

# Better Blog Checklist



To keep this as simple as possible, I've divided this checklist into categories. I've provided links to useful posts that will provide more explanation.

This list will get your blog started in the right direction or can help you improve an existing blog, but it is not an exhaustive list. In other words, there may be other improvements your blog may still need even after completing this list.

This checklist was designed to be a helpful guide for bloggers at any skill level, but especially for newbies. If you're a more advanced blogger, simply check off the tasks you've already completed and move on to the next.

If you have any questions at all, feel free to stop by the blog and [contact me](#).

## Hosting

**Select a reliable host.** Self-hosting gives you more control over your blog. It's a sign of professionalism and builds credibility.

I recommend: [Justhost](#) or [Hostgator](#)

**Suggested reading:**  
[2 Ways to Make Your Webhosting Pay for Itself](#)

## WordPress

**Install Wordpress on your Server.**

Of course there are other blogging platforms, but Wordpress has the greatest flexibility.

**Select an appropriate theme for your niche.**

Choose your theme wisely. An inappropriate or visually unappealing theme is the fastest way to lose readers. Choose a professional-looking design, header and logo.

I recommend: [Thesis](#) or another highly customizable theme. You can find free themes on [WordPress.org](#), also.

**Be sure to delete the default "Hello World" post, "Hello Dolly" plug-in, as well as default links.**

## Install Plugins

WordPress has a plugin for just about everything.

### I recommend:

Tweetmeme or Twitter Button

Sexy BookMarks (optional)

Nested Comments

Kadon Ads

WordPress Greet Box

Facebook Like Button

ComLuv

Twitter Avatar

[MaxBlogPress Ninja Affiliate](#)

You can find these plugins by conducting a search in your WordPress plugins menu.

Configure all plugins, as needed. You can configure your social media share buttons in your settings.

For Twitter buttons: Remove the default @addthis or @tweetmeme mention and replace it with your Twitter profile. Don't forget to select the option for a shortened link – nothing is more annoying than trying to tweet a post with a URL that's longer than the 140 character limit!

### Suggested reading:

[25 WordPress Plugins that Keep Blog Readers Engaged](#)

## Categories

Select 5 – 10 overarching topics that your blog will focus on as a whole.

### Suggested reading:

[5 Tips for Using Categories and Category Pages Effectively](#)

Add a category list or widget to your sidebar.

Choose a highly visible spot. This will help readers know what to expect to find on your blog and will help them navigate with greater ease.

## Pages

Create some static pages to display important information that won't work as a blog post.

**I recommend these pages:**

Home

About

Contact

Archives

Read More by \_\_\_\_\_ (to showcase guest posts on other sites – optional)

Affiliate Disclosure

Privacy Policy

Hire Me (optional)

Tools & Resources (optional)

Twitter follower page that says "Thank you for following" and gives a little information about the blog. (see [PushingSocial](#)'s example) (also optional)

**Suggested reading:**

[5 Essential Pages Every Blog Needs](#)

## Images

Upload a nice picture of yourself.

This should preferably be the same picture you're using for all of your social network sites. Choose one you can get used to. Avoid switching up every few weeks, pick a picture and stick with it - use the same profile picture everywhere you go.

Either add it directly to your sidebar or add it to your About me page.

**I recommend:**

Add your profile pic to [Gravatar.com](#) so that whenever you leave a comment on another blog with your email address, your profile pic will be automatically displayed.

### Use quality photos for every blog post

Go ahead and sign up for accounts to give you access to a wide range of pictures to use for each of your blog posts.

**Here are some free sources I frequently use:**

[Freedigitalphotos](#)

[Dreamstime](#)

[Flickr](#)

[Freefoto.com](#)

These sources will tide you over while you get your blog started, but after a while, you may need to upgrade and find get a paid photo subscription.

**Remember to follow onsite guidelines for including photo credit.**

### Upload a social media icon set to your media library

Add a matching set of social media icons that will make it easy for your readers to follow you on Twitter, Facebook, Youtube (or any other social networks you're active on) and your RSS feed. (See the last page for an example of a matching icon set.)

**I recommend:**

[Smashing Magazine](#) always has some cool and innovative icon sets. Browse the site and find a set that works well with your theme.

## Other Sidebar Items

### Search Box

Be sure to add a search box to help your readers find what they're looking for on your blog.

**I recommend:**

[Google search](#) – you can enable AdSense and earn a few extra dollars via search.

### Subscriber Box

Be sure to add a subscriber box so that it's easy for readers to subscribe to your newsletter or updates. This will help you build your list and keep you in touch with the people who frequent your blog. Use a cool graphic to draw attention to it. Place in the top fold; in a highly visible spot.

This works better if you offer a subscriber incentive, such as a free ebook or report.

Set up an auto-responder to deliver the promised e-book or report instantly.

**I recommend:**

[Mailchimp](#) – I use this email service. It's free up to 1,000 subscribers and you're allowed to send an ample amount of emails each month.

### Ad Space

Be light on the ad space. Designate no more than four blocks to display ads. Create an "Advertise Here" page to provide information to potential advertisers. Be sure to include pricing and location information.

**I recommend:**

**Kadon Ads plugin** to easily create and manage rotating ad zones. Let's you specify the number of ads you'd like to rotate. Let's you set a start and end date, so that you're ads remain timely.

I use 4 blocks that rotate up to 15 different ads.

**Google AdSense Blocks**

The top fold of the sidebar is a good spot to place your AdSense blocks. I recommend going lightly on the ads, don't go crazy. Be sure to coordinate the colors so that they either coordinate with or complement the colors already on your blog.

### Facebook & Twitter Updates

Increase your fan base and followers by displaying your Facebook Fan page updates and Tweets in your sidebar. You can get the Facebook Sidebar widget code from your Facebook fan page settings.

**I recommend:**

[Twitter Counter Widget](#)

## Blog Post Publishing

### Create an Editorial Calendar

**Write at least 10 posts in advance.** Even if you don't have time to write the posts ahead of time, it helps to at least have a topics schedule. Plan at least two weeks ahead, but the farther ahead you can plan; the better.

Suggested reading:

[Is Your Blogging Schedule Getting out of Control?](#)

### Draft in Notepad

You might be tempted to do all of your drafting in WordPress, but I highly recommend against it. Yes, WordPress does have a great auto-save feature, but you never know when software or another glitch will cause you to lose all of your hard work.

I draft in Notepad first, with HTML markup when possible, and I save everything in a folder. Then later, when I'm ready, I copy and paste the content into Wordpress.

### Quick Keyword Check

Before finalizing your title, it's a good idea to do a quick keyword check to make sure you're targeting decent keywords. Just a small tweak to your title and tags can bring you better search engine traffic.

**I recommend:**

[Google's Keyword Tool](#)

**Suggested Reading:**

[5 SEO Tips for Bloggers \(that won't make people gouge their eyes out\)](#)

[Complete Guide to Easy SEO for Busy Bloggers](#)

### Select appropriate categories and tags

Based on what you find during your quick keyword check, add the appropriate tags and don't forget to select the proper category. Choose no more than 1 or 2 categories. You'll lose a lot of search engine traffic if you forget to do this.

### Spelling & Grammar Check

It may seem like your post is perfect and ready to publish, but it always helps to do a quick spelling and grammar check. Use WordPress's spellcheck feature and then hit the preview button to take a look at what the finished post will look like.

You'll find your errors a lot easier when you view the post the way your readers will. I save myself a lot of errors by previewing.

**Suggested Reading:**

[Wait... Don't Hit the Publish Button!](#)

### Link to Old Posts Whenever Possible

To increase page views and improve your search engine ranking, try to link to old posts, whenever possible. Links should be logical, don't just link to anything – make sure it's truly a related post. Limit links to no more than 2 – 3 per post.

**I recommend:**

[SEO Smart Links Wordpress Plugin](#)

**Suggested Reading:**

[Get Smart with Your Internal Links](#)

### Publish or Schedule for Later

You don't need any fancy plugins to schedule your posts to publish in the future. Simply change the date and time for when you'd like a post to publish and then WordPress's schedule option will appear.

## Traffic Building

### Post at frequent intervals. 5 posts a week is optimal.

Posting search engine optimized content at least 3-5 times a week will help increase search engine traffic and gives loyal readers a reason to come back more often. It also gives them more of your content to share via Twitter, Facebook or other social networks.

### Comment on at least 5 (the more the merrier) new blogs a day.

Register your blog at ComLuv so that you can choose from your latest blog post to display on blogs that use this plugin.

### After commenting, share the content on all social networks you're active in.

Tweet the post, Like the post, stumble it, Digg it, vote for it on Blog Engage, Blokube, SERPD, or BizSugar, etc.

Suggested reading:

[7 Growing Social Bookmarking Sites Worth Exploring](#)

### Guest post as often as possible. Aim for once a week or every other week.

Write guest post for sites with a better Alexa ranking than your own; sites that have lots of interaction and comments. This will expose your writing to a new audience. Be sure to include links to your blog and social network profiles in your author bio.

Suggested reading:

[Guest posting: How to Successfully Borrow A-List Bloggers' Traffic](#)

### Join a Team

Promoting a blog is easier when it's a team effort. Team up with a few other bloggers in your niche (or related niche) and go out of your way to share each other's content. Comment on each other's posts. The more people you can team up with and create a mutually beneficial relationship; the better.

[Meet the WBB Team!](#)

## **Connect**

Connect with me 😊



Click the icons to visit my profile & connect with me .