ScaledOn

FREE SELF-CHECK

SEO Basics Checklist

The foundations of search visibility, in plain terms.

- 33 checks — across 6 sections
- Your own site — page by page
- Plain terms — no jargon
- Free tools — nothing to buy

How to use it: Start with the pages closest to a sale: your main service or product pages, your location pages and your contact page. Tick what's done and note what isn't. Some fixes need access to your website's settings or code; if you don't manage those, send the check and the page address to whoever maintains your site.

1 Can Google find and read your site?

- [ ] 1 **Your site is verified in Google Search Console.**
  It's free, and it's where Google reports what it can and can't index.
- [ ] 2 **Your important pages are indexed.**
  Check the Page indexing report in Search Console for site-wide problems, and paste a page's full address into URL Inspection to check that page.
- [ ] 3 **Important pages aren't blocked.**
  Ask your developer to confirm none carries a "noindex" instruction and none is blocked in robots.txt. The two work differently, so check both.
- [ ] 4 **If your site has a sitemap, it lists your important pages at their current addresses and is submitted in Search Console.**
- [ ] 5 **Each page has one preferred address.**
  Other versions, such as "http" or the version with or without "www", redirect to it.
- [ ] 6 **Pages that moved send people straight to the new address with a permanent redirect.**
  Pages removed with no replacement show a proper "page not found", rather than sending visitors somewhere unrelated.
- [ ] 7 **Every important page is linked from at least one other page on your site.**
  A page nothing links to is hard for Google, and customers, to find.
- [ ] 8 **Every page address starts with https:// and the browser shows no "Not secure" warning.**

2 Does each page match what people search?

- [ ] 9 **Each important page has a clear purpose.**
  Pages that repeat the same information for the same customer are combined into one.
- [ ] 10 **The words on the page are the words your customers use, not only your internal names for things.**
- [ ] 11 **Those words read naturally.**
  Repeating a service, a keyword or a town name over and over to rank counts as spam in Google's policies.

- [ ] 12 **Each page has a clear, concise title that says what's on it.**
  Google may use it as the clickable headline in search results.
- [ ] 13 **Each important page has its own accurate description (the meta description).**
  Google may use it as the summary under the headline, or write its own from the page.
- [ ] 14 **The main heading says what the page is about, and subheadings break it into sections a reader can scan.**
- [ ] 15 **The page answers the question fully, for a person, not for a search engine.**
  Articles say who wrote them.
- [ ] 16 **Prices, services, hours, dates and staff are accurate and current.**
- [ ] 17 **Images that carry information have alt text describing them, and large image files are resized so they don't slow the page.**
- [ ] 18 **Links between your pages use words that say where they go, not "click here".**

3 Does the site work for the person on it?

- [ ] 19 **The site works on a phone, and the phone version shows the same services, prices and contact details as the desktop version.**
  Google primarily uses the mobile version of a site when it indexes and ranks it.
- [ ] 20 **Pages load quickly, respond quickly when tapped, and don't jump around while loading.**
  Check the Core Web Vitals report in Search Console; if it shows too little data, test your main pages with PageSpeed Insights.
- [ ] 21 **Pop-ups don't cover the page on a phone right after someone arrives.**
  A notice required by law, such as a cookie or age notice, is fine.
- [ ] 22 **On pages meant to bring in inquiries or sales, the next step (call, book, buy, get in touch) is easy to find.**

4 Do other sites vouch for you?

- [ ] 23 **Relevant, reputable sites link to you: partners, suppliers, associations, local press.**
  Never buy links to influence rankings; Google treats that as spam. If an ad or sponsorship links to you, it's labeled, and the link is marked as sponsored by whoever edits that site.
- [ ] 24 **If you serve customers locally, your Google Business Profile is verified, and its details are complete and accurate.**
- [ ] 25 **Your website and your main listings show the same business name, address, phone and hours.**
  The name is your real-world business name, without added keywords or towns.
- [ ] 26 **You invite genuine customers to leave an honest Google review, with no incentive, no pressure and no request for a particular rating.**

5 Help search engines and AI tools understand you

- [ ] 27 **Your key information (services, prices, locations, contact details) is on the page as text, not only inside images or PDFs.**
  Google says the same foundations apply to its AI features in Search.

- [ ] 28 **Where Google supports structured data for your type of page (your business, products, articles, events), your developer has added it to match what's on the page, and tested it with Google's Rich Results Test.**

- [ ] 29 **You've checked whether AI assistants like ChatGPT name your business when asked to recommend one like yours, and written down who they name instead.**
  Answers vary from one ask to the next, so ask a few times.

6 Measure what matters

- [ ] 30 **You review Search Console regularly: the searches you appear for, the clicks they bring, and the pages gaining or losing clicks.**

- [ ] 31 **Google Analytics records your important customer actions, such as form submissions and purchases, and marks them as key events.**
  Phone calls need their own call tracking.

- [ ] 32 **You compare the pages getting clicks in Search Console with the pages leading to actions in Analytics.**
  That shows which pages bring customers, not just visitors. Search Console is where you see the searches themselves.

- [ ] 33 **You run this checklist again on a schedule that fits how often your site changes (we suggest every quarter), and always after a redesign, migration or platform change.**

WANT A SECOND SET OF EYES ON IT?

See what's holding your site back

We look at your search data, name what's holding your site back, and show you what we found before any conversation about working together.

See What's Holding Your Marketing Back

No long-term contracts.