



## WordPress Checklist

### #1. Getting Started

We all know the importance of starting right.

If you understand the basics, right from the beginning of the process, the rest of the exercise becomes as smooth as silk.

So make sure you make a perfect start by following these steps systematically to get the best end results.

- Select Web Hosting: Choose a suitable web host depending on your requirements.
- Use the one-touch installation software your host provides to install WordPress. Take note of any generated user names and logins.

### #2. WordPress Pre Development Checklist

So where do you actually start?

That's the first question that's probably popped in your head. This checklist is the answer to that very question.

Regardless of whether you are a beginner or a WordPress expert, this particular checklist will benefit anyone who is in the process of developing a new WordPress website.

- Choose the Right Directory: Select a directory and install the files under public\_html. Do not use 'root' or 'WordPress.'
- Change Table Prefix: Use random letters/numbers\_table names instead of the default wp\_table names. Checkout [Change Table Prefix](#) Plugin.
- Use Unique Login/Password: Refrain from using admin/admin as admin login/password. Alternatively, you may follow these examples;
- Username- CMW (e.g.)
- Password- (Use [Strong Password Generator](#) Plugin).
- Hide your Test Website from Search Engines: Make sure you hide your website from the search engines by checking the option under **Settings > Reading** "Discourage search engines from indexing this site".
- Additional Steps: Once the installation is complete, here are some of the additional things you should do.
- Create a "Coming Soon" page with the free [SeedProd Coming Soon](#) or [WP Maintenance Mode](#) Plugins.
- Set Default Date & Time: Don't forget to update the Time Zone, Date/Time under **Settings > General**.
- Update Blog Title: Very important to update the blog title and tag line appropriately under **Settings > General**.



- Change Media Settings: Under **Settings > Media**, uncheck the “Organize my uploads into month and year based folders” option if you would like to save all the images under ‘uploads’ folder. Be aware that large sites with 1000’s of images will make this folder very heavy.
- Change Blog Category: Similarly, under **Posts > Categories**, rename the ‘uncategorized’ to set up a default category for Posts.
- Password Protect Demo Site: Increase the security for your demo website by installing the [Password Protected](#) plugin.
- Delete Sample Config File: Finally, don’t forget to remove the sample config file, WP-config-sample.php in your root under public\_html.

As the admin, you should be able to upload/remove media and install new plugins as per your requirements.

### #3. WordPress Development Checklist

Now comes the most important checklist.

There are a million settings and changes you need to make during the WordPress development process, in order to build a website that meets all your requirements.

That's why, we have included even the minutest of steps that are important during development so that you never miss out on anything crucial to your website.

- Remove Default Content: Here, the first thing you need to do is remove the WordPress default content like posts, comments and more.
- Create a Sitemap: Next, create a logical sitemap in Notepad, Word or Excel and add pages like About us, Contact us, etc, according to this sitemap.
- Use Dash for URLs: Make sure to use “-” in your URL’s instead of “\_”.
- Add Blog Categories: Under Posts > Categories, add appropriate blog categories.
- Add Tags & Media: Once you’ve added the blog categories, include suitable posts, tags and media files.
- Update Menu: Then, as per the Sitemap, add Menu under the Appearances > Menu section.
- Use ALT Text: Don’t forget to add alt text to all the website images. You may also use the [Search Friendly Images](#) Plugin.
- Add Newsletter Subscription: Include the Email Opt-In Form for newsletter subscription. You may use [Newsletter](#) Plugin. We use [MailChimp List Subscribe Form](#) Plugin.
- Make a Plugin List: Make a list of all the plugins you wish to install. Few recommended Plugins:
  - SeedProd Coming Soon: <https://wordpress.org/plugins/coming-soon/>
  - WordPress SEO by Yoast: <https://wordpress.org/plugins/wordpress-seo/>
  - Google Analytics Plugin: <https://www.monsterinsights.com/>
  - BackUpWordPress: <https://wordpress.org/plugins/backupwordpress/>



- WordPress Backup to Dropbox: <https://wordpress.org/plugins/wordpress-backup-to-dropbox/>
- Broken Link Checker: <https://wordpress.org/plugins/broken-link-checker/>
- Redirection: <https://wordpress.org/plugins/redirection/>
- WP-reCAPTCHA: <https://wordpress.org/plugins/google-captcha/>
- Contact Form 7: <https://wordpress.org/plugins/contact-form-7/>
- Contact Form 7 reCAPTCHA Extension: <https://wordpress.org/plugins/contact-form-7-recaptcha-extension/>
- BBQ: Block Bad Queries: <https://wordpress.org/plugins/block-bad-queries/>
- WP-Optimize: <https://wordpress.org/plugins/wp-optimize/>
- WP-PageNavi: <https://wordpress.org/plugins/wp-pagenavi/>
- WP Super Cache: <https://wordpress.org/plugins/wp-super-cache/>
- iThemes Security: <https://wordpress.org/plugins/better-wp-security/>
- Revision Control: <https://wordpress.org/plugins/revision-control/>
- Error Log Monitor: <https://wordpress.org/plugins/error-log-monitor/>
- Add Social Icons: Add social media icons/links for Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Pinterest, LinkedIn, etc. You may use [AddThis](#), [ShareThis](#) or [Share Bar](#) Plugins.
- Add Social Feeds: Also include feed posts for;
  - [Facebook Page Plugin](#)
  - [Twitter Plugin](#)
  - [Google Plus](#)
- Create Social Profiles:
  - [Facebook Fan Page](#)
  - [Twitter](#)
  - [Google Plus](#)
  - [Pinterest](#)
- Style Sticky Post: Style the sticky posts well and make sure they function well. More info at [RoadtoBlogging.com](#)
- Check for Content Overflow: Make sure there are no posts with pictures that break the content layout or are too big for the content column. In that case, make Overflow: Hidden in you CSS.
- Highlight Author's Comments: Ensure that the author comment is highlighted differently. Checkout How to [Highlight Author's Comments](#) by WPBeginner.
- Add Comment Closed Message: The comments display form is replaced with a “Comments Off” message or something similar.
- Create 404 Page: Another important thing is to ensure that the 404 page is created and customized.



- Test Search Page: Please check if the search page is accessible to users. You can check by navigating to <http://yoursite.com/?s=Test>.
- Use & Test Pagination: Test the pagination using [WP-PageNavi](#) plugin.
- Add Favicon: Add custom Favicon.
- Use Breadcrumb: Don't forget to use Breadcrumbs for easy navigation. It's a part of [WordPress SEO by Yoast](#) Plugin
- Link Logo: Link the company logo to the Homepage.
- Remove Lorem Ipsum: Lastly, make sure you remove all the Lorem Ipsum text on the website.

## #4. WordPress Launch Checklist

Congratulations! You're finally done with the tricky development process!

Just follow them all and have a hassle-free launch!

- Take Backups: Once you launch your website, it's important to take regular back-ups. You may use these plugins for creating back-ups. Check Content Structure: Check the structure and content for everything including pages, categories, URL's, submission forms, etc.
- Update Admin Email: Also, under Settings > General, check social links, contact info and admin email.
- Implement Security: Make sure you have all the security in place, like password strength, files and folder permissions, etc. using the a plugin like WordFence.
- Ensure CBC: Check if your website is cross browser compatible by extensive testing. Free Trial with [Cross Browser Testing](#).
- Enable Site to be Crawled: Uncheck the option under Settings > Reading of "Discourage search engines from indexing this site" and make website visible to search engines.
- Disable Coming Soon Page: Launch the plugin SeedProd and disable the Coming Soon page.
- Test for Responsiveness: Ensure that your website is mobile friendly. Run [Google's Mobile Friendly Test](#) to determine the same.
- Check Loading Speed: You must also improve the page loading speed with the help of [Google's Page Speed Insights](#).
- Compress Images: Reduce all the image sizes by almost 50% by compressing the PNG and JPG files using [TinyPNG](#), [WP Smush it](#) or [Short Pixel](#) plugin.
- Use Latest WP Version: Make sure you are using the latest version of WordPress. If not, ensure that you upgrade on going live.
- Upgrade Plugins: It is also important to upgrade all the plugins on your website before going live.
- Open URL in New Tab: Check if all your external links are working by opening them in new tabs. Use code similar to this for links
  - `<a href='#' target='_blank'></a>`



- Check Broken Links: It is imperative that you check for broken links on your website before going live using [Broken Link Checker](#) Plugin
- Disable Coming Soon Page: Launch the plugin SeedProd and disable the Coming Soon page.

## #5. WordPress SEO Checklist

Follow each step carefully and you'll have a fully search engine optimized website ready in a jiffy!

- Manage 301 Redirects: Manage your 301 redirection with the help of user [Redirection](#) Plugin.
- Enable Site to be Crawled: Turn on the site visibility under the Settings > Reading, if you haven't done it already. Uncheck "Discourage search engines from indexing this site".
- Use H1 Tag: Ensure that you have only one H1 tag on each of your pages.
- Use H2 Tag: Also, make sure you have the H2 tag only within the content for headers
- Add Alt text to Images: Don't forget to add alt text to all the website images. You may also use the [Search Friendly Images](#) Plugin.
- Test XML Sitemap: Check if the Yoast's WordPress SEO Plugin's in-built sitemap is working or else install [Google XML Sitemap](#) Plugin.
- Check Robots.txt: Next, it's important to have the Robots.txt file in place and ensure it is Optimized. More Info @ [ElegantThemes.com](#)
- Compress Images: Reduce the size of the images on your website using [WP Smush it](#) Plugin
- www or non www: Redirect the 'www' to 'non-www' or vice versa but stick to one
- Signup for Webmaster Tools: If you have found any issues with the website so far, sign up for [Google's Webmaster Tool](#) and fix those issues. Ensure that you have submitted both the 'www' as well as the 'non-www' versions.
- Test Breadcrumb: Ensure that links on Breadcrumb are working.
- Limit Meta Title (V.V.Imp): Another thing to ensure is that the Meta Title remains only 55 characters long, including the spaces. WordPress SEO has this feature inbuilt for you.
- Limit Meta Desc (V.V.Imp): Similarly, the Meta Description should only contain 155 characters, including spaces.
- Use LSI Keywords: [LSI Keywords](#) are very important for SEO. Make sure you include enough in your content. Find LSI using [Google Keyword Planner](#), [Uber Suggest](#), [LSI Graph](#) or [Google Search](#) (hint: look for keywords at the bottom of the page after completing the search query)
- Check Duplicate Content: It is very important that all your content is original and that you have no duplicate content on your website. Use [CopyScape](#)
- Interlink Content: Interlinking is also a significant aspect of SEO. So make sure you have contextual links within your website.



- Link to External Links: It is also important to have external links to other resourceful websites, within your content like we have done on this page.
- Optimize Site: Use an optimization plugin to help with the optimization of the page and downloading
- Loading Speed: by optimizing images and content within the page.
- Ensure Responsiveness: Ensure that your website is responsive and mobile ready by running [Google's Mobile Friendly Test](#).
- Create Short URL: Opt for a shorter URL for the pages, e.g. [How To Create a Viral Infographic](#) post.
- Submit for Local Listing: If your website is about a local business, make sure you submit it to [Google Business](#).
- Review Analytics: Don't forget to add & review Google Analytics.
- Check Onpage Content: Check all the aspects related to OnPage SEO before going live. A Must Read [On-Page SEO Guide](#) by Brian Dean from Backlinko.com
- Proofread Content: Make sure you proofread the entire website to check for spelling and grammar errors, before going live.
- Use CDN: It is advisable to use CDN networks like [MaxCDN](#) to ensure better speed and usability. JetPack provides you with a CDN when you use it.
- Exclude IP from Analytics: Exclude home and office IP addresses in [Google Analytics](#). Google Analytic Help More information on Excluding Internal Traffic can be found on [Google Analytic Help](#) Section.
- Add Social Sharing Icons: Don't forget to include Social Media icons on all pages of the WordPress website. You may use any of the [best WordPress plugins](#) like [AddThis](#), [ShareThis](#) or [Share Bar](#).

## #6. WordPress Security Checklist

Now let me tell you, security is a very important aspect of website development.

Hence, before you present your WordPress website to the world, it is imperative that you have tight web security in place.

Through this checklist, you will get to learn which plugins and additional settings are required to safeguard your precious website from malicious threats.

- Monitor Site Performance: Get regular reports of your websites performance with the help of the JetPack Plugin.
- Delete Install & Upgrade Files: Be sure to delete /wp-admin/install.php and /wp-admin/upgrade.php after every WordPress installation or upgrade.
- Limit Suspicious Login Attempts: Limit the number of login attempts possible both through normal login as well as using auth cookies by using Limit Login Attempts plugin
- Use a firewall & Security plugin: We strongly recommend that you use the most comprehensive security plugin, WordFence plugin, because it's free and takes care of almost all the security issues on a website.



- Go Live: Once all these things are in place, you may either go live at this stage and follow the SEO Checklist after or vice-versa.

## #7. WordPress Maintenance Checklist

There! You've finally taken care of everything for your WordPress website.

This maintenance checklist will give you stepwise information on how you can run your website smoothly and conduct regular checks to make sure it functions impeccably.

- Clean Spam Comments: Tackle an attack of thousands of spam comments with the help of [Delete Pending Comments](#) Plugin.
- Test Forms: Test the functioning of your Contact form by sending an inquiry through it.
- Check Broken Links: Look for broken links on your website with the [CheckMyLink](#) Extension for Chrome & [Broken Link Checker](#) for WordPress.
- Post Revision Control: Gain total control over your post revision system with [Revision Control](#) plugin.
- Reply to Comments: Make sure you check your comments section and answer questions & interact regularly with your readers.
- Update Plugins: Keep a tab on plugin updates and upgrade them regularly.
- Take Regular Backups: Don't forget to take backups of the latest databases and files using the Backup plugin we have installed.
- Check Google Analytics: Check [Google Analytics](#) regularly.
- Review Webmaster Tools: Similarly, check [Google Webmaster Tools](#) periodically.
- Check Resources Used: Keep an eye on your resources with the [P3 – Plugin Performance Profiler](#).
- Monitor Statistics: Use [WP Statistics](#) plugin to monitor your WordPress website's statistics.
- Ongoing Security Checks: A good plugin which scans your WordPress installation and gives you suggestions accordingly is [WP Security Scan](#). This plugin will check for below things:
  - Passwords
  - File Permissions
  - Database Security
  - WordPress Admin protection