a link goes.

  Done when: Lowercase words separated by hyphens, no dates or IDs unless needed.

  How to check: Read the address out loud.

  Common mistake: Changing addresses of pages that already rank, without redirects.

  Source 1

- [ ] **4. Make sure the page can be indexed and has one canonical address**

  Start here · Developer · 5 min

  Noindex keeps it out; duplicates split signals.

  Done when: No noindex; a canonical tag pointing to this page's own final address.

  How to check: The SEO Health Dashboard checks both.

  Common mistake: A canonical pointing to a different page by mistake.

  Check it free with the SEO Health Dashboard

The content

- [ ] **5. Know the one main question the page answers**

  Start here · You · 10 min

  A page that tries to rank for everything ranks for nothing.

  Done when: You can name the page's main search in one phrase, and no other page of yours targets it.

  How to check: The Content Cannibalization Checker finds pages that compete.

  Common mistake: Three blog posts on the same topic.

  Check it free with the Content Cannibalization Checker

- [ ] **6. Answer that question near the top**

  Start here · You · 15 min

  Readers and AI tools look for the answer first, then the detail.

  Done when: The first paragraph answers the main question plainly.

  How to check: Read just the first 3 sentences. Is the question answered?

  Common mistake: A long introduction before the point.

  Check it free with the AEO Analyzer

7. Cover what the reader needs to decide

Start here · You · 1–2 hours

Google asks for people-first content that leaves readers feeling they've learned enough.

Done when: For a service: what, who for, cost, time, area, process, next step. For an article: the full answer with examples.

How to check: Compare with the questions customers ask you and the pages that rank now.
Common mistake: Writing to a word count instead of to the questions.
Check it free with the AEO Analyzer Source 4

8. Use one H1 and clear subheadings

Important · You + developer · 15 min

Headings show the structure to readers and search engines.

Done when: One H1 matching the topic; H2s for each part; no skipped levels.

How to check: The SEO Health Dashboard shows the outline.
Common mistake: Two H1s from the theme's logo and page title.
Check it free with the SEO Health Dashboard

9. Show who is behind the content

Important · You · 15 min

Google's helpful content guide asks whether it's clear who created the content and why they're qualified.

Done when: An author or business name, with a bio or About link and contact details.

How to check: Ask: would a stranger know who wrote this and why to trust them?
Common mistake: Anonymous pages on topics where expertise matters (health, money, law).
Source 4

10. Use lists, tables and short paragraphs

Important · You · 20 min

They make pages easier to scan, and easier to quote.

Done when: Steps are numbered, options are in a table, paragraphs are 2 to 4 sentences.

How to check: The SEO Health Dashboard flags long paragraphs and missing lists.
Common mistake: Tables as images.
Check it free with the SEO Health Dashboard

11. Keep it accurate and dated where it matters

Important · You · 30 min

Outdated prices, laws or numbers cost trust.

Done when: Facts checked; sources linked; pages with time-sensitive facts show an updated date.

How to check: Click every outbound link and check every number.
Common mistake: Updating the date without updating the content.
Check it free with the Content Refresh Planner Source 4

Links

12. Link to the page from related pages on your site

Start here · You · 20 min

Internal links help Google find pages and understand what they're about.

Done when: At least 3 relevant pages link to it with descriptive text, and it's reachable from the menu or a hub page.

How to check: Search your site for its topic and add links from the best matches.
Common mistake: Important pages linked only from the sitemap.
Source 7

13. Write link text that says where the link goes

Important · You · 10 min

Google's link best practices ask for descriptive, concise anchor text.

Done when: No "click here" or "read more" as the whole link text.

How to check: The SEO Health Dashboard lists generic link text.
Common mistake: Over-optimized anchors repeating the same keyword everywhere.
Check it free with the SEO Health Dashboard Source 7

14. Use real, crawlable links

Important · Developer · 10 min

Google only follows <a> elements with an href.

Done when: Links are <a href> to real addresses.

How to check: Right-click links: "Open in new tab" should work.
Common mistake: Clickable cards built with JavaScript only.
Check it free with the Render Analyzer Source 7

15. Link out to good sources where they help

When you have time · You · 10 min

Citing sources supports your claims.

Done when: Facts and figures link to their original source, once.

How to check: Check each outbound link still works.
Common mistake: Linking the same source on every mention.

Images and media

16. Write alt text for meaningful images

Important · You · 10 min

Google uses alt text with computer vision and the page to understand images; it also serves screen reader users.

Done when: Descriptive alt text on content images; alt="" on decorative ones.

How to check: The Accessibility Checker lists missing alt text.
Common mistake: Alt text that's just keywords.
Check it free with the Accessibility Checker Source 6

17. Compress images and use modern formats

Important · Developer · 20 min

Large images are a common cause of slow pages.

Done when: Images sized to how they're shown, in WebP or AVIF where possible, with width and height set.

How to check: The HTML & CSS Analyzer flags oversized images.
Common mistake: A 4000-pixel photo shown at 400 pixels.
Check it free with the HTML & CSS Analyzer + Minifier Source 6

18. Don't lazy-load the main image at the top

Important · Developer · 10 min

The largest image at the top is often what Largest Contentful Paint measures; lazy-loading it delays it.

Done when: The main above-the-fold image loads immediately; images further down lazy-load.

How to check: The SEO Health Dashboard's speed section names the LCP element.
Common mistake: loading="lazy" on every image by default.
Check it free with the SEO Health Dashboard Source 8

Structured data and speed

19. Add the structured data that fits the page

Important · You + developer · 30 min

It tells search engines and AI tools what the page is. Google's guidelines require it to match the visible content.

Done when: The right type (Service, Product, Article, BreadcrumbList, FAQPage) with no errors, matching what's on the page.

How to check: The Schema Generator's check, or Google's Rich Results Test.

Common mistake: Marking up reviews, prices or FAQs that aren't visible on the page.

Check it free with the Schema Generator Source 5

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20. Meet Core Web Vitals on mobile

Important · Developer · 1–3 hours

"Good" means Largest Contentful Paint up to 2.5 seconds, Interaction to Next Paint up to 200 milliseconds and Cumulative Layout Shift up to 0.1, at the 75th percentile.

Done when: The page meets all three in field data, or in a mobile lab test when there's no field data yet.

How to check: PageSpeed Insights; the SEO Health Dashboard shows Core Web Vitals when connected.

Common mistake: Chasing a perfect lab score while real users still wait.

Check it free with the SEO Health Dashboard Source 8

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21. Make sure the page works on phones

Start here · Developer · 15 min

Google indexes the mobile version of pages.

Done when: Text readable without zooming, buttons easy to tap, no sideways scrolling, same content as desktop.

How to check: Open the page on a phone, or narrow your browser window.

Common mistake: Content hidden on mobile that exists on desktop.

Source 1

Sources (checked November 9, 2026)

1. SEO Starter Guide, Google Search Central
2. Influencing your title links, Google Search Central
3. Control your snippets in search results, Google Search Central
4. Creating helpful, reliable, people-first content, Google Search Central
5. General structured data guidelines, Google Search Central
6. Google image SEO best practices, Google Search Central
7. Link best practices for Google, Google Search Central
8. Web Vitals, web.dev