

WordPress SEO

Getting Your WordPress Website or Blog SEO Ready

This Action Plan will give you the key steps involved in setting up a WordPress site to be completely SEO-Ready. It's a list of the first things we do with all our clients sites to ensure they are completely ready for SEO.



Host

You need a good host, preferably one that supports both HTTP2 and Apache PageSpeed. Hosts that support Apache PageSpeed are few and far between, however HTTP2 is a must. Contact your host for details.

Plugins

You'll need the following plugins, similar plugins will work also, but you won't be able to follow the step by step instructions below.

- **Yoast SEO**
www.WordPress.org/plugins/WordPress-seo/
- **EWWW Image Optimiser**
www.WordPress.org/plugins/ewww-image-optimizer/
- **Google XML Sitemaps**
www.WordPress.org/plugins/google-sitemap-generator/
- **W3 Total Cache**
www.WordPress.org/plugins/w3-total-cache/

Install these plugins and activate them, then let's continue.

First Steps

Cut the Bloat

Your first step should be reducing the Plugin bloat on your WordPress website. Go individually through all your plugins, evaluate whether you need them, and disable the ones that are not truly necessary.

Many Themeforest themes come with a lot of bloated plugins, such as Slider plugins. Some Themeforest themes even automatically install WooCommerce regardless of whether you have a store or not, so ensure you disable WooCommerce if you do not have an online store.

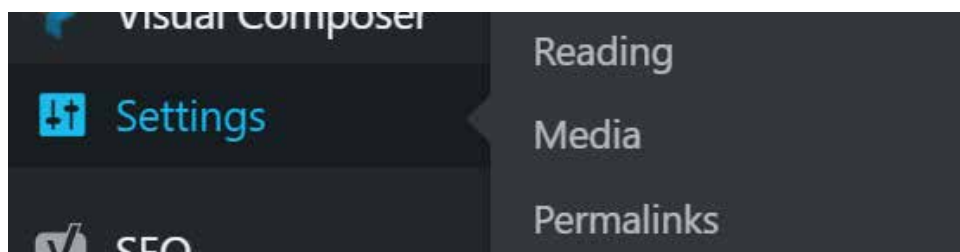
You'll need the following plugins, similar plugins will work also, but you won't be able to follow the step by step instructions below.

Reading Settings

Make sure you have the Search Engine Visibility box unchecked, or you won't be appearing in Google.

Permalink Settings

If your posts are time sensitive, set your Permalinks to "Month and Name" otherwise, simply set them to Post Name. This allows you to have short concise URL's that are more effective for your SEO.



Yoast Set Up

Many people are surprised to hear that Yoast doesn't work on its own, and needs to be configured correctly to maximise its effectiveness. First, head to the Yoast Search Appearance page.

General Settings

Make sure you have the Search Engine Visibility box unchecked, or you won't be appearing in Google.

- **Title Separator**

Leave this as “_”.

- **Knowledge Graph**

Set your company details (unless this is a personal blog) and upload a square version of your logo.

- **Content Types**

Skip this, it's not important.

- **Media**

Leave “Redirect attachment URLs” as Yes.

- **Taxonomies**

Pay attention here, this is important. The reasoning behind this is that you don't want to be duplicating content needlessly across your site for Google to index.

- Change “Show Categories in search results” to No.
- Change “Show Tags in search results” to No.

- **Archives**

- Change “Show Author Archives in Search results” to Disabled.
- Change “Date Archives” to Disabled.

- **Breadcrumbs**

Enable Breadcrumbs, it's the markup that changes your URL's and makes them look neater in the Search Engine Results.

Social Settings

That's it for the General Settings, now head to "Social" Settings within Yoast. Setup Your Social Profiles with all the relevant information

Facebook Tab

Change "Add Open Graph Meta Data" to Enabled.

Facebook App ID: If you have a Facebook App for your site, add it here. If you don't know what that is, ignore that.

Add a cover photo that you'd like to use for your Website if Facebook can't find a relevant photo to use when sharing your content onto Facebook. This image is used if the blog post/page doesn't contain any images.

Twitter, Pinterest, Google+

These are similar settings, fill in the details if you have or share to those platforms. That's it for Yoast, let's move on!

Google XML Sitemaps

Basic Options

Tick the "Notify" options for both Bing and Google.

Post Priority

Use "Comment Count" to set Priority of a post.

Sitemap Content

Include "Homepage" "Posts" "Static Pages" and all your shop/membership/etc related special pages if you have them. If you're worried, just include everything except for "Tags", "archives" and "taxonomies" or anything with those words.

Change Frequencies

Include "Homepage" "Posts" "Static Pages" and all your shop/membership/etc related special pages if you have them. If you're worried, just include everything except for "Tags", "archives" and "taxonomies" or anything with those words.

- **Homepage:** Daily
- **Posts:** Monthly
- **Static:** Weekly
- **Leave the others as is.**

Change Frequencies

- **Homepage:** 1.0
- **Posts:** 0.6
- **Static Pages:** 0.6
- **Minimum Post priority:** 0.2
- **Categories:** 0.3
- **Tags:** 0.2
- **Others (excluding products or other important pages, which you should set as 0.6):** 0.2

EWWW Optimisation

Basic Settings

Head to Settings > EWWW. It's best to splurge on the Premium EWWW and get an API key to put in here, however, this guide will work without it, just skip the things you can't do. However, your results will be lesser.

- **API key:** Put your API key here.
- **JPG Optimisation Level:** Lossy Compression
- **PNG Optimisation Level:** Lossy Compression
- **GIP Optimisation Level:** Lossless Compression
- **PDF Optimisation Level:** No Compression
- **Backup Originals:** Up to you, it does use more disk space.

Advanced Settings

- **JPG Quality Level:** 75
- **Parallel Optimisation:** If on VPS, tick. If on shared hosting, don't tick.
- **Include Media Library Folders:** Tick
- **Ignore the rest and Save Changes**

Resize Settings

- **Resize Media Images:**
 - Max width: 2048
 - Max Height: 2048.
- **Resize Existing Images:** Tick
- **Ignore the rest and Save Changes**

Conversion Settings

- **Enable PNG to JPG conversion:** Tick, leave background color empty
- Ignore the rest and **Save Changes**

WebP Settings

- **JPG/PNG to WebP:** Tick this box.
- Ignore the rest and **Save Changes**

Bulk Optimise

Head to Media -> Bulk Optimise.

Now we will bring your existing images into line with our new optimisation, if your server is slow, add a 2 second pause between images, then press "Begin Optimisation".

This will take a few hours, leave it running. Don't close your browser window or shutdown/sleep your computer.

W3 Total Cache

Head to "Performance -> General Settings".

Page Cache

- **Page Cache:** Enabled (Tick)
- **Page Cache Method:** Disk (Enhanced if available, otherwise Basic)

Minify

Warning: After enabling Minify, ensure your site still works correctly, if it stops working, come back and disable Minify.

- **Minify:** Enable
- **Minify Mode:** Auto
- **Minify Cache Method:** Disk
- **HTML, JS, CSS minifier:** Leave as Default.

Opcode Cache

This is available on most good hosts and with a Website Care Plan.

- **OpCode Cache:** Opcode: Zend Opcache
- **Validate Timestamps:** Ticked

Database Cache

- **Database Cache:** Enabled
- **Database Cache Method:** Disk

Opcode Cache

This is important on sites with Membership and other similar features

- Object Cache: Enabled
- Object Cache Method: Disk

Browser Cache

- Browser Cache: Enabled
- Ignore the rest, and Save all Changes

Page Cache

Head to Performance > Page Cache.

- Cache SSL Requests: Ticked
- Ignore the rest, and Save all Changes

Browser Cache

Head to Performance > Browser Cache. Tick the following items:

- Set Last-Modified Header
- Set Expires Header
- Set cache control header
- Enable HTTP (gzip) compression
- Ignore the rest, and Save all Changes

That's it!

I hope you enjoyed this guide on making your WordPress website or blog SEO ready. We use this internally to get all sites ready for real SEO, so we know it has been useful for you! If you'd like to find out more about our website care plans, visit our website for details at www.ideaengine.com.au