Setting Up Your Online Store for Free

@ Goal

Build a professional-looking online store **without spending money** by using free platforms and tools.

Choosing Your Platform: Shopify vs WooCommerce vs Ecwid

When starting out, picking the right platform is key. Here's a quick breakdown:

1. Shopify (Free Trial)

- Super beginner-friendly, drag-and-drop builder.
- Various Tons of apps, themes, and built-in payment gateways.
- X Only free for **3 days**, then starts at ~\$29/month.
- Good for testing, but not ideal for staying free long-term.

2. WooCommerce (WordPress)

- 100% free plugin for WordPress.
- V Highly customizable (themes, plugins, SEO-friendly).
- X Requires hosting + domain (small cost unless you find free hosting).
- Great if you're comfortable with WordPress or want more control.

3. Ecwid (Free Plan)

- Free forever for up to **5 products**.
- V Easy setup, can embed into any website (WordPress, Wix, Blogger, etc.).
- V Free store builder included.
- X Limited features compared to Shopify or WooCommerce.
- Pest for starting with no cost at all.

Recommendation: If you want **completely free**, start with **Ecwid**. If you want more control and don't mind learning, go with **WooCommerce**.



No matter the platform, follow these tips to make your store look polished:

1. Choose a clean theme

- Use a simple design (white or light backgrounds).
- o Avoid clutter focus on your products.

2. Add your brand identity

- Logo (use free tools like <u>Canva</u>).
- o Colors (pick 2-3 brand colors).
- o Fonts (stick to 2 max for a consistent look).

3. Use high-quality product images

- Natural lighting works great.
- Use free editing tools like Canva or Snapseed.
- Show product from multiple angles.

4. Mobile optimization

Test your site on phone + tablet (most shoppers use mobile).

Must-Have Pages

Here's what your store needs to look professional and trustworthy:

1. A Home Page

- o Banner with your brand & main product.
- Featured products or collections.
- Call-to-action button (e.g., "Shop Now").

2. **product Page**

- High-quality images.
- o Clear title + short description at the top.
- Detailed description below.
- o Pricing, variants (size, color), "Add to Cart" button.

3. About Us Page

- Tell your story (why you started, your values).
- Add a personal touch (photos, mission statement).

4. Contact Page

- o Contact form or email address.
- Social media links.

5. **Policies Page**

Refund/Return policy.

- Shipping details.
- o Privacy policy & Terms of Service (many free generators available).

Free Apps & Plugins for Beginners

Depending on your platform:

For Ecwid

- Free mobile app (manage orders on your phone).
- Facebook & Instagram integration.
- Google Shopping integration.

For WooCommerce

- WooCommerce Payments (accept cards for free).
- Yoast SEO (boost search ranking).
- WooCommerce Blocks (custom product displays).

For Shopify (Trial Users)

- Oberlo (dropshipping, limited free).
- Plug in SEO (free SEO checker).
- Privy (popups & email capture).

Practical Task: Create Your Free Store

Let's do this step-by-step with **Ecwid** (free forever):

- 1. **Sign Up on Ecwid** (https://www.ecwid.com) → Choose free plan.
- 2. Add Your First Product
 - Go to "Catalog" → "Products" → "+ Add Product".
 - Upload a product image.
 - Add product name, description, and price.
 - Set inventory & shipping (optional).
- 3. Customize Storefront
 - Go to "Website" tab → Choose free design theme.
 - Add your logo, brand colors, and fonts.
- 4. Set Up Payment

- Choose PayPal (easy to set up for free).
- o Or enable "Cash on Delivery" if local.

5. Publish Your Store 🎉

- o Ecwid gives you a free URL like: storename.company.site
- o Share it on social media to get your first visitors.

🌟 Pro Tips to Succeed

- Start with **1–3 products** to test the process.
- Use free tools like Canva for banners & mockups.
- Promote on Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook (organic reach is free!).
- Keep updating even 1 new product a week builds momentum.

Your Challenge Today:

Create your free Ecwid store and upload at least 1 product.

Tomorrow, share your link with a friend (or on social media) and get your first visitor!