

Complete SEO Checklist for New Websites

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✓	Phases	SEO Checklist
☐	1. Pre-Planning	Define SEO goals/KPIs (e.g., traffic targets, conversions).
☐		Conduct keyword/market research (tools: Ahrefs, SEMrush).
☐		Analyze competitors' site structure, content, and backlinks.
☐		Choose an SEO-friendly domain (short, brandable, no penalties).
☐		Secure social media handles and Google Business Profile (if local).
☐		Select a CMS/platform with SEO features (e.g., WordPress + Yoast).
☐		Plan project timeline with SEO milestones (content, audits, reviews).
☐		Draft a high-level sitemap (home, about, services, blog, etc.).
☐		Set up Google Analytics 4 (GA4) and Search Console pre-launch.
☐	2. Information Architecture & Sitemap	Build a hierarchical site structure (e.g., Home > Category > Subcategory).
☐		Map primary keywords to each page (avoid cannibalization).
☐		Create an XML sitemap (include pages, images, videos).
☐		Plan navigation menus (primary, footer, internal links).
☐		Prioritize core pages (homepage, product/service pages).
☐		Design URL structure (short, readable, hyphens, lowercase).
☐		Prepare for multilingual/regional setups (subfolders vs. subdomains).
☐	3. Feature Scoping & Content Strategy	Identify SEO-critical features (FAQs, forums, UGC).
☐		Develop content templates (product pages, blog posts).
☐		Create a content calendar (launch + 3–6 months).
☐		Incorporate semantic SEO (cover subtopics, FAQs).
☐		Address E-E-A-T (author bios, case studies, "About Us").
☐		Plan answer-focused content (AEO) for featured snippets.
☐		Add local SEO content (NAP, location pages) if applicable.
☐		Optimize for LLMO (natural language, conversational queries).
☐		Implement schema markup (FAQ, Product, Breadcrumbs).
☐	4. UI/UX Design Phase	Mobile-first, responsive design (test on devices).
☐		Optimize for speed (compress images, lazy load).
☐		Ensure crawlable navigation (HTML/CSS menus).
☐		Avoid text in images (use HTML/CSS for critical content).
☐		Design clear heading hierarchy (H1, H2, H3).
☐		Plan for content growth (blog pagination, filters).
☐		Include UX/SEO features (breadcrumbs, related posts).
☐		Avoid intrusive pop-ups (follow Core Web Vitals guidelines).
☐		Sync with devs on technical constraints (e.g., interactive elements).
☐	5. Development Phase	Use clean URLs (hyphenated, lowercase, keyword-rich).
☐		Set unique title tags/meta descriptions per page.
☐		Ensure one H1 per page + logical subheadings.
☐		Add alt text to images and compress (WEBP/AVIF).
☐		Enable HTTPS and security headers.
☐		Implement canonical tags for duplicate content.
☐		Add structured data (JSON-LD for Organization, FAQ, etc.).
☐		Optimize code (minify CSS/JS, leverage caching).
☐		Set up 301 redirects (if migrating).
☐	6. Testing Phase	Block staging envs via robots.txt pre-launch.
☐		Crawl staging site (Screaming Frog, Sitebulb).
☐		Validate schema markup (Rich Results Test).

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☐		Check on-page SEO (titles, meta, H1s, links).
☐		Test page speed (Lighthouse, PageSpeed Insights).
☐		Verify mobile-friendliness (Google's Mobile Test).
☐		Remove placeholder content ("Lorem ipsum").
☐		Audit robots.txt and meta robots tags.
☐		Test forms/functionality (avoid high bounce rates).
☐		Plan staging-to-live transition (update canonicals).
☐	7. Deployment & Pre-Launch	Remove blocking (password protection, Disallow).
☐		Activate 301 redirects (if migrating).
☐		Submit XML sitemap to Search Console.
☐		Verify site ownership (Google/Bing Webmaster Tools).
☐		Fetch/render pages in Search Console.
☐		Monitor initial crawl (check logs for errors).
☐		Enable CDN/cloud security (whitelist crawlers).
☐		Announce launch (social media, PR, newsletters).
☐		Double-check analytics/conversion tracking.
☐	8. Post-Launch Optimization	Monitor Search Console/Analytics daily.
☐		Track indexation (site:yourdomain.com).
☐		Run technical audits (Semrush, Ahrefs).
☐		Optimize Core Web Vitals (fix "Poor" pages).
☐		Publish new content (follow calendar).
☐		Build backlinks (outreach, directories).
☐		Refine AEO (target featured snippets).
☐		Improve conversions (A/B test CTAs).
☐		Boost local SEO (reviews, citations).
☐		Audit for outdated SEO practices.
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