

The Ultimate On-Page SEO Checklist



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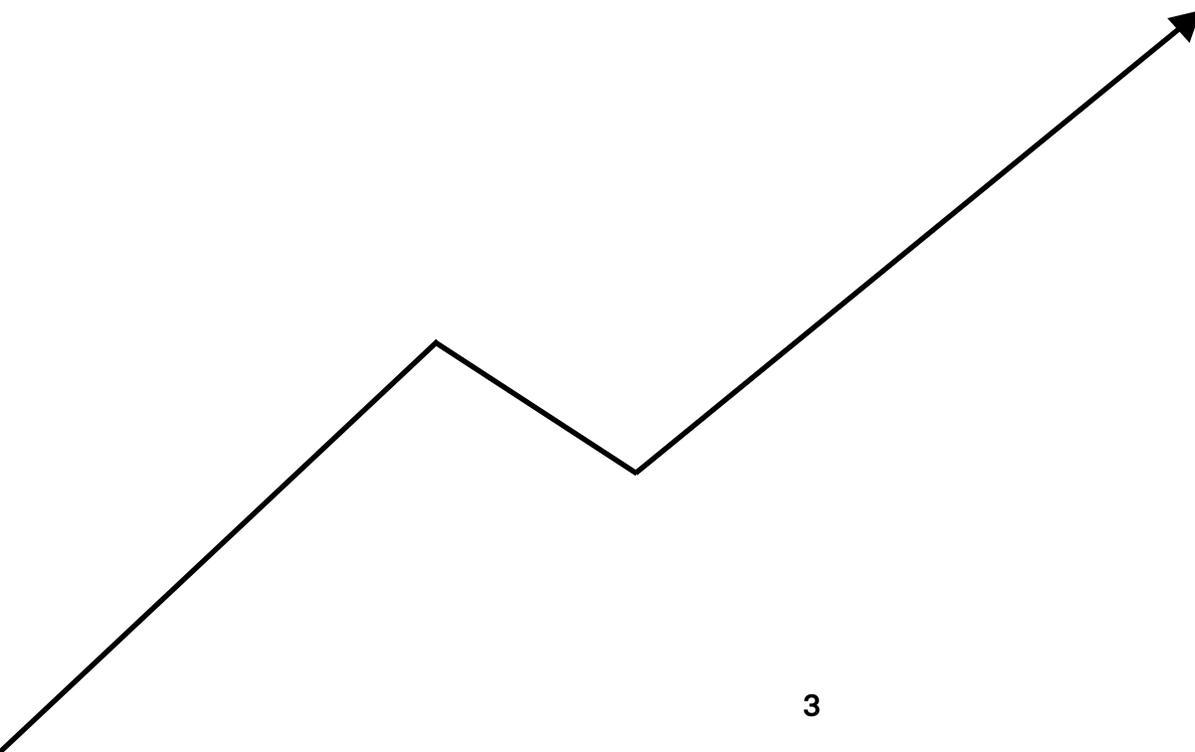
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INTRODUCTION

Stop treating SEO like it's all about links!

We admit that's dramatic, but it's true. If your web page doesn't satisfy a searcher's intent, you won't make any money for your efforts. Instead, use this list of the top on-page elements you can optimize to start ranking higher in SERPs today.

Note: Not all of these will apply to every page on your site.



META ELEMENTS + KEYWORD TARGETING

These are the most important words on your page... that aren't exactly on your page. It's important to take care of the elements listed below before turning your attention to what visitors will actually read on your site.

Note: this checklist assumes you've already done proper keyword research.



Title Tags

- Limit your title tags to 55-60 characters (including spaces)
- Push the keyword closer to the beginning of the title, but ONLY if it sounds natural
- Don't stuff your keywords
- Include your brand at the end of the title tag, separated by a pipe bar (|)
 - Example: "Chicago SEO | Digital Third Coast"



URLs

- Label your directories and folders in a way that makes sense for users
 - socks/women
 - socks/kids
- Don't repeat keywords in your URL more than once. Keywords are helpful, but overdoing it effects user experience
 - Example: /best-socks-comparison-best-socks-best-socks?
- Keep URLs as short as possible



Headers

- Keep your H1s limited to one per page, all other headers are H2 or H3



Meta Descriptions

- Meta descriptions are what entice people to click on your listing if they see it in their search results Highlight something unique about your page and when relevant, include a geo-qualifier
- 300 characters or less (including spaces)

PAGE CONTENT

This is what your visitors will read, so it needs to be written with them in mind. That being said, page content is still essential for search engines, so remember these tips when creating new content.

Page Copy

- Aim for at least 500 words of copy
 - Although there is no exact formula for how many words a page should have, Google seems to prefer when a page has a lot of content surrounding your targeted keywords
- Copy must be unique to each page, not duplicated from other pages on your site, and should directly address your visitors' search queries
- Push the keyword closer to the beginning of the title, but ONLY if it sounds natural

Internal Linking

- Internal links are links that point from one page on your site, to another
- Make sure your page content includes 1-3 relevant internal links

SITE SPEED

Google has a tool called PageSpeed Insights that will analyze your site on mobile and desktop, and suggest tips to optimize your site speed. There are also quick fixes to eliminate whatever is bogging your site down:

- Minimizing HTTP requests
- Making sure server response time is <200ms
- Setting browser caching to at least a week or longer
- Enabling Gzip compression
- Having image sizes under 100kb (.jpg, .png, .gif)
- Placing all CSS in an external stylesheet
- Minifying all JS, CSS and HTML
- Prioritizing above the fold content loading

MEDIA



Alt Text for Images

Search engines can't actually see images, so they rely on alt text to read and understand them. Writing an alt attribute for each image keeps your website in compliance with WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines). Keep the following things in mind when writing alt text:

- Thoroughly describe the image in 8-10 words
- Include your targeted keyword where it sounds most natural
- Include, if relevant, a geo-locator (e.g., Chicago)



Video Optimization

- Use video-hosting software like Wistia
- Host your videos on your own site first, then post them to other sites, like YouTube
- Include keywords in video titles, descriptions and transcripts



Social Tags

Having your content shared on social tells Google that people find your content relevant, helpful and reputable. Not every page on your site is shareworthy, but you can optimize the pages that are with these tips:

- Make sure you have Open Graph tags and Twitter Cards installed
- Make it easy with “tweet this quote” links, or social share buttons for each post