

“Healthy Website Checklist”

by **Christina Hills**

Steps to go Through to Clean up and Refresh
Your WordPress Website on the Inside and Out.





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Introduction

Everyone wants a clean, well-functioning website.

And you might have a beautiful WordPress website already, but without proper setup and updates, it may not be performing at its best or staying up-to-date with the changes that are happening in the Internet and marketing world on a daily basis.

This guide will help you make some important updates to both inside and out of your WordPress website and help you to improve your website's functionality.

(This document assumes that you have a basic understanding of WordPress)

Print out this document and check off each item as you complete it.

Refresh your WordPress inside and out so that it will keep working for you!!

To your success,

Christina Hills

Christina Hills
Your Teacher/Mentor/Coach for WordPress
<https://www.WebsiteMarketingWorkshop.com>



CHECKLIST: Outside Your WordPress Website

When we talk about the “outside of your site”, we are talking about what visitors see when they come to your website. In general this means your theme design. This section is to help you go through this checklist to help you improve what visitors see.



Are you happy with your theme design? If not, look at other themes and consider getting a test area “staging” site to try out new themes before you commit to a new one.

Does your site look good on different devices? Pull out your phone (or ask a friend) and take a look at it.

Does your website pass Google’s Mobile-Friendly Test? Check it at:

<https://www.christinasresources.com/isitmobile>

If it does not pass the Mobile Friendly test, either change themes and use a mobile responsive theme, or install a mobile plugin to make your site instantly mobile responsive. We like this one:

WPTouch: <https://wordpress.org/plugins/wptouch/>

Remove any *Lorem Ipsum* (Latin text) placeholder copy and put in your actual text.

Proofread your website for typos, spelling, and/or grammar errors.

Go to Posts and **delete the default “Hello World” Post** that WordPress created automatically.

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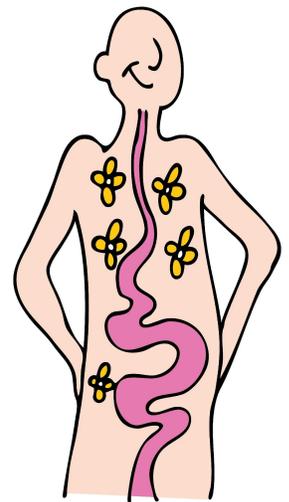
- Go to Pages and **delete the "Sample" page** that WordPress created automatically.
- Delete any test pages or make them private if you are still working on them.
- Review Your Site for any bad links.

Try the broken link checker plugin <https://wordpress.org/plugins/broken-link-checker/> ,
or try the Online Broken Link Checker website: <https://www.brokenlinkcheck.com/>

- Make sure all links to external websites open in a new window or tab.
- Is your URL SSL (https://)? If it's not https://, call your hosting company and ask them for a free SSL certificate.
- Add Copyright links to the footer of your site. (Some WordPress themes make this easy to do, and others make it harder.)
- Make a privacy policy and put it in the footer of your website.
<https://www.wmwprogram.com/modules/creating-content/create-privacypolicy/>
- (Optional) Add a **404 Page** for when people search for something that does not exist. Try this plugin or a similar one: <https://wordpress.org/plugins/404page/>
- (Optional) make sure you have an author box for your blog posts. (If you have a blog) You could also have a Gravatar.com account and connect it with all your email addresses, but we no longer recommend that as it's a confusing system to setup.
- (Optional) Do you have a site icon graphic? This is a little graphic that shows up in the browser. Nice to have but not critical. Check out this page for more information:
<https://www.wmwprogram.com/modules/refresh/outside/site-icon/>

CHECKLIST: Inside Your WordPress Website

When we talk about the “inside of your site”, we are talking about how the website functions on the inside. These are generally maintenance things, or other things you want to do to improve the function of your website. This section is to help you go through this checklist to help you improve what how your website functions



- Edit your **dashboard screen options** and turn on Site Health Status.
- Go to **Settings** → **General** and make sure your site has a “Site Title” and Tagline. If not, just add one in there.
- Go to **Settings** → **General** and set your email address to an email that you can receive. This is for important administrative messages WordPress sends to you.
- Go to **Settings** → **General** and set the time zone for your city.
- Go to **Settings** → **General** and set the day for the “week starts on” as “Sunday” (This is important if you use any calendar plugins, but it’s a good habit to get into.)

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Go to **Settings** → **General** and make sure "anyone can register" is **NOT** checked (you don't want strangers to have a login to your site)

Go to **Settings** → **Reading** and set the "Search Engine Visibility". **Uncheck** the box for "Discourage search engines from indexing this site" if you **want** the search engines to find your site. (This is for Google and the other search engines. However, it is not guaranteed that they will honor this request)

If you are using a TEST site (practice/staging site) leave the box checked!!

Check your users area.

- Make sure you know who all of the users are. Delete any, if needed.
- For security reasons, if any users have the username "admin", please create a new user and delete the "admin" user.
- Make sure all of your users have strong passwords.
- For extra security, make sure your site has at least 2 users. One that has an 'administrator' role and one that has an 'author' or 'editor' role.

If you have a **blog** on your site: **Go to Settings** → **Writing** and select a category **other** than "**Uncategorized**". If you don't have another category, then create one.

If you allow comments, go to **Settings** → **Discussion** and make sure the defaults are how you want them to be for people to leave comments.

Go to **Appearance** → **Themes** and delete all extra themes except for the current theme and the current default theme. i.e. Twenty Twenty-Four. (**Do NOT delete your parent theme** if you are using a parent-child theme system. If not sure, ask whomever

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created your website for you.) You should probably have no more than 3 themes installed.

- Go to **Settings** → **Permalinks** and set the Permalinks setting to something other than the default. We recommend the simple “Post Name” setting as it’s just a simple click of a button (this is important for SEO).
- Review all your plugins and ask yourself on each plugin: **“What does this do and do I really need it?”**
- Delete any inactive plugins that you do not plan to use.
- In your dashboard go to Tools → Site Health and check for any warnings or recommendations. (Note: If it is not in the critical section in Site Health, you can disregard it. Call your hosting company and ask if you are not sure.)
- Check all your plugins and make sure they are not outdated or are not being supported anymore using the free WordFence plugin:
<https://wordpress.org/plugins/wordfence/>
If you find a plugin that is outdated or not supported, find another plugin that is up to date/supported to replace it.
- Make sure you have a backup plugin installed. We like
<https://wordpress.org/plugins/updraftplus/>
<https://christinasresources.com/managewp>
- Make sure you have a security plugin installed. We like
<https://wordpress.org/plugins/better-wp-security/>

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Or <https://wordpress.org/plugins/wordfence/> DO SEE this page for turning off WordFence notifications.

<https://wmwprogram.com/modules/refresh/inside/security/wordfence-email-notifications/>

Go inside your dashboard in WordPress and make sure your software, plugins, and themes are up to date.

go to: <http://www.yourdomain.com/wp-admin/update-core.php>

Enable Auto updates for plugins so that they update by themselves. Do this if you have a good backup system implemented see video here

<https://wmwprogram.com/modules/refresh/inside/backups-updates-php/enable-automatic-plugin-theme-updates/>

***See detailed instructions on updating WordPress at the bottom of this document**

Use the checklist space below for any additional things you need for your sites:

Simple steps to update your WordPress site:

Note: When WordPress comes out with a major update, **wait a few days for the plugin authors and theme authors to make updates BEFORE you update your site.** And contact your theme company to see if your theme is compatible with the new version of WordPress. Example of a major update - from version 6.3 to 6.4. Example of a minor update - from version 6.4.1 to 6.4.2.

- 1) **BACKUP FIRST:** create a backup of your **WordPress Website.** We like <https://wordpress.org/plugins/updraftplus/>
<https://christinasresources.com/managewp>
- 2) **UPDATE PLUGINS:** update your plugins before you update the core WordPress software.
- 3) **VIEW YOUR SITE:** Click around your site on the inside and the outside to make sure everything looks good.
- 4) **UPDATE WORDPRESS:** Go inside your admin dashboard and click the button to update WordPress.
- 5) THEN→ **UPDATE PLUGINS AGAIN:** check to see if your plugins need updating again and if they are compatible with the new version of WordPress. Sometimes you have to wait several days while the plugin authors make their own updates.
- 6) **VIEW YOUR SITE AGAIN:** Click around your site on the inside and the outside to make sure everything looks good.

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7) **UPDATE THEMES:** Go inside WordPress to the updates area and update any themes that may need updating. (Sometimes it's best to check with your theme company first before you update)

8) **VIEW YOUR SITE AGAIN:** Click around your site on the inside and the outside to make sure everything looks good.

Resources

Web Hosting companies we like:

GreenGeeks:

<https://www.christinasresources.com/greengeeks>



Blue Host:

<https://www.ChristinasResources.com/bluehost>



Siteground:

<https://www.christinasresources.com/siteground>



WP Engine (for advanced users):

<https://www.christinasresources.com/wpengine>



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