

On-Page Optimization Checklist

| Step | ✓ | Description | Reference | Notes / Comments |
|------|---|---|---|--|
| 1 | | Choose One Topic and Keyword (KW) Phrase Per Page or Post | | Stick to a single, focused topic per page or post as this opens the door for more content to be published and creates cross-linking opportunities. |
| 2 | | Gather Keyword Options | https://adwords.google.com/KeywordPlanner | For "money" pages, pages like home, about, and services, use the free Google KW Planner tool to gather KW options. For posts, start typing the topic you wish to focus on into Google search and the free Keyword (KW) Suggest tool will suggest phrases you might want to optimize (and search) for. |
| 3 | | Assess Relevance, Specificity and Volume | https://adwords.google.com/KeywordPlanner | With KW Suggest, popular phrases are displayed in descending order of search volume. With Google KW Planner, search volume ranges will be presented to you as numeric values. It is more important to satisfy visitors than drive a lot of disinterested visitors to your website, pick the phrase that is most relevant and most specific. Longer phrases tend to be easier to optimize. |
| 4 | | Note Primary (Focus) and Secondary Keyword Choices | | Your primary (focus) KW phrase is the phrase you want to show up in search results for and the "focus" topic of your page or post. Secondary (similar and often seen together) keyword phrases help Google confirm your relevance and create more opportunities to be found. Pick the focus phrase you want to be found for and note down any relevant secondary keyword phrases for later use. |
| 5 | | Assess Search Intent | https://www.searchenginjournal.com/seo-101/how-people-search/ | <p>Google's goal is "... to make it as easy as possible for you to find the information you need and get the things you need to do done."</p> <p>When a search phrase is entered into Google, Google tries to serve up content that will satisfy most users, that will satisfy the "search intent". To do that, it shows different results and measures the amount of engagement (time on page and site, repeat visits, bookmarks, shares, and backlinks). The content that earns high engagement is considered best able to satisfy the searcher and his or her "search intent".</p> <p>Your content should strive to satisfy search intent. Look at the top ranking websites for the phrase you want to rank for. What problem are they trying to solve? Are they providing a definition, how-to instructions, or is the searcher looking for a specific brand name or locations? Consider whether you can satisfy the user intent. What topics are covered in existing results? How well are they covered? Your content should aim to do BETTER - be more comprehensive, specific, or detailed, use more or better visuals, or offer something original. You should provide sources for all your data and serve up meaningful examples. Be exceptional.</p> |
| 6 | | Enter Post Title | https://moz.com/learn/seo/title-tag | Your title tag is (usually) what shows up as the blue underlined text in Google search results. It should accurately describe what a visitor will discover when they click on your link. It should be clever enough to incite clicks but not be misleading. Title tags should be unique, use your focus keyword phrase, and 50-60 characters in length. Anything more than that will be truncated (...) in search results. |

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| 7 | | Customize Post Permalink (URL) | https://moz.com/blog/15-seo-best-practices-for-structuring-urls | Your permalink is the Internet address of your page or post. It should be unique, contain your focus KW phrases, reflect the page or post content, and be succinct. In most instances, it should closely match your post title. The permalink should not exceed 115 characters. Shorter is better. Remove stop words ("a", "the") as they add no value. |
| 8 | | Post Body Text | https://www.b-seenontop.com/seo-blog/seo-copywriting-best-practices/ | Your post body text should (a) satisfy search intent; and (b) be skimmable. Write content to satisfy the search intent of the focus keyword phrase. Make sure your content is unique, well-organized, clearly written, complete, accurate, specific, detailed, engaging, and valuable. Aim for 300 words (minimum). Use your KW phrase 2-3 times on short pages, 4-6 times on longer ones. Use lots of white space, headings, sub-headings, bullet points, and visuals to facilitate easy scanning. |
| 9 | | H1 Heading | | Use ONE and only 1 H1 heading per page or post. Incorporate your focus KW phrase as best you can. |
| 10 | | H2-6 Headings | | Use H2-6 headings to break up your content and to help enable skimming. It's okay to repeat your focus KW phrase once here, but only if it helps your audience. |
| 11 | | Secondary Keyword Phrase(s) in Post Body | | Use only if they're relevant and helpful to your audience. Don't expect to rank on page 1 for these terms unless there's no competition. They're there primarily to help increase your content relevancy relative to the competition. |
| 12 | | Visuals | https://www.pinterest.com/beseenontop/blog-post-image-sources/ | Visuals keep people on the page (and your site) longer - a form of engagement and important Google ranking factor. Visuals can be photos, charts, infographics, slides, illustrations, videos, GIFs, and more. Select relevant, high-quality and eye-catching visuals that break up / enhance your content and appeal to your audience. |
| 13 | | Ensure you have permission to use images | http://www.macworld.co.uk/how-to/mac-software/law-using-free-images-found-online-3526354/ | It is a serious offense to use someone's trademarks or visuals without permission. You risk a cease and desist order or being sued. Create your own visuals, pay for stock images, or request permission from the originator. If credit is requested in exchange for use, be sure to provide it. |
| 14 | | Image sizes | | Large images slow down your website - a Google ranking factor. Use images saved for the web, typically less than 100k in size. Resize them before uploading as resizing is complicated once on the site. |
| 15 | | Image URLs | | One image URL should contain your focus KW phrase. The others should be descriptive. Name them before uploading as renaming is complicated once images are on the site. |
| 16 | | Image Captions (optional) | | A good place to use your primary keyword phrase if your post is on the short side, but only if it helps your audience. |
| 17 | | Image Alt Tags | | Image alt tags serve multiple purposes: (1) They help you rank so at least one of your image alt tags should contain your focus KW phrase. (2) They help people with visual impairments. Alt tags are read aloud using software for the blind and dyslexic. (3) They become the default shared text on some social media channels, for example, Pinterest. |

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| 18 | | Image Link | | Images should be set to link to the page on which they reside so if someone bookmarks, links to or shares the image, the next person who visits will be taken to your post (with the image AND text) and not just a file with the image by itself |
| 19 | | Meta Description | http://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/how-to-write-meta-description-ht | The goal of the meta description is to incent clicks. It should contain your focus keyword phrase (because it gets highlighted in search results and thereby stands out in crowded search results), should be 300-320 characters in length, and should (again) avoid quotes. If you have an ecommerce website or it's too hard to come up with a unique meta description, leave it blank. Google will pick relevant text from your post to display to searchers. Don't use quotes or your description will be truncated. |
| 20 | | Meta Keywords | | Leave blank. Google ignores it and it's publically viewable, potentially giving away your KW choices to your competition. |
| 21 | | Categories and Tags | How To Pick Blog Categories and Tags | Assign each post a unique category and as many relevant tags as you want. Goal is to make it easier for visitors to find the information they're looking for by grouping together related content. |
| 22 | | Canonical Tag | https://moz.com/blog/rel-canonical | Set this to your post permalink UNLESS your page or post is a duplicate, has been published somewhere else first. Then you want the canonical tag to contain the URL of the page or post where the content was orionally published. The original will get credit for links. |