



How to Sell on WordPress: Step-by-Step Guide, Plus Tools and Tips

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Starting an online store is a great way to get your feet wet with an online business. The overhead costs are relatively low not to mention there are more and more people shopping online from the comfort of their own home.

This is even more true in times of crisis, like the recent COVID-19 pandemic. Many online retailers continue to operate and offer no-contact delivery in the hopes of minimizing the spread.

But the best part? You no longer need to be a developer or hire one to launch an online store.

When it comes to ecommerce websites, WordPress is a popular choice. It powers more than 30% of all websites and offers many useful features for anyone looking to start selling online.

In this article, we'll explain how to sell on WordPress, which tools and plugins to use, and how exactly you can get started.

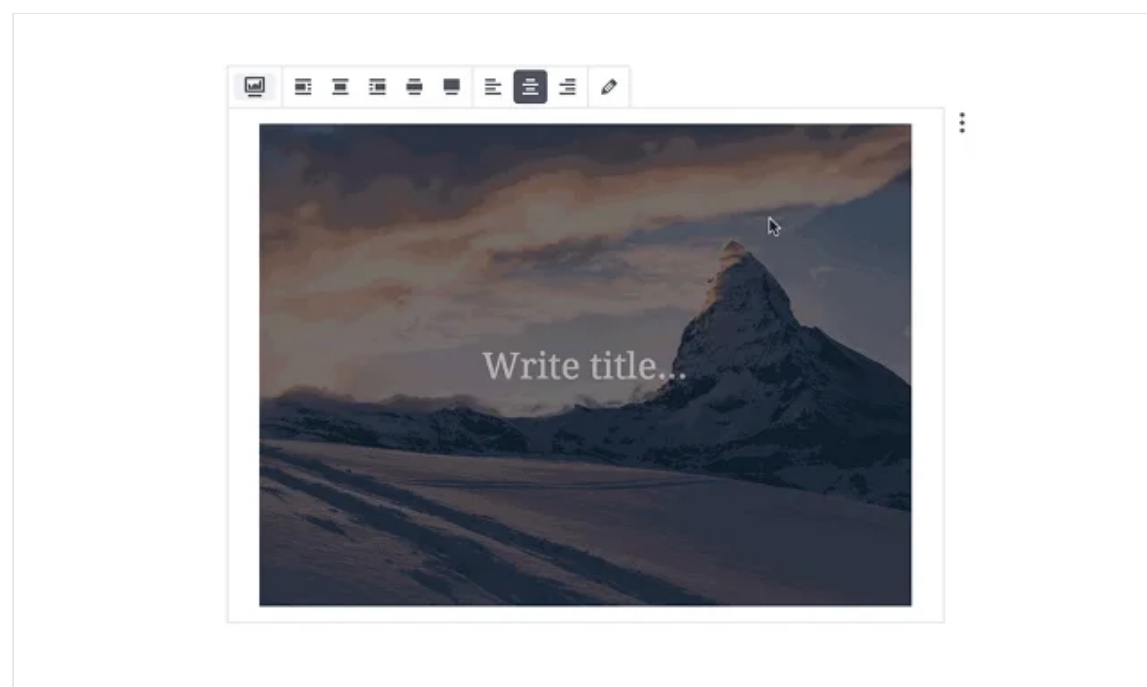
Why WordPress?

Before we get into the details of selling on WordPress, let's take a minute to go over

the reasons that make WordPress a great choice for an online store.

1. WordPress is easy to use

The most important reason why so many people use WordPress for their websites is the fact that it's easy to use. There is no programming involved in getting your website set up and the dashboard is easy to navigate.



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Pair that with the new, easy-to-use block editor, and it's easy to see how you can create beautiful posts and pages with blocks that can be rearranged and styled individually.

2. A lot of creative freedom

One of the best things about WordPress is that it offers a lot of creative freedom. Thanks to the numerous plugins and themes, you can create any type of website you want. From simple blogs and brochure sites to membership and online course sites – the sky's the limit.

Plus, there are several plugins designed to help you create an online store and add all the necessary ecommerce features.

What's more, there are also hundreds, if not thousands, of themes (both free and paid),

designed specifically to make selling on WordPress easier.

3. Overhead costs are low

As mentioned earlier, the overhead costs with WordPress are low. For starters, WordPress itself is free to download, modify, and use. Secondly, a good majority of plugins and themes are free as well.

Lastly, hosting fees are no longer as expensive as they once were. While choosing the cheapest hosting is not the best idea, you can find good, quality hosting for as low as \$10/month.

What about Shopify and similar platforms?

If you've been thinking about starting an online store, you might be wondering if selling on WordPress is the best choice. You might even be wondering about [selling on Shopify](#) or similar ecommerce platforms.

While it's true that these platforms make it easy to start your store, they are limited in terms of customization options and features you can add. They are also more expensive than WordPress in the long run. On top of that, most of these platforms are hosted which means you don't have full control over your website.

In other words, if one of these platforms decides to shut down or change its entire business model, you can quickly lose your entire online store as well as your livelihood.

Given that WordPress is open-source and free, you can easily switch hosting companies if one of them shuts down.

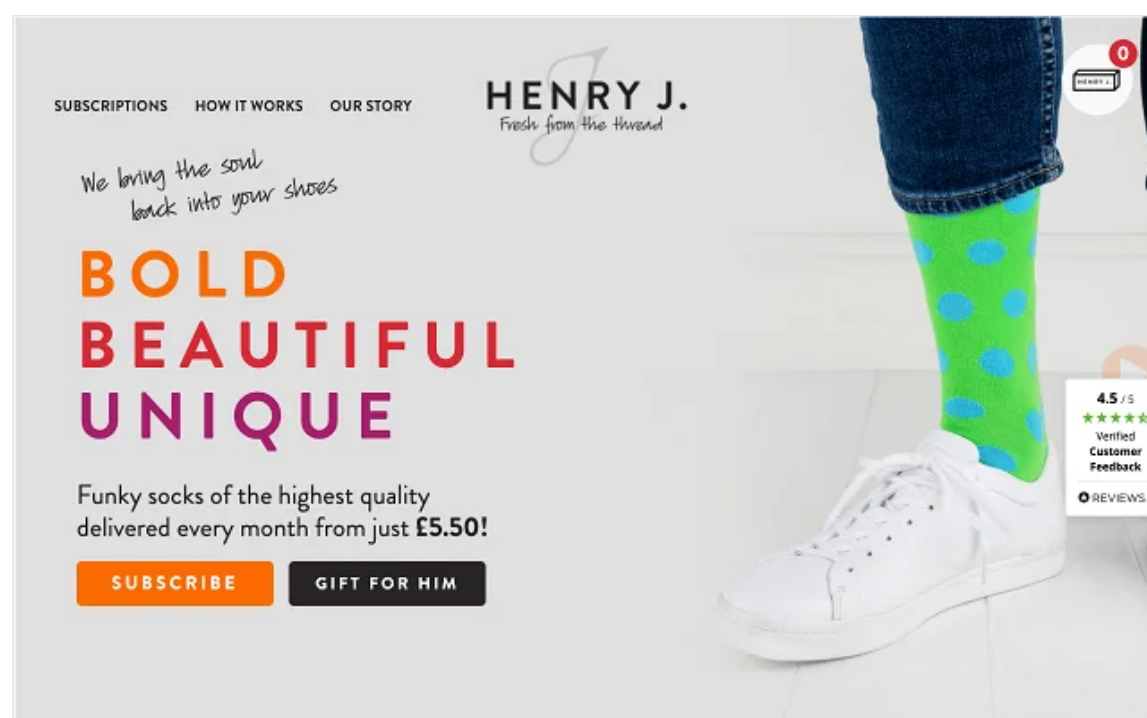
You have full control over your site's design and features you want to add which makes WordPress a much better choice for your online store.

With that out of the way, let's go over what you can sell on WordPress and how you get started.

What can you sell on WordPress?

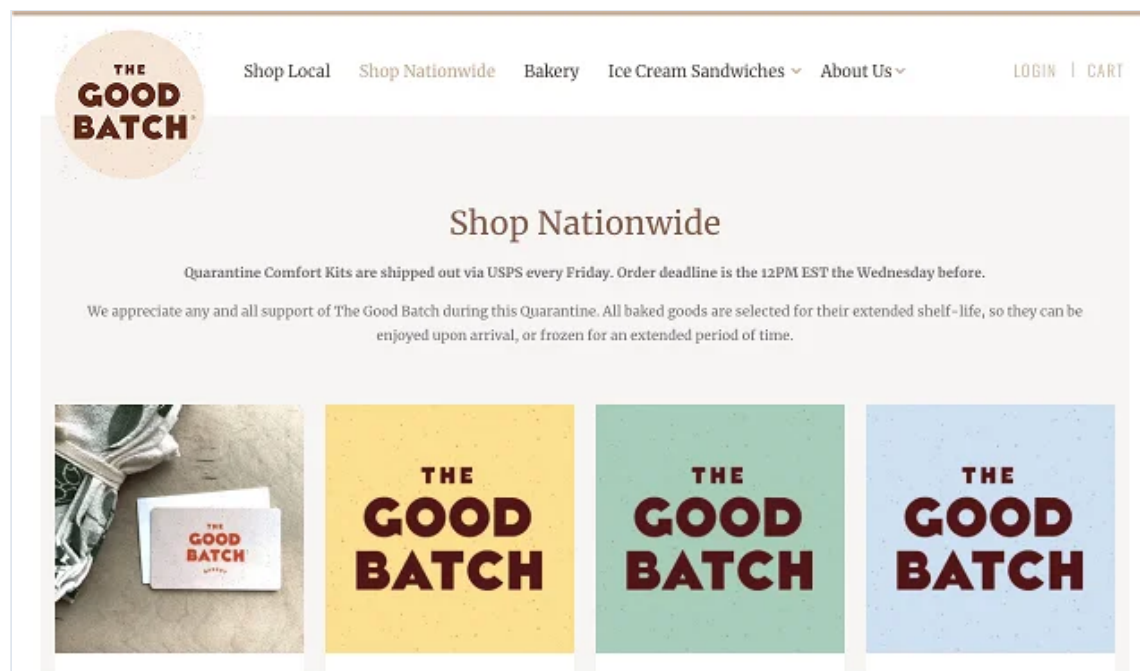
If you're here wondering how to sell on WordPress, you probably already have a product in mind.

The truth is, WordPress makes it easy to create any type of online store. For instance, Henry J (<https://www.henryjsocks.co.uk/>), a socks subscription company, chose to build their store using WordPress.



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Here is another example of a company selling on WordPress. The Good Batch (<https://thegoodbatch.com/>) is a Brooklyn bakery that ships cookies all over the United States.



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So, broadly speaking, there are four types of products you can sell on WordPress:

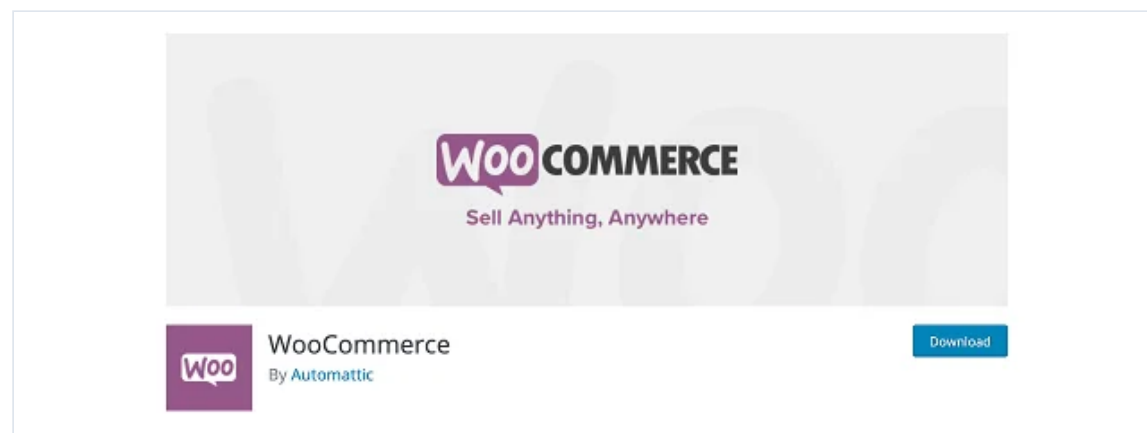
- **Digital products** — you can sell any type of digital product you want. This includes eBooks, digital artwork, fonts, logos, patterns, icons, and other graphic design assets, workbooks, code snippets, templates, and more.
- **Physical** — you can use WordPress for selling a variety of physical products. This can include products that you made or produced as well as products from third-party vendors (also known as dropshipping).
- **Information products** — this includes courses, masterclasses, workshops, and other information products. It also includes memberships or masterminds.
- **Services** — lastly, you can use WordPress to sell your services. You can sell simple services like website audits or website copywriting as well as ongoing services for which you charge a recurring monthly fee. Ongoing services include virtual assistant services, website maintenance, video editing, copywriting or copy editing, and more.

Helpful tools to start selling on WordPress

Now that we've covered the product categories, let's go over the tools you'll need based on

what you want to sell in your WordPress store.

1. WooCommerce



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WooCommerce (<https://wordpress.org/plugins/woocommerce/>) is, hands down, the most popular ecommerce plugin for WordPress. It can be downloaded for free from the official plugin repository where it has more than 5 million active installations as well as a 4.5-star rating.

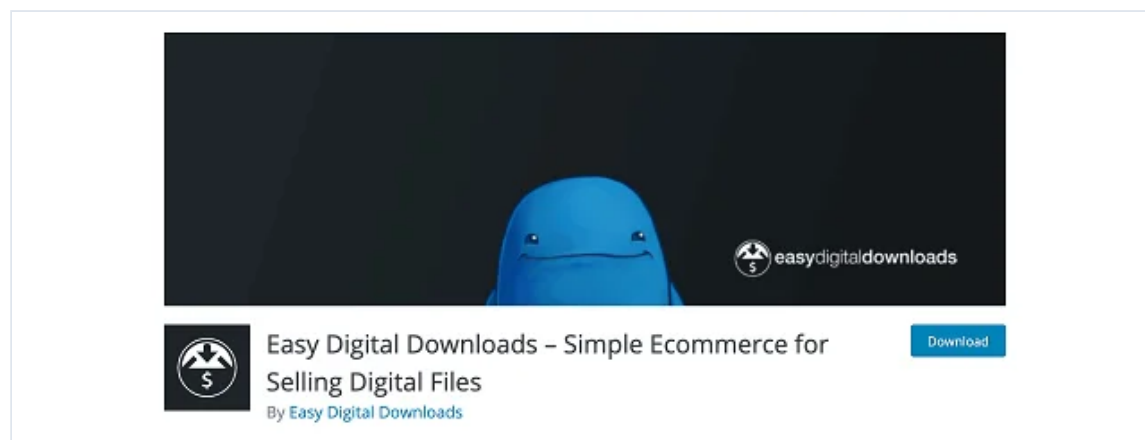
You can use WooCommerce to sell both physical and digital products. You can even sell both digital and physical products at the same time.

WooCommerce comes with all the pages you'll need to turn your WordPress website into an online store and offers features such as:

- Multiple payment gateways including Stripe and PayPal
- Configurable shipping options
- Integration with Google Analytics, Facebook, and MailChimp
- The ability to set up product subscriptions
- The ability to create discount codes

- Detailed store dashboard to see your orders, sales, and revenue
- And more.

2. Easy Digital Downloads



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If you plan on selling digital products exclusively, the Easy Digital Downloads (<https://wordpress.org/plugins/easy-digital-downloads/>) plugin is a great choice.

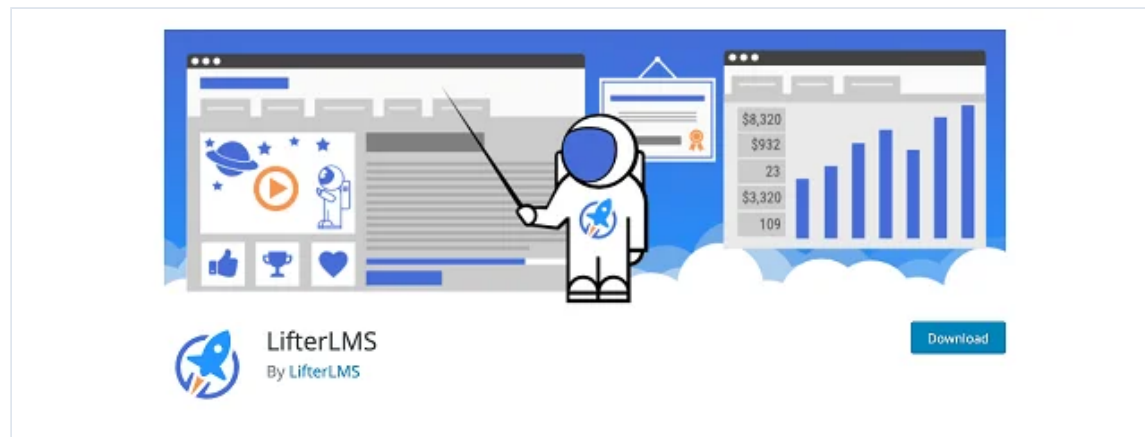
The plugin can be downloaded for free from the official plugin repository. It has over 60,000 active installations and features a 4.5-star rating.

Easy Digital Downloads offers the following features:

- All the necessary pages you'll need for your online store
- Flexible and minimal checkout form
- Detailed dashboard to keep track of your store's metrics such as pending orders, revenue earned, and more
- Complete customer management along with their purchase history
- Product protection so unauthorized visitors can't access the files without paying first

- Discount codes
- And more.

3. Membership and LMS Plugins



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If you plan on selling courses, masterclasses, or other types of information products, then you'll need a membership or a Learning Management System (LMS) plugin.

These plugins differ from other eCommerce plugins as they include all the necessary pages for account creation, user profile management, lesson files, and more.

There is no shortage of membership and LMS plugins for WordPress. A few popular options include:

- MemberPress (<https://memberpress.com/>) – this is one of the most popular plugins for creating and selling memberships with WordPress. It's a premium plugin starting at \$149/year that offers features such as different membership levels, member dashboards, restricted content, and more.
- Paid Memberships Pro (<https://wordpress.org/plugins/paid-memberships-pro/>) – this is a popular membership plugin that can be downloaded for free from the official repository and has a 4.5-star rating and over 90,000 active installations.
- LifterLMS (<https://wordpress.org/plugins/lifterlms/>) – if you want to sell courses

and are looking for a free plugin, LifterLMS could be the right choice. It has over 10, 000 active installations and a 4.5-star rating. The plugin offers features such as gamification, complete course management and student profile pages, one-time and recurring payments, integration with Stripe and Paypal, and more.

- LearnDash (<https://www.learndash.com/>) – this is a premium plugin starting at \$159/year. It includes features such as drip content, course forums, email notifications, course certificates and badges, and more.

How to sell on WordPress: getting started

Getting your online store up and running might seem daunting but once you know what steps to follow, it's quite simple. Below, you'll find all the steps for starting a physical product store with WordPress and WooCommerce.

Step 1: Get a domain and hosting

Once you know what you're going to sell on WordPress, the first step is to get a domain name and a hosting plan for your store. When choosing a domain name here are a few tips to keep in mind:

- ✓ Make sure your domain name is easy to spell and remember
- ✓ Avoid using hyphens
- ✓ Keep it relevant to the type of products you want to sell as that will make it easier for your customers to remember it

After you have decided on your domain name, you need to get a hosting plan. There is no shortage of hosting companies and cheap hosting plans.

A few recommended companies include Siteground, BlueHost, and DreamHost. These hosting companies are recommended by WordPress itself so you can't go wrong if you decide to purchase one of their plans.

Step 2: Install WordPress

After purchasing your hosting plan, you'll need to install WordPress, unless it already came preinstalled on your hosting plan. Most hosting companies have a one-click WordPress installation process so all you'll need to do is log in to your hosting dashboard and locate the [Install WordPress](#) button.

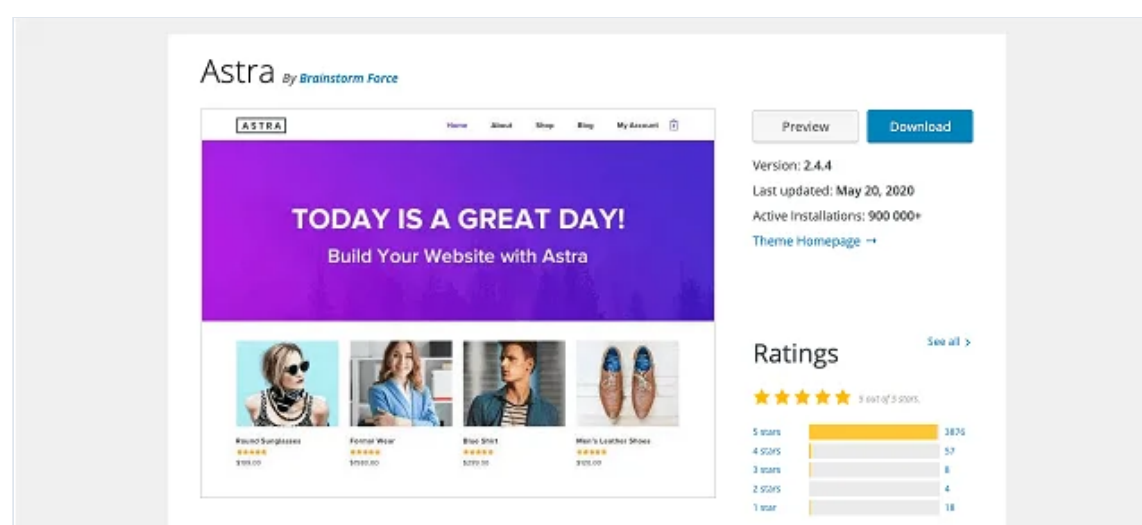
Then, enter a username and a password that you want to use to log in to your WordPress website, enter your site name, and wait for the WordPress installation process to complete.

You'll then be able to log in to your WordPress dashboard which brings us to the next step.

Step 3: Install a theme

A WordPress theme controls how your store will look.

To install a theme, go to [Appearance > Themes](#). As you can see, there is no shortage of free themes to choose from but for the purposes of this tutorial, I'll be using the Astra theme.



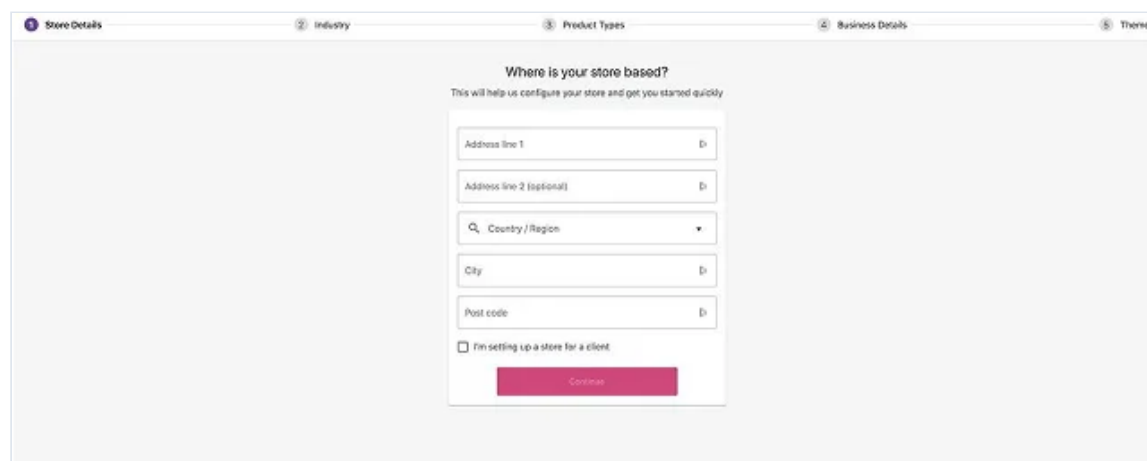
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The [Astra](https://wordpress.org/themes/astra/) theme is a free and popular theme for selling on WordPress. It is also fully compatible with WooCommerce which is the ecommerce plugin we'll be using to create our store. Astra has more than 800, 000 active installations and a 5-star rating. This theme is lightweight which means it will load fast. Once you install the theme, all you need is to activate it.

Step 4: Install the WooCommerce plugin

The next step is to install the WooCommerce plugin. To do this, go to **Plugins > Add new**. Search for WooCommerce. Click on the **Install** button and then the **Activate** button once the plugin is done installing.

You'll be taken to the WooCommerce setup wizard where you'll need to configure your store options such as your measurement units, store currency and payment options, shipping zones, and more.

The screenshot shows the 'Where is your store based?' step of the WooCommerce setup wizard. It features a form with fields for 'Address line 1', 'Address line 2 (optional)', 'Country / Region' (a dropdown menu), 'City', and 'Post code'. Below these fields is a checkbox labeled 'I'm setting up a store for a client'. A pink 'Continue' button is at the bottom of the form. The wizard's progress bar at the top shows 'Store Details' as the current step, followed by 'Industry', 'Product Types', 'Business Details', and 'Theme'.

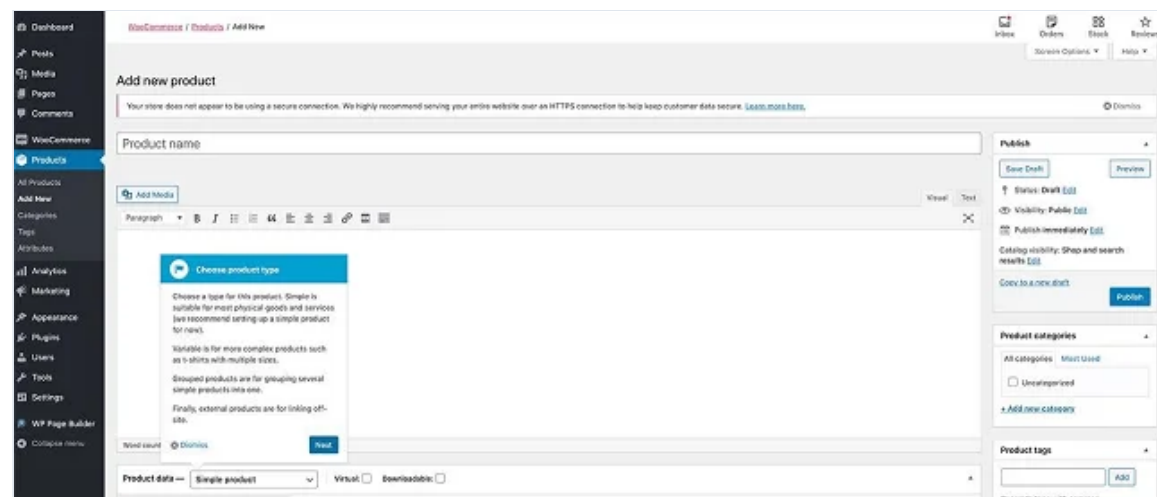
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After you finish the store setup wizard, you'll be able to add your first product.

Step 5: Add your products

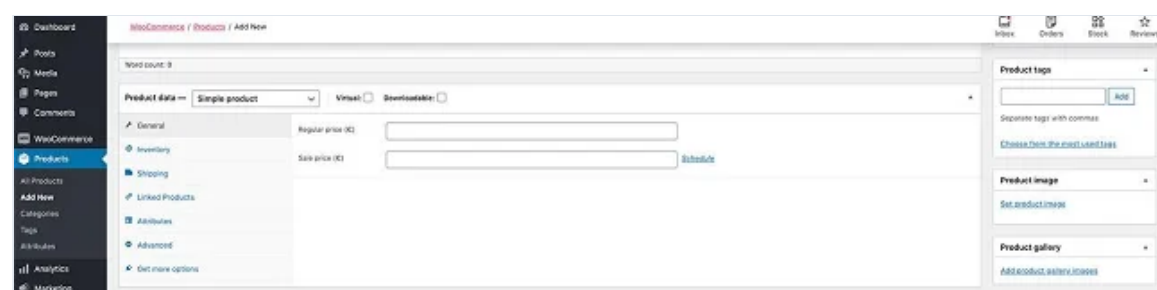
Once you click on **Add product**, you'll be able to choose whether you want to add your product manually or import it. For this tutorial, we'll create the first product manually.

Start by entering a name for your product. You can also add your product description and product images. WooCommerce will even give you helpful tooltips that explain what each option and setting does.



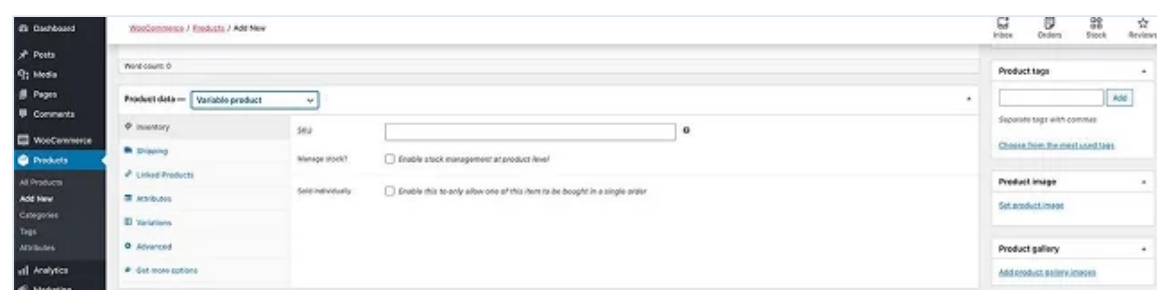
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If you aren't selling a physical product, you can mark the checkboxes indicating that your product is virtual and downloadable or not. This step comes right after the description and it will tell WooCommerce that the product you're selling is digital rather than physical.



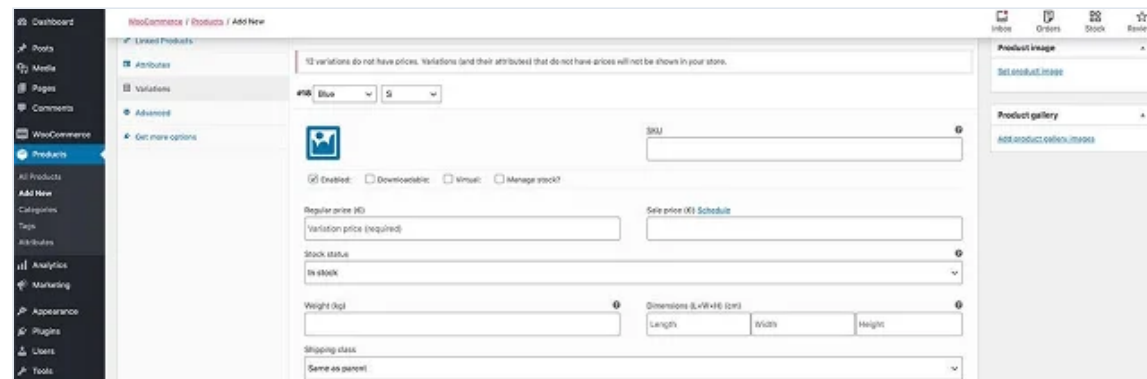
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If you're selling a product that has variations such as different colors or sizes, be sure to select the **Variable product** option from the drop-down menu. You'll then need to create product attributes such as color or size.



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After you have created attributes, switch to the **Variations** tab, and select **Create variations** from all attributes from the drop-down menu. Then, click **Go**. WooCommerce will then create variations and after that you'll need to set the price for each product variation.



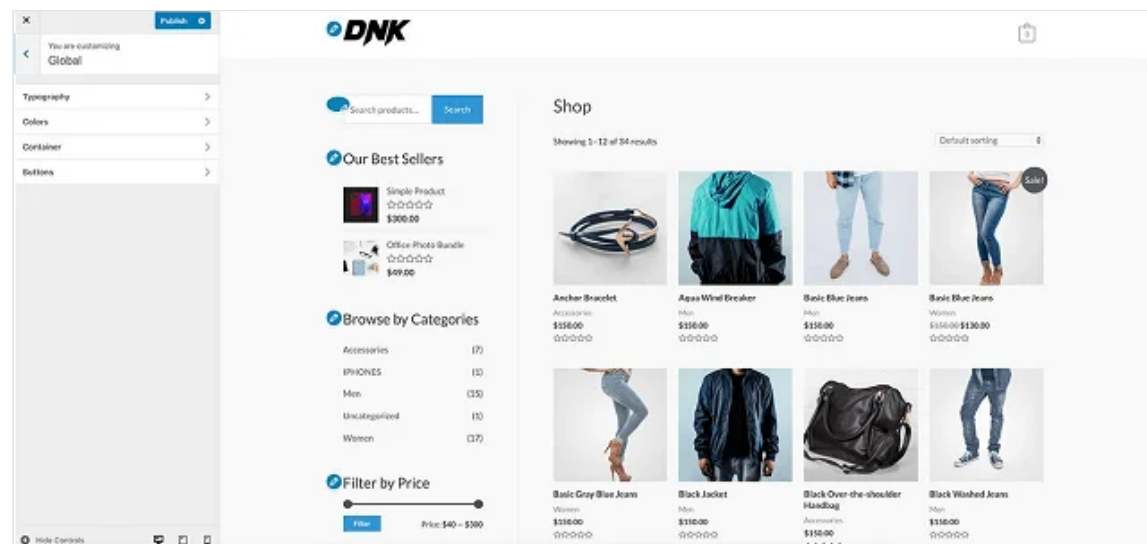
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Don't forget to assign a category to your product as well as upload any product images you have. When you're done with all the product details, hit the **Publish** button and your product will be live in your store.

You can then repeat this process for all other products you want to sell in your store.

Step 6: Customize the look of your store

Now that your store is set up, you can customize the style and the look of it. Keep in mind that your store design will depend on your theme, so you'll need to use your theme's customizer to tweak the settings.



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As you can see, you can change colors and fonts, upload your own logo, configure how your menu looks, and more.

Step 7: Start marketing your store

Once you have added all the products to your store and customized it to your liking, consider the first part of the job done. Now, if you want to know **how** to sell on WordPress, it goes beyond setting up the store.

It's time to start implementing your marketing strategy.

Your main goals are to drive traffic to the store and, of course, to generate sales. There are many ways to promote your business and increase ecommerce store sales, so this topic deserves a whole different article. Here are just a few tips to help you with both driving traffic and getting sales.

Create a blog to generate organic traffic

Blogging is a popular marketing strategy that can help you drive organic traffic from search engines. When you optimize your content for SEO, chances are, people looking for something relevant to your niche will find your website.

You can post about the production process, share tips for using a particular product, and feature testimonials or case studies from past customers.

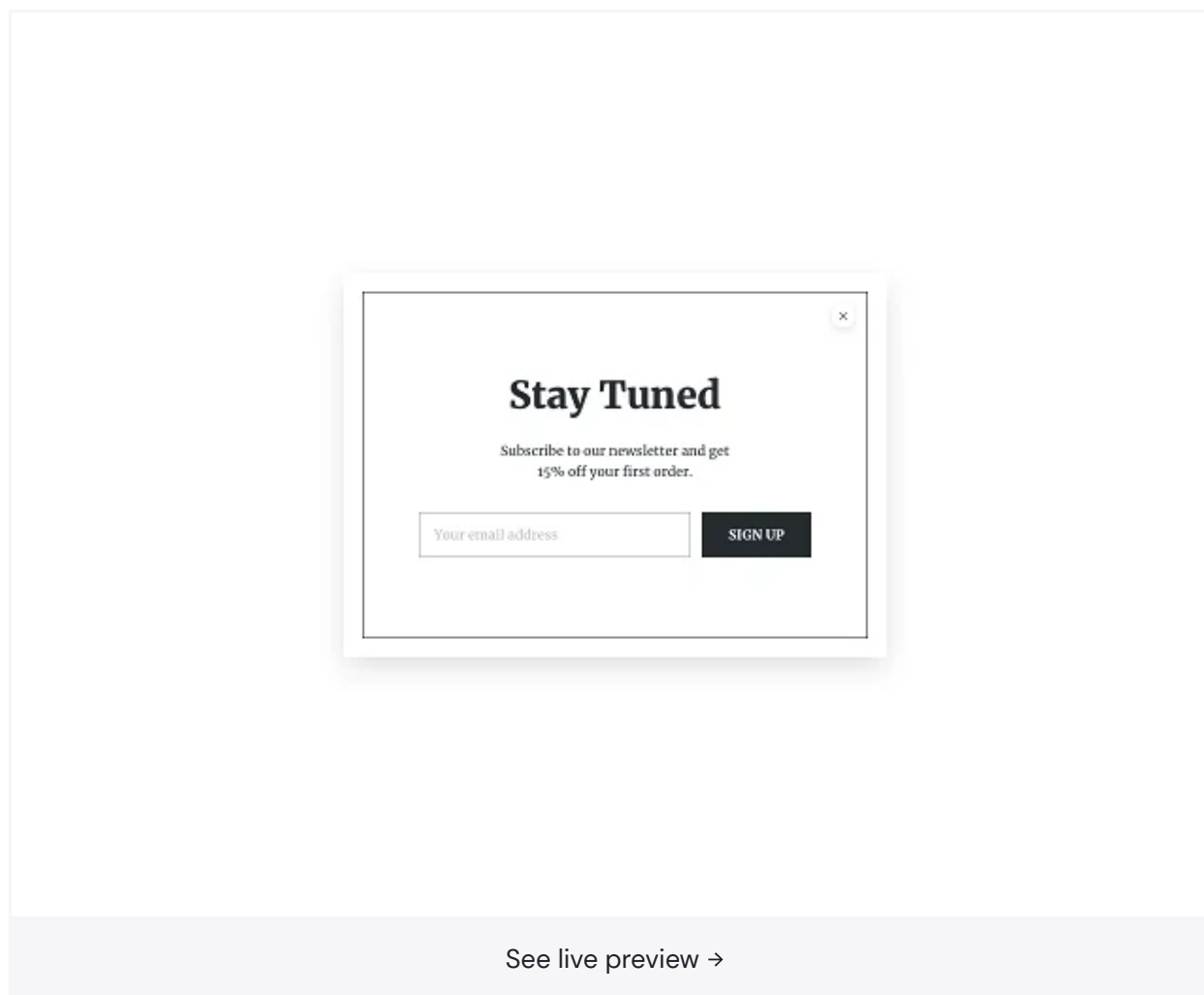
If your content is high-quality and provides value to the readers, search engines will pick it up and drive visitors to your website. Once that happens, you'll be able to convert those visitors into blog subscribers and then — into customers using the power of email marketing.

And that brings us to the next point.

Start building an email list

Most people won't be ready to buy the first time they land on your store. And that's why you want to collect their email addresses to be able to reach out later.

To do that, you can use eye-catching email subscription forms that would pop up a few seconds after a visitor has landed on your website, when they open a particular page, or even right before they hit exit.



Want the best results? Then instead of just asking visitors to “Subscribe”, offer a lead magnet in exchange for their email addresses. A lead magnet can be a discount, exclusive content, a template, or practically anything that is of value to your audience. For example, if we had to create a lead magnet for this blog post, it would probably be a cheat sheet titled “How to sell on WordPress”!

Build social media presence

Being on social media is crucial for your business, but you should focus on the platforms where your ideal audience hangs out.

For instance, to engage in a conversation with your followers, Facebook and Twitter are the most obvious choices. Whereas, Instagram and Pinterest might bring better results for sales and traffic. Use your Instagram bio for generating leads and start pinning your product images on Pinterest to drive people directly to your store.

Step 8: Add extra functionality with Woocommerce extensions

The last step is to add extra functionality to your store with WooCommerce extensions (<https://woocommerce.com/product-category/woocommerce-extensions/>). There are hundreds of free and paid WooCommerce extensions that you can choose from. They add

extra features such as the ability to sell your products on Facebook, sync your customers with your MailChimp subscribers, offer extra payment gateways, sell subscriptions, add extra shipping options, and more.

How to sell on WordPress: final thoughts

By now, you have a clear idea of how to sell on WordPress. As you can see, the platform makes it easy to launch an ecommerce website and provides a lot of features to help you build the store you want. And after reading this guide, you should be ready to get started! The only thing left to do now is to take the first step and decide on what kind of online store you want to open.

Happy selling!

Brenda Barron is a writer from southern California. You can find out more about her at [The Digital Inkwell \(http://thedigitalinkwell.com/\)](http://thedigitalinkwell.com/)

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