

FREE BEGINNER GUIDE · SEO

The Beginner's SEO *Checklist*



A plain-English guide to getting your website found on Google: keywords, page settings, Search Console, helpful content, and links, with no technical background needed.

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point SEO checklist

10

free tools and research
methods

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title & description formula

How Google search works

SEO (search engine optimization) means making it easy for Google to find your pages, understand them, and see that they're the most helpful answer to someone's search.

1. Crawl

Google's robot follows links to discover your pages



2. Index

Google stores your page and works out what it's about



3. Rank

For each search, Google shows the pages it judges most helpful

Keyword

The words people type into Google, like "how to store water."

SEO title

The blue clickable headline shown in Google's results.

Meta description

The short summary under the title in search results.

Backlink

A link to your site from another website. Good ones build trust.

Search Console

Google's free tool showing how your site appears in search.

Sitemap

A file listing your pages so Google can find them all.

What helps

- ☐ Pages that fully answer a question
- ☐ Clear titles and headings
- ☐ A fast, mobile-friendly site
- ☐ Links from trusted, related sites

What doesn't

- ☐ Repeating keywords over and over
- ☐ Thin or copied content
- ☐ Buying links
- ☐ Mass-produced pages with no real value

Be patient: new sites often take 3–6 months or more to get steady Google traffic. SEO is a long game, but the traffic is free and lasts.

Find what people actually search

Before you write, find the exact words your readers use. Beginners do best targeting longer, specific phrases with less competition.

Free method	How to use it
Google autocomplete	Start typing your topic into Google and note the suggestions that appear.
"People also ask"	The question box in results is full of ready-made article ideas.
Related searches	Scroll to the bottom of the results page for more phrases.
Search Console	Once your site is live, see which searches already bring you visitors.
Forums & Q&A sites	Note the exact questions real people ask in your niche.

Pick the right keyword for each page

1. **One main keyword** per page, so pages don't compete with each other
2. **Longer is easier:** "best indoor plants for low light" beats "plants"
3. **Match the intent:** a "how to" search wants a guide, a "best" search wants a list
4. **Check page one:** if big brands fill every result, choose a narrower phrase

My first 5 keywords

One per planned page or article.

Example: from keyword to article outline

Keyword: **"how to store water for emergencies"**

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ H1: How to Store Water for Emergencies | ☐ H2: Where to store it safely |
| ☐ H2: How much water you need | ☐ H2: How often to replace it |
| ☐ H2: The best containers to use | ☐ H2: Free printable checklist |

Set up every page the right way

These settings tell Google, and searchers, exactly what each page is about. Most website builders have them under each page's SEO settings.

The title & description formula

1. **SEO title (under 60 characters):** main keyword first, then a benefit, then your site name
2. **Example:** "Free Beginner Piano Chords Guide (PDF) | MyInfoLabs"
3. **Description (under 155 characters):** what the page offers and why to click
4. **Example:** "Learn piano chords in 7 days: keyboard basics, your first 4 chords, and a 15-minute daily plan."

On-page checklist: 10 points

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Unique SEO title on every page | ☐ Short web address, like /water-guide |
| ☐ Unique meta description | ☐ Descriptive image file names |
| ☐ One H1 headline with the keyword | ☐ Alt text on every image |
| ☐ Subheadings (H2s) to break up text | ☐ Links to 2–3 related pages on your site |
| ☐ Keyword in the first paragraph | ☐ A clear next step for the reader |

Building a new site? [systeme.io](#) has a free plan with a blog, page SEO settings, and your own custom domain.
Start free with [systeme.io](#) →

Weak SEO title	Better SEO title
Home	Free Practical Guides & Ebook Library MyInfoLabs
My Recipes Page	Easy Plant-Based Dinners Under 30 Minutes [Site]
Blog Post 12	How to Start a Balcony Vegetable Garden [Site]

Help Google find your site

You don't need to be technical. These one-time setup steps make sure Google can find, read, and trust your site.

Technical checklist: 10 points

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Site shows the "https" padlock | ☐ Sitemap submitted in Search Console |
| ☐ Looks good and works on phones | ☐ Main pages requested for indexing |
| ☐ Pages load in a few seconds | ☐ No broken links or "page not found" errors |
| ☐ Site added to Google Search Console | ☐ Pages aren't hidden from search by mistake |
| ☐ Domain ownership verified | ☐ Thank-you pages are hidden from search |

Free tool	What it's for
Google Search Console	Indexing, search queries, errors, and sitemaps
PageSpeed Insights	Checks your page speed on phones and computers
Rich Results Test	Checks the structured data on your pages
Google Analytics	Shows how many people visit and what they read
Bing Webmaster Tools	Like Search Console, for Bing search

Fix errors first: check Search Console's "Pages" report once a month. It tells you which pages aren't indexed and why.

Add your site to Search Console in 5 steps

- ☐ Go to Google Search Console and sign in with a Google account
- ☐ Add a "Domain" property with your domain name
- ☐ Verify ownership by adding the record Google gives you at your domain provider
- ☐ Submit your sitemap (often `yoursite.com/sitemap.xml`)
- ☐ Use "URL inspection" to request indexing for your home page

Earn your place in the results

Google's aim is to show the most helpful page. Write for people first: answer the question fully, share real experience, and keep pages up to date.

Content & links checklist: 10 points

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Answers the searcher's question early | ☐ Updated when information changes |
| ☐ Covers the topic better than page one | ☐ Listed on relevant directories |
| ☐ Includes your own experience or examples | ☐ Shared on your social profiles |
| ☐ Easy to scan: short paragraphs, lists | ☐ Useful enough for others to link to |
| ☐ Has an author name and About page | ☐ No bought, swapped, or spammy links |

Month	Simple SEO routine	Done
Month 1	Set up Search Console, fix all page titles and descriptions, and submit your sitemap	☐
Month 2	Publish 4 helpful articles, one per week, each targeting one keyword	☐
Month 3	Add internal links between related pages, and reach out to 5 related sites	☐
Ongoing	Check Search Console monthly and improve pages that get views but few clicks	☐

Shortcuts that backfire

- | | |
|---|--|
|  Stuffing keywords into every line |  Buying links or "SEO packages" that promise rankings |
|  Copying other sites' content |  Hiding text or links from visitors |
|  Publishing hundreds of low-effort pages |  Misleading titles that don't match the page |

YOUR NEXT STEP

Build an SEO-ready site, free

Good SEO starts with a site that's easy to update. If you don't have a website yet, or want your site, blog, and email list in one place, here's the free builder we use ourselves.

WHAT WE USE

Build your site free with [systeme.io](#)

Website & blog

Drag-and-drop pages and a blog for your SEO articles.

Page SEO settings

Set titles, descriptions, and web addresses for each page.

Email marketing

Collect sign-ups and send unlimited emails to up to 2,000 contacts.

Free to start

No credit card needed, and the free plan includes 1 custom domain.

[Create your free account](#) →

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See you on page one,

Uday Chandra

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