

## Introduction

Welcome! This checklist covers **technical SEO, on-page, content, off-page**, and **WordPress-specific** optimizations. Follow it step-by-step to boost rankings, traffic, and conversions in 2026 (Google's focus: E-E-A-T, Core Web Vitals, AI overviews).

### 1. Technical SEO Foundations

- Submit your sitemap to Google Search Console (GSC) and Bing Webmaster Tools.
- Verify your site in GSC and fix crawl errors.
- Enable HTTPS (free via Let's Encrypt or Cloudflare).
- Set up robots.txt to block unwanted pages (e.g., /wp-admin).
- Use a fast, lightweight theme (Astra/GeneratePress).
- Install WP Rocket (or free alternative: LiteSpeed Cache) for caching.
- Optimize images: Compress with Imagify/Smush, use WebP format.
- Enable lazy loading for images/videos.
- Minify CSS/JS/HTML (via Autoptimize or WP Rocket).
- Pass Core Web Vitals: Aim for LCP < 2.5s, FID < 100ms, CLS < 0.1.
- Mobile-first: Test with Google's Mobile-Friendly Test.
- Add schema markup (JSON-LD) for pages, articles, reviews (via Rank Math).
- Fix broken links and redirects (301 for old URLs).
- Enable browser caching for static files.

### 2. On-Page SEO Essentials

- Use Rank Math or Yoast for every page/post.
- Write unique, keyword-rich title tags (50-60 chars).
- Meta descriptions: 150-160 chars, compelling CTA.
- Target primary keyword in URL slug (e.g., /wordpress-tips-2026).
- H1 tag: Main keyword + benefit.
- Use H2/H3 subheadings with related keywords.
- Internal linking: 3-5 links per post to related content.
- External linking: 2-3 authoritative sources.
- Add alt text to all images (descriptive + keyword).
- Optimize for featured snippets: Use lists, tables, Q&A format.
- Add table of contents for long posts (>1500 words).

### 3. Content Optimization

- Create helpful, original content (E-E-A-T: Experience, Expertise, Authoritativeness, Trustworthiness).
- Aim for 1500-3000 words on pillar pages.
- Use keyword research tools: Google Keyword Planner, Ahrefs free.
- Target low-competition long-tail keywords.
- Update old content annually for freshness signals.
- Add author bio with credentials (e.g., "Salah Ud Din – Top-Rated WordPress Expert").

- Include images, infographics, videos for engagement.
- Readability: Short paragraphs, bullet points, active voice.
- Use AI tools sparingly (e.g., for outlines, not full content).

#### **4. WordPress-Specific Tips**

- Update WordPress core, themes, plugins regularly.
- Use security plugins: Wordfence or iThemes Security.
- Backup weekly with UpdraftPlus.
- Disable XML-RPC if not needed (security).
- Limit login attempts (via Limit Login Attempts plugin).
- Use secure hosting (SiteGround, Cloudways, or Kinsta).
- Install Rank Math for advanced schema and XML sitemap.
- Optimize database (WP-Optimize plugin).
- Remove unused plugins/themes.

#### **5. Off-Page & Monitoring**

- Build quality backlinks: Guest posts, HARO, directories.
- Claim Google Business Profile for local SEO.
- Monitor rankings with GSC or Ahrefs.
- Track traffic with Google Analytics 4.
- Set up alerts for indexing issues in GSC.
- Analyze competitors: Use Ahrefs or SEMrush free tools.
- Submit new content to Google via GSC "URL Inspection".

#### **6. Bonus 2026 Trends**

- Optimize for AI overviews: Clear, concise answers.
- Voice search: Natural language keywords.
- Zero-party data: Collect user preferences.
- Video SEO: Embed YouTube videos with transcripts.
- Sustainability: Fast sites reduce carbon footprint.

**Total: 50+ Steps** – Print, check off, and watch your rankings soar!

#### **How to Use This Checklist**

1. Download as PDF.
2. Audit your site weekly/monthly.
3. Implement one section per week.
4. Track progress in GSC/Analytics.

Questions? Contact me at [khansalahudinkhan@gmail.com](mailto:khansalahudinkhan@gmail.com) or book a free consultation at [freelancetip.com/contact](https://freelancetip.com/contact).

