

SEO audit checklist – Hostinger Learning lab

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SEO audit checklist

A full site health check covering both on-page and technical SEO. Run this quarterly — or any time a site's rankings drop unexpectedly.

How to use this checklist: Work through each section in order. High-priority items are flagged — fix those first. Use the findings summary at the end to record what's working, what needs fixing, and what can wait. Tool suggestions are included throughout so you know where to look.

PART 1

Technical SEO

Indexing and crawlability

- ☐ **Site is indexed by Google**
Search "site:yourdomain.com" in Google. If no results appear, your site may be blocked from indexing. Check Google Search Console.
- ☐ **robots.txt file exists and is not blocking important pages**
Visit yourdomain.com/robots.txt. A misconfigured robots.txt can accidentally block your whole site from Google.
- ☐ **XML sitemap exists and has been submitted to Google Search Console**
Usually found at yourdomain.com/sitemap.xml. Submit it under Search Console › Sitemaps.
- ☐ **No important pages are marked "noindex"**
Noindex tags tell Google to ignore a page. Useful for thank-you pages — but not for pages you want to rank.
- ☐ **No crawl errors in Google Search Console**
Check Search Console › Coverage for pages with errors. Fix or remove them.

HTTPS and security



Site loads on HTTPS, not HTTP

Google uses HTTPS as a ranking signal. Check that the padlock appears in the browser bar on every page.



HTTP URLs redirect automatically to HTTPS

Visiting `http://` should redirect to `https://` with a 301 redirect, not show a separate page.



SSL certificate is valid and not close to expiry

An expired certificate throws a browser warning that kills traffic. Check the expiry date in your hosting panel.

Page speed and core web vitals



Page speed tested on mobile and desktop

Target under 3 seconds on mobile. Speed is a confirmed Google ranking factor. Tools: PageSpeed Insights, GTmetrix.



Core Web Vitals pass (LCP, CLS, INP)

LCP measures load speed. CLS measures layout stability. INP measures responsiveness. All should be in the green. Tool: Google Search Console.



Images are compressed and in a modern format (WebP preferred)

Unoptimised images are the most common cause of slow pages. Aim for under 200 KB per image.



Caching is enabled at the server or plugin level

Caching stores a version of your pages so they load faster on repeat visits.



CSS, HTML, and JavaScript files are minified

Most caching plugins handle this automatically. Check your plugin settings.

Mobile friendliness

- ☐ **Site passes Google's mobile-friendly test**
Google uses mobile-first indexing — it ranks the mobile version of your site. Tool: Google Mobile-Friendly test
- ☐ **Text is readable on small screens without zooming**
- ☐ **Buttons and links are large enough to tap on a phone**
Minimum tap target size recommended by Google is 48x48px.

URL structure and redirects

- ☐ **URLs are clean, descriptive, and include target keywords**
Avoid URLs with numbers, dates, or random strings. `yourdomain.com/sourdough-bread-recipe-beats /p=4821`.
- ☐ **No broken links (404 errors) across the site**
Broken links waste crawl budget and frustrate visitors. Tool: Screaming Frog, Ahrefs
- ☐ **301 redirects in place for any changed or deleted URLs**
If you've moved pages, old URLs should redirect to the new ones — not return a 404.
- ☐ **No redirect chains (A redirects to B, B redirects to C)**
Each extra hop in a chain slows the page and dilutes link equity. Redirect A straight to the final destination.

PART 2

On-page SEO

Title tags and meta descriptions

- ☐ **Every page has a unique title tag**
Duplicate title tags confuse Google about which page to rank. Each page needs its own. Tool: Screaming Frog
- ☐ **Title tags are under 60 characters and include the target keyword**
- ☐ **Every key page has a unique meta description**
Not a ranking factor, but it affects click-through rate significantly.
- ☐ **Meta descriptions are under 160 characters and include the keyword**
- ☐ **No pages are missing title tags or meta descriptions entirely**
Missing tags mean Google writes them for you — and it rarely does a better job than you would. Tool: Screaming Frog

Headings and content

- ☐ **Every page has exactly one H1 tag containing the primary keyword**
- ☐ **H2 and H3 subheadings are used to structure content logically**
- ☐ **No thin content pages (under ~300 words with nothing unique to offer)**
Thin pages drag down your whole site's quality score. Expand, consolidate, or noindex them.
- ☐ **No duplicate content across pages**
Identical or near-identical content on multiple URLs splits ranking signals. Use canonical tags if duplication is unavoidable. Tool: Siteliner
- ☐ **Key pages are up to date — no outdated stats, broken examples, or expired offers**

Images

- ☐ **All images have descriptive alt text**
Alt text helps visually impaired users and tells search engines what an image shows. At least one per page should include the target keyword naturally.
- ☐ **Image file names are descriptive, not generic**
Rename IMG_4201.jpg to something like "red-sourdough-loaf.jpg" before uploading.
- ☐ **No images are serving as text (text embedded in an image file)**
Search engines can't read text inside images. Use real HTML text instead.

Internal linking

- ☐ **Important pages are linked to from multiple other pages on the site**
Internal links pass authority and tell Google which pages matter most. Orphaned pages (no internal links pointing to them) struggle to rank.
- ☐ **No orphaned pages — every page can be reached by following links from the homepage**
- ☐ **Internal link anchor text is descriptive — not "click here" or "read more"**
- ☐ **Blog posts link to relevant product or service pages where appropriate**
Informational content should create a path toward your commercial pages.

Keyword targeting

- ☐ **Each key page targets a distinct, specific keyword — no two pages compete for the same term**

Keyword cannibalisation splits your ranking signals. If two pages target the same keyword, consolidate them or differentiate the focus.

- ☐ **Target keywords appear naturally in the first 100 words of each page**

- ☐ **No keyword stuffing — keywords read naturally in context**

Over-optimising can trigger a Google penalty. Read the copy aloud. If the keyword sounds forced, trim it.

- ☐ **Pages targeting commercial keywords have clear calls to action**

Set your technical foundations first.

Many technical SEO issues – slow load times, missing SSL, poor uptime – come down to the hosting plan. Hostinger plans include fast servers, free SSL, and built-in caching to take care of the basics from day one.

[Explore plans →](#)