



SEO Audit Checklist

Actionable steps to improve your
website's search rankings

On-Page SEO

Technical SEO

Content

UX & Mobile

Backlinks

Analytics

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■ 01 · On-Page SEO

On-page SEO ensures every page of your site is optimized to tell search engines — and users — exactly what your content is about.

Meta Titles

- Title is 50–60 characters long
- Primary keyword appears near the beginning
- Each page has a unique meta title
- Avoid keyword stuffing in the title
- Title matches the page's content intent
- Brand name included where appropriate

■ Tip: Write titles for humans first. A title like 'Buy Running Shoes Online | BrandName' beats a keyword dump every time.

Meta Descriptions

- Description is 120–158 characters
- Includes a clear call-to-action (CTA)
- Contains the primary keyword naturally
- Every page has a unique meta description
- No duplicate descriptions across site
- Accurately summarizes the page content

Heading Structure (H1–H6)

- Only one H1 per page
- H1 includes the primary keyword
- Headings follow a logical hierarchy (H1→H2→H3)
- Subheadings break up long content sections
- No heading tags used purely for styling
- Keywords used naturally in H2/H3 tags

Internal Linking

- Important pages linked from homepage
- Descriptive anchor text used (not 'click here')
- No orphan pages (pages with zero internal links)
- Links point to relevant, related content
- Broken internal links identified and fixed
- Pillar pages linked from cluster articles

■ Tip: Use keyword-rich anchor text for internal links. Instead of 'read more,' try 'learn about on-page SEO best practices.'

URL Structure

- URLs are short and descriptive
- Hyphens used to separate words (not underscores)
- URLs are lowercase with no special characters
- Primary keyword included in the URL
- No dates or numbers unless necessary
- Consistent folder/category structure used

Image Alt Text

- All images have alt text attributes
- Keywords used where contextually natural
- File names are descriptive (not IMG001.jpg)
- Alt text describes the image accurately
- Decorative images use empty alt="" attribute
- Images are compressed for fast loading

■■ 02 · Technical SEO

Technical SEO forms the foundation of your site. Without it, even great content can struggle to rank. Fix technical issues first for the biggest impact.

Site Speed

- Page load time under 3 seconds
- Google PageSpeed score ≥ 70 (mobile & desktop)
- Images optimized (WebP/AVIF format used)
- Minified CSS, JS, and HTML files
- Browser caching enabled
- CDN (Content Delivery Network) in use
- Render-blocking resources eliminated
- Lazy loading implemented for images

■ **Tip:** Use Google PageSpeed Insights or GTmetrix to find specific speed issues. Start with image compression — it's the quickest win.

Mobile-Friendliness & HTTPS

- Site passes Google's Mobile-Friendly Test
- Responsive design on all screen sizes
- Site served over HTTPS (SSL certificate active)
- HTTP \rightarrow HTTPS redirects properly configured
- No mixed content warnings (HTTP in HTTPS pages)
- Tap targets appropriately sized on mobile

XML Sitemap & Robots.txt

- XML sitemap exists and is up to date
- Sitemap submitted to Google Search Console
- Sitemap submitted to Bing Webmaster Tools
- No important pages blocked in robots.txt
- Robots.txt file exists and is correct
- Sitemap URL listed in robots.txt

Crawl Errors & Indexation

- No 404 errors on important pages
- Custom 404 page implemented
- Redirect chains minimized (max 1 hop)
- 301 redirects set up for deleted/moved pages
- No soft 404s or thin content pages indexed
- Check Coverage report in Search Console
- Crawl budget not wasted on low-value pages
- Pagination handled correctly (rel=next/prev or canonical)

Canonical URLs & Structured Data

- Canonical tags present on all pages
- No duplicate pages without canonical tags
- Structured data tested via Google Rich Results Test
- Open Graph tags set for social sharing
- Self-referencing canonicals set correctly
- Schema markup implemented (Article, Product, FAQ, etc.)
- No errors in structured data markup
- Twitter Card tags configured

03 - Content SEO

Content is the backbone of SEO. High-quality, keyword-targeted content that satisfies search intent drives organic traffic and builds topical authority.

Keyword Research

- Primary keyword identified for each page
- Search intent understood (informational, transactional, navigational)
- Long-tail keywords targeted for blog content
- Keywords mapped to specific pages (no cannibalization)
- Secondary/LSI keywords researched
- Keyword difficulty vs. opportunity assessed
- Competitor keywords analyzed
- Search volume data reviewed (min. 100–500/mo)

■ **Tip:** Tools: Google Keyword Planner (free), Ahrefs, SEMrush, Ubersuggest. Start with competitor gap analysis to find quick wins.

Keyword Placement

- Primary keyword in first 100 words
- Keyword in meta title and meta description
- Keyword in URL slug
- Keyword in H1, at least one H2
- Keyword in image alt text (where relevant)
- Natural keyword density (avoid stuffing)

Content Quality & Readability

- Content comprehensively covers the topic
- Short paragraphs (3–4 sentences max)
- Content is original (no plagiarism)
- Content regularly updated and refreshed
- Flesch Reading Ease score ≥ 60
- Subheadings break up long sections
- E-E-A-T signals present (author bio, sources cited)
- Outbound links to authoritative sources included

Duplicate Content & Multimedia

- No duplicate content across the site
- Images, videos, or infographics included
- Syndicated content uses canonical tags
- Videos hosted on YouTube/Vimeo with transcripts

- Multimedia adds genuine value to the content
- Image captions used where appropriate

■ ***Tip:*** Adding a YouTube video to a blog post can increase dwell time significantly — a positive user signal for Google.

■ 04 - User Experience & Mobile SEO

Google's ranking algorithm heavily weighs user experience signals. A fast, accessible, and intuitive site keeps users engaged and sends positive signals to search engines.

Mobile Responsiveness & Layout

- Site is fully responsive on all devices
- Font size $\geq 16\text{px}$ on mobile screens
- No intrusive interstitials/pop-ups on mobile
- Navigation is intuitive and accessible
- No horizontal scrolling on mobile
- Buttons and links easy to tap ($\geq 44\text{px}$)
- Above-the-fold content loads instantly
- Breadcrumbs implemented for deep pages

Core Web Vitals

Google's Core Web Vitals are official ranking factors. Measure and optimize all three:

Metric	What It Measures	Target
LCP (Largest Contentful Paint)	How fast the main content loads	< 2.5 seconds
FID / INP (Input Delay / Interaction)	Responsiveness to user interaction	< 200ms / < 100ms
CLS (Cumulative Layout Shift)	Visual stability of page elements	< 0.1

Accessibility

- Sufficient color contrast (WCAG AA standard)
- ARIA labels used for screen readers
- No content flashes or strobing effects
- All interactive elements keyboard navigable
- Skip navigation links present
- Forms have proper labels and error messages

■ **Tip:** Use Google's Lighthouse tool (built into Chrome DevTools) to audit Core Web Vitals and accessibility in one click.

■ 05 - Backlinks & Off-Page SEO

Backlinks remain one of the strongest ranking signals. Quality always beats quantity — a single link from an authoritative site outweighs dozens of low-quality ones.

Backlink Audit

- Total backlink count reviewed
- Domain Authority (DA) / Domain Rating (DR) checked
- Toxic/spammy links identified
- Disavow file submitted for harmful links
- Lost backlinks identified for reclamation
- Competitor backlink profiles analyzed
- Referring domain diversity assessed
- Follow vs. nofollow ratio reviewed

■ **Tip:** Tools: Ahrefs, SEMrush, Moz Link Explorer, or Google Search Console's Links report. Audit backlinks quarterly.

Link Quality & Anchor Texts

- Links come from relevant, niche-related sites
- No link schemes or PBN links detected
- Anchor text is varied (branded, naked URL, keyword)
- No over-optimized exact-match anchor text
- Guest posts on quality sites pursued
- Broken link building opportunities explored
- HARO / journalist outreach used for citations
- Business listed in authoritative directories

Social Signals & Brand Mentions

- Active presence on relevant social platforms
- Social sharing buttons on blog/content pages
- Unlinked brand mentions converted to links
- Google Business Profile optimized (local SEO)
- NAP (Name, Address, Phone) consistent across web
- Reviews on Google, Yelp, Trustpilot monitored

■ 06 - Analytics & Tracking

You can't improve what you don't measure. Proper tracking setup gives you the data to make confident, informed SEO decisions.

Google Analytics 4 (GA4)

- GA4 property created and tracking code installed
- Internal traffic filtered out (IP exclusion)
- Enhanced measurement enabled
- Custom dimensions and events configured
- Data is flowing correctly (real-time test passed)
- Goals / key events configured
- Ecommerce tracking set up (if applicable)
- Regular traffic/behavior reports scheduled

Google Search Console

- Site verified in Search Console
- XML sitemap submitted
- Core Web Vitals report reviewed
- Rich results status monitored
- All site versions verified (www, non-www, HTTP, HTTPS)
- Coverage report checked for errors/warnings
- Manual actions check (no penalties active)
- Search Performance report analyzed regularly

■ **Tip:** Connect GA4 with Search Console for a unified view of traffic, clicks, and impressions inside one platform.

Conversion Tracking & Goals

- Macro conversions tracked (purchases, form fills, calls)
- Thank You page conversions set as events
- UTM parameters used for campaign tracking
- Micro conversions tracked (scroll depth, video plays, downloads)
- Funnel exploration configured in GA4
- Monthly SEO KPI report template set up

■ 07 - Action Plan / Next Steps

Use this prioritized action plan to tackle your SEO audit findings systematically. Start with high-impact, low-effort items for the fastest results.

Priority	Action Item	Impact	Effort
■ Critical	Fix crawl errors & broken links	High	Low
■ Critical	Install SSL / enforce HTTPS	High	Low
■ Critical	Set up GA4 + Search Console	High	Low
■ High	Optimize meta titles & descriptions	High	Low
■ High	Improve page speed (images, caching)	High	Medium
■ High	Add alt text to all images	Medium	Low
■ Medium	Build internal linking structure	High	Medium
■ Medium	Implement schema markup	Medium	Medium
■ Medium	Refresh outdated top-performing content	High	Medium
■ Low	Start a backlink outreach campaign	High	High
■ Low	Improve Core Web Vitals score	Medium	High
■ Low	Add FAQ/How-To schema to key pages	Medium	Medium

Recommended SEO Tools

Category	Free Options	Paid Options
All-in-One SEO	Google Search Console	Ahrefs · SEMrush · Moz
Site Speed	PageSpeed Insights · GTmetrix	Cloudflare · Pingdom
Keyword Research	Google Keyword Planner · Ubersuggest	Ahrefs · SEMrush
Backlinks	Google Search Console	Ahrefs · Majestic · Moz
Rank Tracking	Search Console (avg. position)	SERPWatcher · Ahrefs
Technical SEO	Screaming Frog (500 URLs free)	Screaming Frog (paid) · Sitebulb

Analytics	Google Analytics 4	Mixpanel · Hotjar
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Monthly SEO Maintenance Checklist

- Review Search Console for new errors
- Monitor keyword ranking movements
- Update and refresh 1–2 existing articles
- Chase 5–10 new backlink opportunities
- Check for new competitor content to outrank
- Check Google Analytics traffic trends
- Publish at least 2–4 pieces of new content
- Audit top pages for content accuracy
- Review Core Web Vitals for regressions
- Run a technical crawl for new issues

■ **Final Tip:** SEO is a long game. The compounding effect of consistent, quality improvements over 6–12 months will outperform any quick-fix tactic. Prioritize user experience, create genuinely helpful content, earn quality backlinks, and keep your technical foundation clean. Results will follow.

Best, **Nirajan Dhungel**