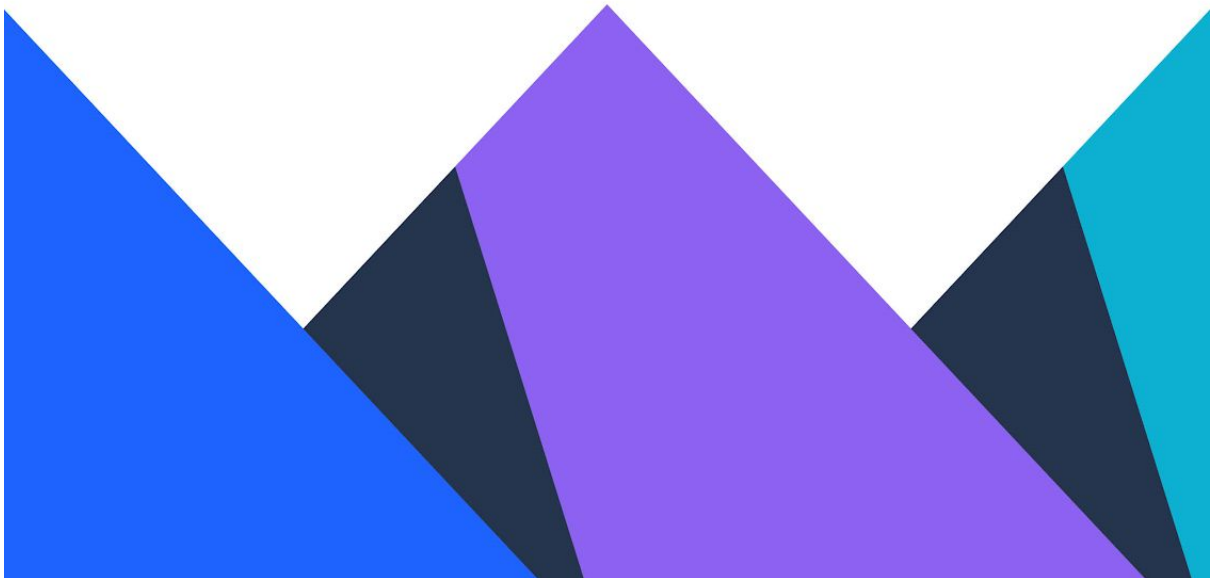


WebsiteBuilderExpert

Website Building Checklist



Ultimate Website Building Checklist: 25 Simple Steps to Create a Stunning Site

Do you want to build your very own website? Are you unsure where to start, or do you just want some expert tips and tricks to help along the way? We've got you covered.

We put together this website building checklist to make building your website as easy and successful as possible. **This guide is for anyone building their website**, whether you're a first-timer, or simply want to check you haven't missed anything before you hit publish.

You don't need coding skills or tech experience to build a website, so don't worry – you'll be able to achieve everything you find in this checklist!

But who exactly are we? And why should you trust us?

Well, Website Builder Expert was founded over 10 years ago, and since then we've made it our mission to help as many people as possible to build their online presence. In fact, over 3.5 million people visit our site every year, so we must be doing something right!

We want you to build the website of your dreams, have fun doing it, and make a success of it the first time around.

We've made all the rookie mistakes, tested tons of website builders, and helped thousands of people who visit our site every month. All in all, we're in a great position to help you build your very own website.

But that's enough about us – this checklist is all about you, and how we can help you get online.

Let's get started straight away.

Website Building Checklist

Before You Build:

P. 3-15

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Find your purpose | <input type="checkbox"/> Test it out |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Decide how to build | <input type="checkbox"/> Choose a price plan |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pick your platform | <input type="checkbox"/> Pick a website address |

Build Your Site:

P. 16-35

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Choose a template | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't forget images |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Choose your color scheme | <input type="checkbox"/> Set up a professional email address |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Design a logo | <input type="checkbox"/> Want to sell online? Add a store to your site |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Edit your page layout | <input type="checkbox"/> Make it mobile friendly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Add pages | <input type="checkbox"/> Link to social media |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Write your content | <input type="checkbox"/> Preview your website |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Say hello to SEO | <input type="checkbox"/> Publish your website |

After Publishing:

P. 36-40

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Set up Google Analytics | <input type="checkbox"/> Add Hotjar to check your site's UX |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Run a site speed check | <input type="checkbox"/> Keep going! |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Analyze Google Analytics results | |

 WebsiteBuilderExpert



Website Building Checklist

Before You Build



01. Find Your Purpose

First of all, why are you building a website? Is it to create a portfolio? Are you taking up blogging? Maybe you want to promote your business?

Knowing the purpose of your website from the start will help your website in the long run. It'll make it much easier to decide on which design you want, which features you need, what pages and content you should create, and even just choosing a name for your site!

Think about what you want to build. Below are the most common types of website, with examples for each – take a look, and see if your idea fits into any of these categories:

- **Portfolio** – photography, art, graphic design, work collections
- **Blog** – writing, podcasts, guest posts, travel logs, lifestyle
- **Online selling (ecommerce)** – handmade products, services, appointments, digital downloads
- **Resume** – examples of work, downloadable CV, personal bio, introduction video
- **Business** – information, meet the team, list of services, testimonials, pricing
- **Personal** – personal brands, private sites, personal projects
- **Events** – weddings, concerts, parties, christenings, festivals, opening nights
- **Charity** – donations, fundraising, awareness, support groups, community boards

All websites are unique, so don't worry if your idea is super niche. You also shouldn't worry if you don't have everything sorted out yet – for now, an idea is enough. We'll get to the rest later!

Before you move on, make sure you have:

- Decided why you want to make a website
 - Formed an idea for the type of website you want to build
 - Had a think about which category your site might fit into
-

02. Decide How to Build

There are three main ways you can build a website. You can hire a web designer, use an open source platform (such as WordPress), or choose a website builder (such as Wix).

Option 1: Hire a Web Designer

Web designers are professionals who build all kinds of websites for their clients. Although it sounds easy enough to get someone else to build your site, you'll still need to pull your weight. You'll need to create a brief, work out a contract and a deadline, and review the site at various stages.

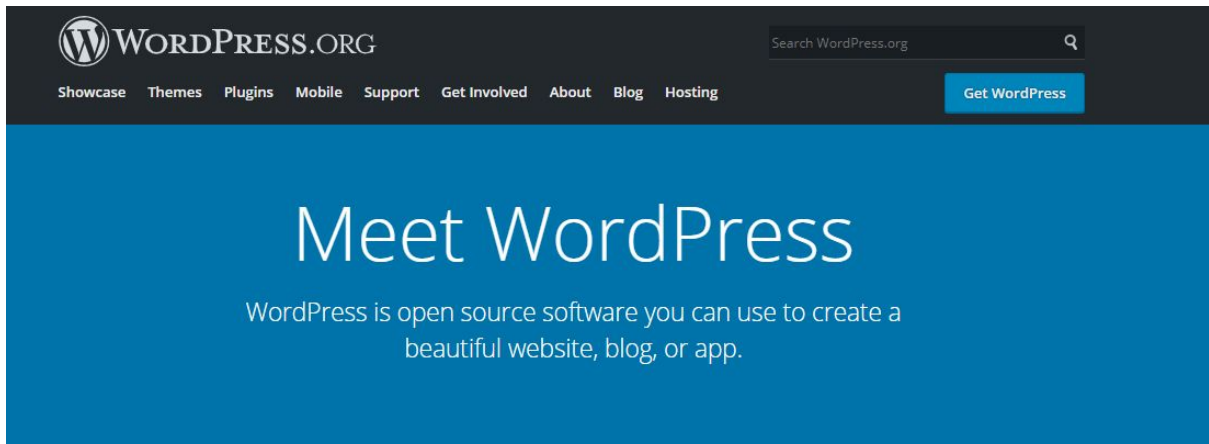
Hiring a web designer is perfect if you need a very advanced website with lots of unique features.

However, the main drawback is price – you're usually looking at an average cost of \$5,000 *minimum* for a very basic site. And as with any service, you should be wary of any prices that are too cheap.

It's also worth knowing that if you ask for a site with advanced features, you won't be able to run it yourself. When content needs changing, or if anything goes wrong, you'll need to ask the web designer to manage this for you. Of course, this also means an ongoing price, so think carefully about your budget before going down this route.

Option 2: Take on WordPress

Using open-source software like WordPress means starting your site totally from scratch.



You need to find a good hosting provider, who you pay to “host” your website on the internet, then install WordPress and any plugins you may need.

A lot of people love WordPress, and it’s great for building complex sites. However, WordPress can also prove time-consuming and difficult for beginners. It’s pretty technical, and requires regular upkeep; you’re in charge of everything from managing security to running updates, and to really get the most out of WordPress, you’ll need to know how to code.

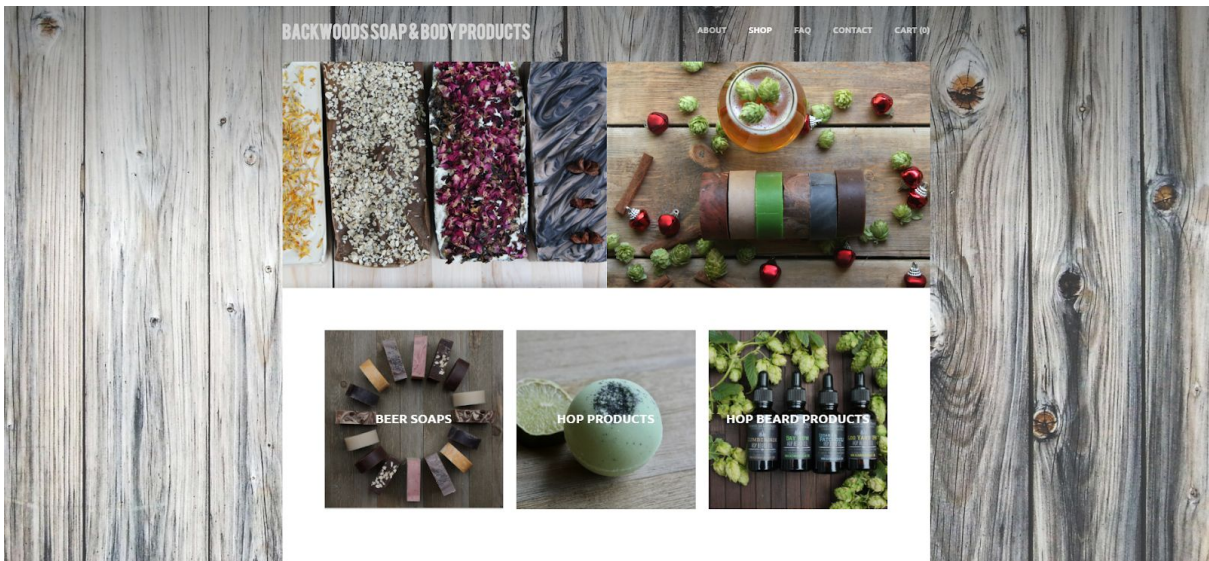
Option 3: Choose a Website Builder

Website builders are an altogether easier and quicker way to build your website. They’re designed to help you at every stage, giving you pre-filled templates to edit and make totally your own. You don’t need tech skills, either – just an internet connection!

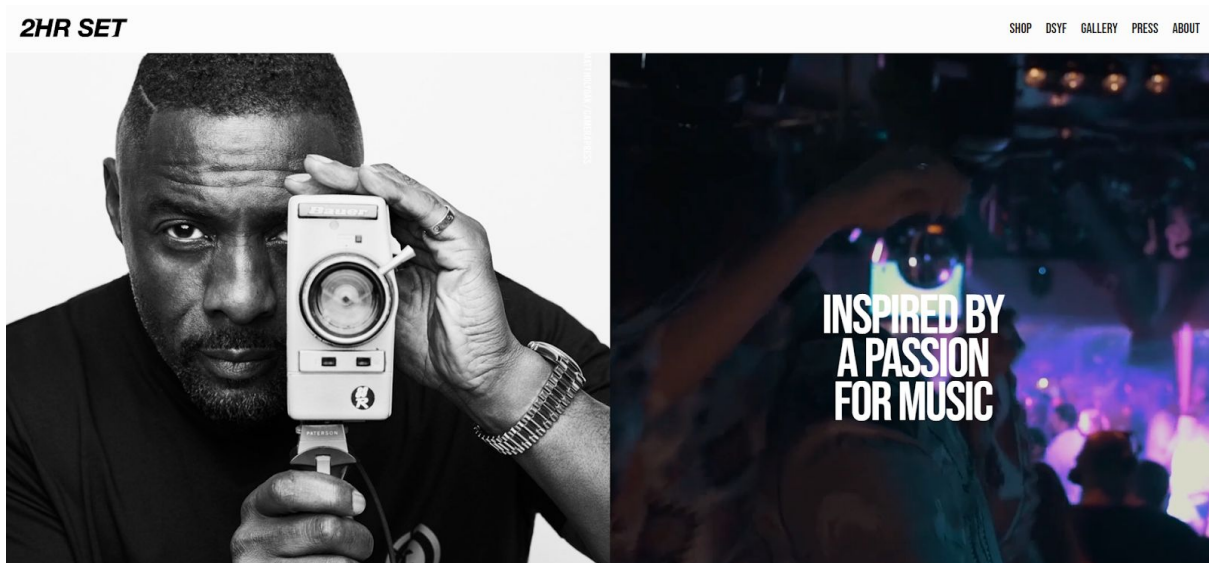
Anyone can use a website builder to create a professional looking site. In fact, if you can use PowerPoint, then you can use a website builder. You don’t need to know how to code, it’s all hosted for you, security comes built-in, and there’s in-house support in case you get stuck.

Don’t be fooled into thinking you can only build basic, boring sites with website builders. Even celebrities – from Keanu Reeves to Idris Elba – have turned to website builders for their projects, showing just how slick and successful these sites can be.

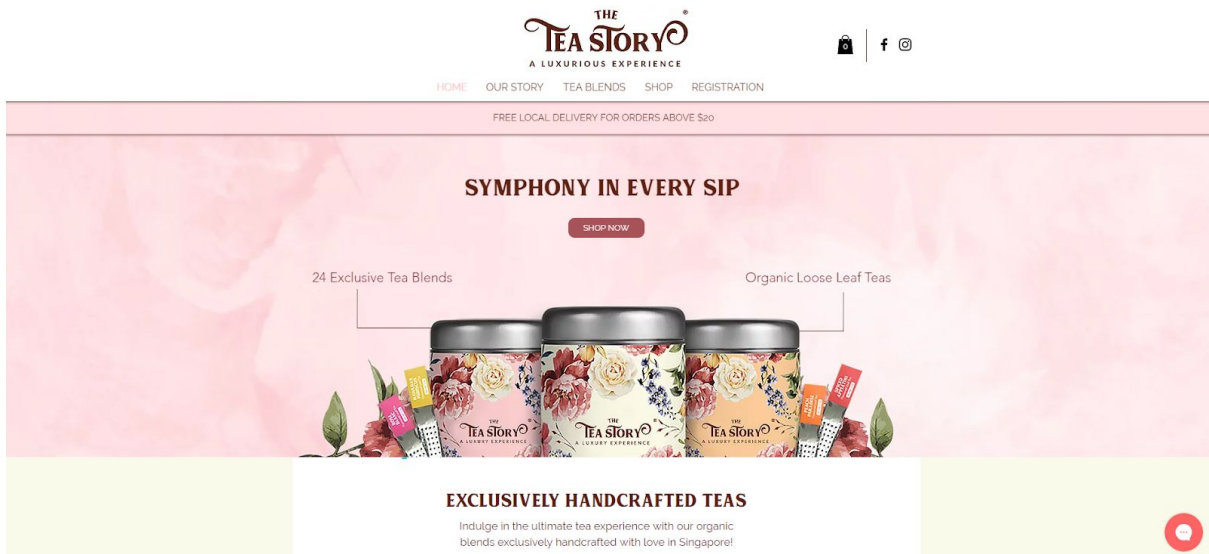
Check out a few of our favorite website builder examples below:



This website, [Backwoods Beer Soap](#), was built using the website builder Weebly. It's a very simple design, but captures the brand and shows off the builder's online selling tools.



Idris Elba chose Squarespace to build his website [2HR SET](#), and you can see why. Large, high quality images, background videos, and stylish store sections feature strongly on this cool, modern website.



[The Tea Story](#) is an online store built on Wix. This website uses pretty colors, clever design, and lots of visuals to make its products stand out.

In this checklist, we'll show you how to build a website using a website builder. We have plenty of guides on [how to work with a web designer](#) or [how to create a WordPress website](#), but here, we're focusing on the easiest option out of the three.

The reason we encourage first-time builders to use a website builder is that they're easier to get to grips with, quicker to get going, and cheaper. We want you to enjoy building your site, and builders give you the freedom to create a website without financial risk, technical headaches, or long-term contracts.

Sound good? Let's go!

Before you move on, make sure you have:

- Decided if you'll use a web designer, website builder or WordPress

03. Pick Your Platform

Once you've chosen to use a website builder, you've got another decision to make: **which one should you pick?**

This is something a lot of first-timers struggle with, simply because there are so many website builders out there. It's hard to pick out the good ones from the downright sketchy ones.

Here are just a few things you should always look for in a website builder:

- **Free trials** – never hand over your payment details without first trying out the builder!
- **Free plans** – in the absence of a free trial, look to see if there's a free plan you can use instead.
- **Mobile responsive design** – with [almost half of worldwide traffic](#) coming from mobile devices, it's vital that your website is mobile friendly – make sure the builder can cater for this. Look out for the term 'mobile-optimized'.
- **SSL security** – not as scary as it sounds, SSL (Secure Sockets Layer) security is the reason for the "S" in HTTPS, and is a must-have for any website. It keeps users' data safe – without one, your visitors may be warned they are entering an 'unsecure site'. A good builder will have SSL built-in.
- **Help and support** – check out what support options the builder has. Live chat? A help center? Phone? Email? Community forum? Find something that suits you.
- **Features you really need** – think about why you want a website, and check the builder has the right features for your needs, whether that's blogging tools, gallery slideshows, or email marketing.

With these things in mind, you should be able to find a reliable and good quality website builder. **Our top tip here is to always try before you buy** – otherwise, how will you know it's the right builder for you?

To save you time and effort we've done extensive research into the main website builders on the market. **We tested over 50 in all**, leaving us with only the best of the best. If you want an insider tip, the leading builders are:

1. [Wix](#) – best overall
2. [Squarespace](#) – best for creatives
3. [Weebly](#) – best for small businesses and portfolios
4. [SITE123](#) – best for help and support
5. [Strikingly](#) – best value for money
6. [GoDaddy](#) – best for building fast

Every single one of these builders offers either a free plan or a free trial. Each builder has been put through our rigorous testing, and we've identified their top strengths to show who each builder is best for.

Click the links in the list above if you want to read an in-depth review of each builder.

Before you move on, make sure you have:

- Looked at a few website builders
 - Read Reviews of website builders you like
 - Made a list of builders you think will suit your needs
 - Check the builders against our criteria
-

04. Test It Out

As we mentioned in the last point, it's vital to try out your website builder before you commit to a paid plan. The last thing you want is to get halfway through building your website, only to find your website builder has a major flaw.

So, start out by playing around on either a free trial or a free plan.

But how am I supposed to know if it's a good builder or not?

That's a great question, especially if you've never used a website builder before. Luckily, we've tested tons of free plans and can tell you exactly what you should be looking out for. **Start out by choosing a template and have a go at building a practice site.**

As you go, think about the following questions:

- **Is it easy to use?** This is perhaps the most important factor you need to test. There's no point in choosing a builder you don't enjoy using – you'll grow frustrated and your site will suffer in the long run.
- **Can you add new pages?** See how easy it is to add new pages, such as an "About Us" page, as this is a function you'll need a lot when building your site.
- **Can you upload new images and edit them?** Images are important for making your site unique, so practice uploading your own pictures to your site.
- **Can you add social media to your site?** Once your site is live, you'll want to promote it, so make sure it's possible to embed social sharing buttons on your pages.
- **Does the builder autosave or do you need to manually save your site?** Make sure your work is safe – don't assume the builder will autosave for you!

- **Is it easy to change the color scheme, fonts, and layout?** A massive part of building a site is adding your own design, so basic customization like this needs to be quick and simple.
- **Can you add a contact form?** It sounds easy enough, but some builders make you go looking for this feature, so it's worth testing out.
- **Is there an option to preview your changes?** This is where you get to view your site as though it's live, and is essential for checking everything looks how it should.
- **Can you switch your theme/template?** Not all builders let you switch your theme, without starting again from scratch, so it's best to find this out as early as possible.

It's also a good idea to try out more than one website builder – that way, you can get a better idea for what feels right for you. Maybe the first builder you try will be the perfect choice, but it doesn't hurt to have something to compare it to.

Where can I find these free plans and trials?

All the website builders we recommend come with either a free plan or a free trial. Simply head to their website by following the links below, then look for any "Try For Free" or "Get Started" buttons. You'll usually need to provide an email address, but you shouldn't have to hand over any payment details.

The following builders provide free plans:

- **Wix**
- **Weebly**
- **SITE123**
- **Strikingly**

While these three builders provide you with a free trial:

- **Squarespace (14 days)**
- **GoDaddy (one month)**

Before you move on, make sure you have:

- Made the most of at least one free plan or free trial
- Had a go at building a practice site
- Decided if it's a good quality builder by asking the suggested questions
- Compared a few different builders

05. Choose a Price Plan

If you've signed up to a **free trial**, you'll lose access to your site once that trial is over unless you upgrade to a paid plan.

If you're using a **free plan**, there's less pressure to sign up to a paid plan so soon. **You can build, publish, and edit your site without paying a dime.** However, we do recommend upgrading to a paid plan if you're serious about your site's success.

Let's quickly explain why, before giving you some advice on picking the best plan for you!

Free plans are generally extremely limited. You'll have adverts displayed on your website, very low storage space (limiting how much media you can have on your site), and limited bandwidth (meaning not many people can visit your site at one time). Also, your website address will have the website builder's name in it, like this: www.myname.wixsite/mylovelywebsite.com.

All in all, a free plan is great for getting started – but doesn't give you a professional-looking website, or much room to grow.

Picking Your Perfect Price Plan

When you're choosing a price plan, it's a good idea to look at what **features** come with each one. This will help you decide which one is best for you, plus show you if you'll be getting good value for money.

The more features and the lower the price, the more value you're getting for your money. [Wix](#) and [Strikingly](#) both provide the best value for money overall, but it really depends on the tools you need.

Don't pick the biggest and best plan if you don't need half the features it offers. Likewise, don't just choose the cheapest plan if your site will outgrow it in a matter of months.

When looking at prices, it's worth thinking about these three things:

- **Your budget.** How much can you afford to spend per month on your website? Don't overstretch yourself – remember, building your site should be enjoyable, not stressful.
- **What your site needs now.** Which features does your site need to get off the ground? Make sure you're giving your site the essentials it needs to succeed.
- **Your site's growth.** Are you expecting fast growth for your site? If you've published on a free plan, did your site perform well? If so, choose a plan that has some room for your site to get bigger and better.

You can always upgrade your plan if you need better features, so don't feel like this is a one-time decision. As your site grows and changes, you'll be able to work your way up through the price plans.

On the whole, for a new site, the cheapest plan is normally fine. For example, [Wix's \\$13 per month Combo plan](#) gives you all the basics you could need, and [Squarespace's \\$12 per month Personal plan](#) comes packed with features.

One exception is Weebly – we always recommend its [\\$12 per month Pro plan](#) instead of its \$5 per month Connect plan. That's because it's the cheapest plan that actually removes adverts from your site, and unlocks phone support, which we think is important for beginners.

Just so you know, we have some useful reviews of popular website builders and their price plans, including:

- [Wix Pricing Review](#)
- [Squarespace Pricing Review](#)
- [Weebly Pricing Review](#)

You can browse these articles if you want more information about these builders' plans, and what you get for your money. If you've already decided, read on for a heads up on things to look out for when signing up...

Things to Watch For

There are just a couple of things to know when you're comparing website builder plans.

1. Billing period of advertised prices

Prices are usually displayed as cost per month, but billed annually. This is a bit sneaky, and can be pretty confusing. To use an example, it means that Wix's Combo plan costs \$13 per month *when billed annually* – so you would actually be paying \$156 upfront for the whole year.

This can be a bit of a shock at the checkout, which is why we're explaining it now. You can choose a month-by-month contract, but this tends to work out more expensive – the Wix Combo plan, for example, would cost \$17 per month – and you sometimes miss out on features included with annual plans.

Our advice is to always pay close attention to the checkout process and make sure you're happy with everything before continuing.

2. Auto-Renewal

Many website builders will set your plan to auto-renew, and this can cause some rather angry reviews from customers who didn't actually *want* to renew their plan.

If you don't want to renew your plan, simply make sure to turn off auto-renew in your settings. The builder's help and support team will be able to advise you on this if it isn't clear.

Before you move on, make sure you have:

- Compared price plans
 - Looked at which features are best for your site
 - Chosen a price plan that matches your budget
-

06. Pick a Website Address

Often, when you sign up to a paid plan, you get a free domain name thrown in for one year.

What exactly is a domain, though?

A domain name is simply the web address you type into the search bar to find a website. For example, ours is websitebuilderexpert.com. A domain is totally unique, and can't be used by more than one website – think of it like your site's fingerprint.

You can buy a domain from a registrar like GoDaddy, but **the easiest way to get a domain is to buy it through your website builder when you sign up**. All you need to do is type in the domain you want, and if it hasn't been registered by anyone else then you can have it!

Mylovelysite



mylovelysite	\$20/yr
mylovelysite.com	UNAVAILABLE
mylovelysite.net	\$20/yr
mylovelysite.org	\$20/yr
mylovelysite.me	\$20/yr
mylovelysite.space	\$20/yr
mylovelysite.online	\$20/yr
mylovelysite.club	\$20/yr
mylovelysite.live	\$20/yr
mylovelysite.xyz	\$20/yr

If you're stuck on how to pick your domain name, here are some helpful tips:

- **Keep it simple** – you want your domain name to be easy to find. Don't overcomplicate it in an effort to be "different."
- **Make it short and snappy** – your domain name needs to be memorable!
- **Don't use numbers and hyphens** – avoid anything that can be misunderstood or confused. When people are recommending your site, are they really going to spell it out to their friends? Don't risk missing out on readers because of a missed hyphen.
- **Reflect your site** – you'll notice our domain is the same as our site's name, just like most websites out there. This helps cement your site's identity, makes it easier to find, and generally avoids confusion!
- **Be unique** – if the domain you want is already taken, don't just stick a number two on the end and leave it at that. Draft a few variations to avoid disappointment.
- **Act fast!** – Once a domain is gone, it's gone – so once you've decided on your domain name, you need to secure it before someone else gets their hands on it. That way, it's ready and waiting when the time comes to publish your site.

What if I already have a domain?

Then you're one step ahead of the game! You can easily connect your existing domain to your new website; just follow the instructions given to you by your builder.

Before you move on, make sure you have:

- Chosen a great domain for your website
- Registered your domain through your website builder, or connected an existing domain to your new site

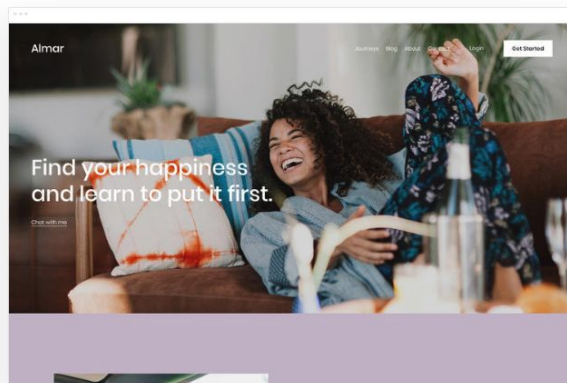
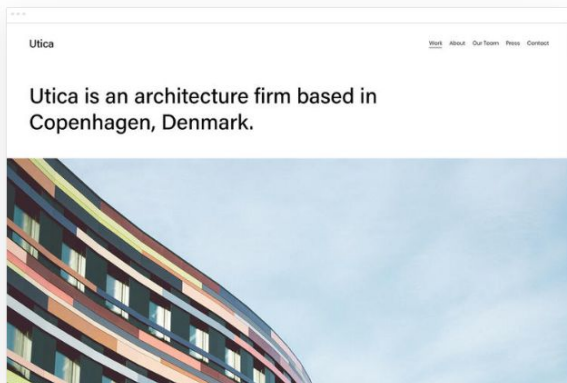
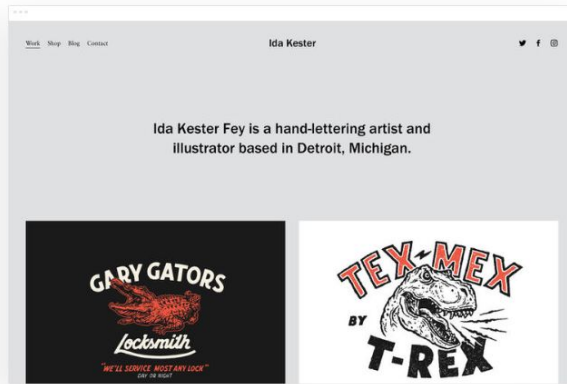
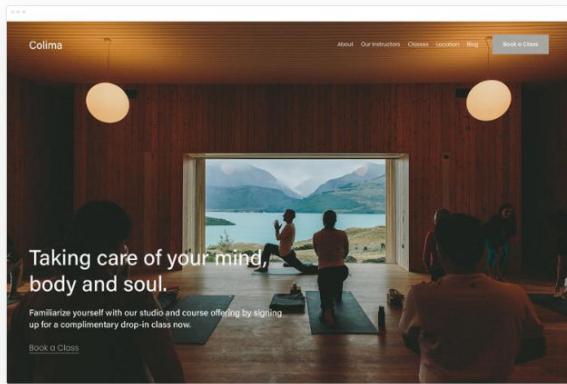
Website Building Checklist

Build Your Website



07. Choose a Template

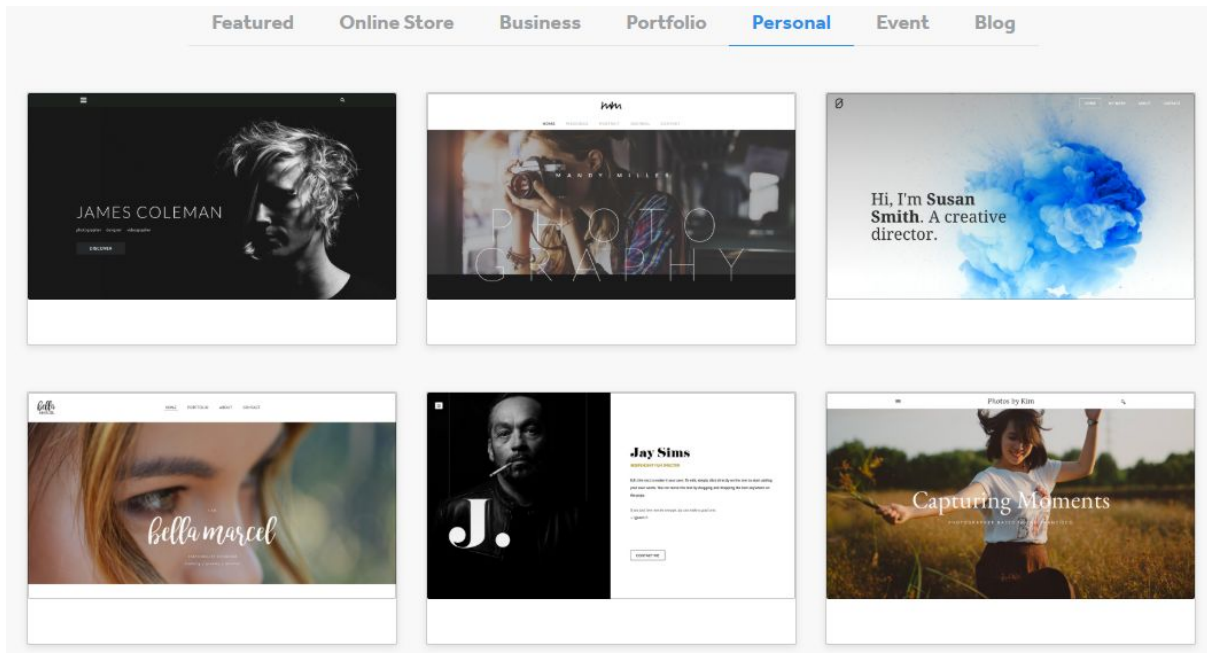
Now you're ready for the really fun part! **It's time to choose a template (or theme) to build your site on.** Templates make up the base of your website – they come in different designs, with sample content which you can change.



Here's a small selection of [Squarespace's templates](#) – it has the best designs on the market!

Templates give you an idea of how your site could look, and makes it easy to get building without having to start from scratch (although this is still an option if you want a completely bespoke website).

You can browse the template selection and pick your favorite, or search by category (such as blog, portfolio, or business). **Some templates have special features built in**, such as a blogging section, a slideshow gallery, or a contact us page.

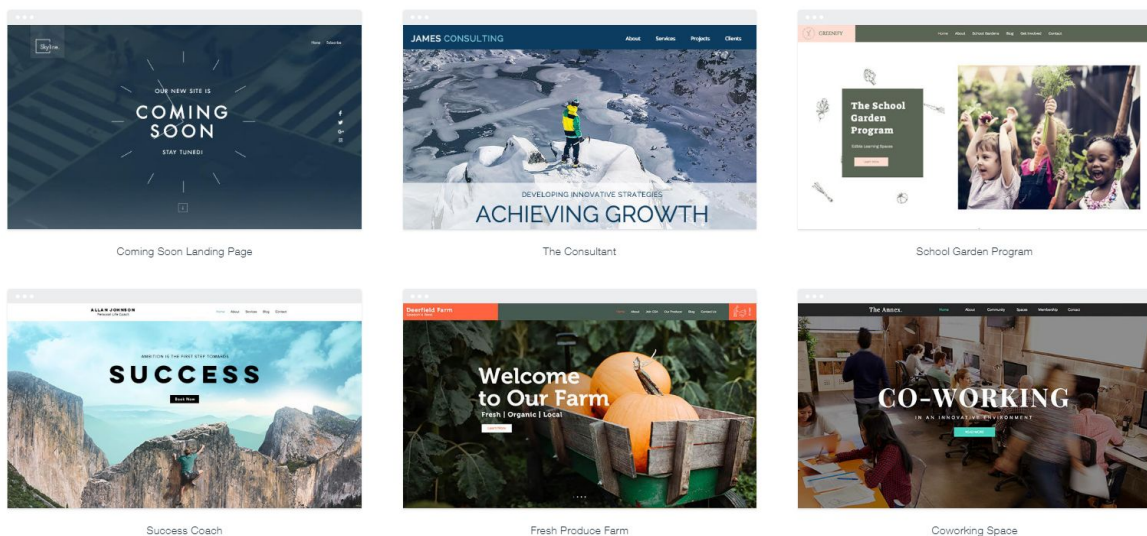


You can search for your perfect template by feature. Here you can see [Weebly's themes](#) come with relevant features and layouts for the selected category.

This is where you start to decide how you want your site to look, so **make sure you pick a template that you love**. Most builders let you preview a template before choosing it – we highly recommend making the most of this as it means you can really get a feel for the design before committing.

Remember, you can change your template as much as you want before hitting publish, but it'll help if you choose a design you're happy with.

Pick the website template you love



Wix has a huge range of [over 500 templates](#), so you're sure to find one you love.

Some website builders let you switch templates even after your site is live, which means you can completely redesign later on. However, other builders don't allow this, in which case definitely make sure you love your design!

Before you move on, make sure you have:

- Browsed your builder's template selection
- Previewed your template
- Chosen a template you love!

08. Choose Your Color Scheme

[Choosing your color scheme](#) is something that sounds easy enough, but can actually become pretty overwhelming.

Is your favorite color lime green? Great! But maybe *not* so great for your website.

Sometimes, you need to set aside your personal preferences, sit back, and think: *what would my visitors respond well to?*

If you don't know the answer to that question, don't worry – we've got some quick tips and tricks for you to get started.

There are three main colors you need to think about:

1. Choose a **dominant color** as your main brand color
2. Choose **one to two accent colors** to create a color scheme for your site
3. Choose a **background color** to complete your design

Your dominant color should be the color people associate with your site, brand, or logo (think that fire engine red of Coca-Cola).



The color red is exciting and energetic. It catches what the brand is trying to promote, creating the message that if you drink Coca-Cola, you'll have fun, feel alive, and be energized.

Here's a quick-fire summary of the main colors and their associations:

- **Green:** wealth, health, tranquility, nature – popular, easy to process
- **Yellow:** youthfulness, optimism, cheerfulness – attention grabbing, use sparingly
- **Orange:** friendliness, creativity, enthusiasm – makes people take action
- **Red:** passion, energy, urgency, excitement, danger – triggers strong emotions
- **Pink:** femininity, sweetness, innocence, romance – has a calming effect
- **Purple:** royalty, wealth, success, wisdom – has a soothing effect
- **Blue:** trust, security, stability, peace, calmness – the world's favorite color
- **Gray:** neutrality, simplicity, futuristic, logic – associated with technology
- **Black:** power, luxury, sophistication, elegance – often used by luxury brands

Take a look at our infographic below for examples and inspiration:

PERSONALITY of COLOR

What color should you choose for your website?



GREEN Represents wealth, health, tranquility, and nature.

The easiest color for the eye to process, so it has relaxation effects. Green is the No.2 most preferred color by both men and women.



YELLOW Represents youthfulness, optimism & cheerfulness.

Often used to grab the attention of the audience. Yellow can put strain on the eyes, so you want to use it sparingly.



ORANGE Represents friendliness, enthusiasm & creativity.

Promotes people to take action: Buy & Subscribe. Orange attracts impulse shoppers.



RED Represents passion, energy, urgency, excitement, vibrancy & danger.

Often used to create urgency for people to buy. Effective in triggering strong emotional reactions. Restaurants use it to stimulate appetite.



PINK Represents feminine, sweetness, innocence, fertility & romance.

Often used to market services and products to women and young girls.



PURPLE Represents royalty, wealth, success & wisdom.

Often used in beauty or anti-aging products. Purple has a soothing and calming effect on people.



BLUE Represents trust, security, stability, peace & calmness.

Often used in businesses and banks to create sense of security & trust in the brand. Blue is the No.1 preferred color by both men & women.



GRAY Represents neutral, simplicity, calm, futuristic & logic.

It lacks emotion and is associated with technology, industry, precision, control, competence and even sophistication.



Source:
<http://www.webpagefx.com/blog/web-design/psychology-of-color-infographic/>
<https://blog.kissmetrics.com/color-psychology/>
<https://www.supermoney.com/2014/08/colors/>
<https://www.helpscout.net/blog/psychology-of-color/>
<https://thelogocompany.net/blog/infographics/psychology-color-logo-design/>

Have a think about the topic of your website, how you want your visitors to feel, and what kind of emotions you want your site to provoke. Is it young, fresh, and happy? Or serious, sophisticated, and neutral?

Once you've got your dominant color, **it's easy to choose your accent colors by using a color matching tool** (like [Adobe Color CC](#), [Coolors.co](#), or [HueSnap](#)).

Then, to choose your background color, you'll want to keep it simple. **Think of your background like a wall in your house** – try to avoid anything too garish that will distract from your site's content. There's a reason most sites have a white background!

Don't be afraid of playing around with different colors on your website. Experiment and get familiar with how to change the color scheme, and see what you like the look of as you edit.

Before you move on, make sure you have:

- Thought about which colors match your site the best
- Chosen a dominant color
- Chosen one to two accent colors
- Chosen a background color
- Played around with changing colors on your website

09. Design a Logo

If you have a business or run a brand online, you're going to need a logo.

Logos are essential for creating a strong brand identity – people remember logos and form strong connections between the logo and the company. Think about Starbucks, Apple, and Nike – do their logos automatically appear in your head?

It's true that these companies have massive budgets and teams of people to design their logos. Luckily, you don't actually need all of that to create a stunning, professional logo – and we can show you how!

Firstly, many website builders – such as [Wix](#) and [Squarespace](#) – come with logo makers built-in as part of their services. You'll need to create an account, but you won't need to pay anything, **even if you're not building your website with them**. Simply enter your site name and edit the design until you're happy.

If your website builder doesn't come with a logo maker, don't worry. **There are plenty of free tools online for you to make the most of, such as:**

- [Tailor Brands](#)
- [GraphicSprings](#)
- [Canva](#)
- [Free Logo Services](#)

So the tools are there. There's a blank canvas in front of you. And you start to wonder: what actually makes a *good* logo?

Here are our top tips for creating a successful logo for your site:

- **Use simple graphics that are easy to recognize** – if an eight year old can draw your logo, you've succeeded.
- **Make sure your logo is versatile** – make sure your logo works on social media, products and business cards, as well as your website.
- **Choose a suitable icon** – pick an image that obviously reflects your brand.
- **Use your dominant color in your logo** – colors are another part of your brand identity, so make use of your color scheme!

If you're struggling to come up with ideas, get back to basics.

What kind of brand are you promoting? How would you describe it to somebody? Who is your main audience?

Start off by doodling and sketching ideas, and take a look at logos of similar brands, or companies that you admire.

You'll have a stunning logo before you know it!

In case you're not keen on designing a logo yourself, you can always have one made for you by a professional. Websites like [Fiverr](#) are great for finding freelancers who can take on jobs like these for a reasonable price.

Before you move on, make sure you have:

- Checked if your website builder has a logo maker
- Compared some different logo makers
- Drafted some ideas for your logo
- Had a go at creating your own professional logo

10. Edit Your Page Layout

Your template will come with the page already laid out a certain way. **Switch things around by mixing up the layout.** Familiarize yourself with your builder – move images, delete text boxes, add new headers, pull a contact form from the bottom of the page to the top.

Don't be afraid of making your site's layout your own.

Different builders work different ways. Some are **block (or 'section based')** editors, where you can move sections of your page around. Others use **drag-and-drop**, which lets you move individual text boxes, images, and anything else you want, to exactly where you want them.

Either way, you'll be able to rearrange your page's structure and make it totally unique.

Before you move on, make sure you have:

- Changed your template's original layout
- Experimented with moving sections of the page around

11. Add Pages

Templates give you a lot to work with, but you might find yourself needing to add some extras to spice up, pad out, or expand your site. **The most important thing to start off with is adding new pages.**

Adding new pages gives you the freedom to really make your site your own. Whether it's a gallery, an about page, or a menu, you can include whatever content you want. **You're not limited by what your template provides.**

It should be pretty easy to add pages with most builders. Some will give you a totally blank page to work with, while others let you choose a category or topic (such as Blog or Contact page) that gives you a pre-set structure to edit or fill out.

It's a good idea to practice adding pages and editing them, as it's an important part of running a website. Even if you don't need extra pages now, you might do in the future as your site grows, so it can't hurt to familiarize yourself with how it works.

Before you move on, make sure you have:

- Found out how to add new pages
 - Added new pages to your site
 - Edited and customized your new pages
-

12. Write your Content

Your site is looking great so far, but it's missing something... content!

Now's the time to get writing and fill out those pages with words. Words welcoming people to your site, words explaining what your site is about, words suggesting what your visitors should do next.

This is totally up to you – your voice, ideas, and site are unique, so we can't tell you what to write. But we can give you some tips on *how* to write well for your website – just check out the infographic below for 19 simple steps on writing stellar web content:

The Ultimate Guide to Writing for the Web

19 Simple Steps



1

Research Your Reader

Know who you're writing for and what they want

2

Know Your Enemy

Carry out competitor research

3

Use Headings

Break up your content using headings

4

Hook Your Reader

Start your piece with a fact, quote, or question

5

Keep Language Simple

Aim to write for an audience of 12 year olds

6

Tell Readers Where They Are

Don't assume readers know what your site's about

7

Front-load Information

Put the most important information right at the start

8

Be Direct

Use "you" to address your reader, and "I" or "we" to refer to yourself or your company

9

Use a Conversational Tone

Keep your copy friendly and relatable

10

Be Active, Not Passive

For example, "the dog sat on the mat", rather than "the mat was sat on by the dog" – sounds better, right?

11

Keep It Short

Use short sentences and short paragraphs – aim for around three lines per paragraph

12

Be Generous With Visuals

Use pictures, graphs, videos, and more to engage readers

13

Write for Screen Readers

Blind people use screen readers, so be descriptive in your links and headings

14

Layer Your Writing for Skimmers and Scanners

Use bold, headings, and short sentences to make your writing easy to scan

15

Leave Out Jargon

If you have to use it, explain it thoroughly first

16

Proof-read Properly

Watch out for spelling, grammar, and punctuation

17

Don't Neglect Your Microcopy

It's small, but mighty

18

Take Care Over Your Metadata

Meta titles and descriptions are important for search rankings

19

Say Hello to Social Media

Share across your social channels

Writing engaging, informative, and good quality copy is the best way to make your visitors happy. Shiny designs will grab their attention, but it's your content that has to keep them on the page. There's a lot to think about when [writing for the web](#), so enjoy it and take your time.

Before you move on, make sure you have:

- Written content for your website
-

13. Say Hello to SEO

As you build your site, you'll start hearing the term SEO thrown around a lot. SEO stands for Search Engine Optimization – this is a way of maximizing your site's chances of getting found in search results, by following guidelines and practices laid out by Google.

SEO is important. Without it, you don't stand much chance of getting found in Google's search results. SEO is all about optimizing your site so that you can climb higher up the Search Engine Results Pages (SERP) – that top result is the holy grail all websites are after.

There are tons of different ways to optimize your site – it can get pretty mind-boggling if you start researching it too deeply. For now, we'll cover the six very basics.

1. Keywords

Carry out **keyword research** to discover what people are typing into Google, and therefore which keywords you should target with your content. Good tools for this include [AnswerthePublic](#), [Google Search Console](#), and [Google Trends](#).

2. Page Structure

Make sure your page titles are **clear, relevant, and descriptive**, giving the user a clear idea of what they can expect to find on the page. Use headings to break up your content – use the header tag h1 for your main heading, h2 for primary headings, h3 for subheadings, etc.

3. Meta Data

Meta data is simply the text you see on the search results page. The blue hyperlinked title is called the **meta title**, and the little bit of descriptive text that appears underneath it is called the **meta description**. You should make these **keyword focused, persuasive, and informative**.

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4. Alt Text

When you upload images, you'll have the option to add **alt text**. This is the text that appears if the image doesn't load, so it should **describe** what appears in the picture, without getting too long. For example, "child splashing in the rain", or "grandma laughing holding mug" would be fine. Good alt text makes for a good user experience, and helps Google assess how relevant your images are to the search query.

5. Links

Links are like pathways between your page and other pages. Google has bots that crawl your website, and links help them to understand its structure and hierarchy – what pages are most important, and which ones are less valuable. Make sure to link to your biggest pages – such as your homepage and about page – more frequently than smaller pages, like a blog post.

6. URLs

The URL is the website address for each page. For example, our homepage URL is www.websitebuilderexpert.com. But the URL for our page on website builders is www.websitebuilderexpert.com/website-builders/. The key to creating good URLs is to **keep them short, descriptive, and relevant to the page content**.

There's an *endless* list of SEO factors, techniques, and tactics, but you don't need to worry about all of those for now. Most website builders come with in-depth help guides for SEO, and some, like [Wix](#) and [GoDaddy](#), even have an SEO Wizard to guide you through getting started.

Before you move on, make sure you have:

- Familiarized yourself with the basics of SEO
- Explored your website builder's SEO guides
- Started looking at ways to optimize your site

14. Don't Forget Images

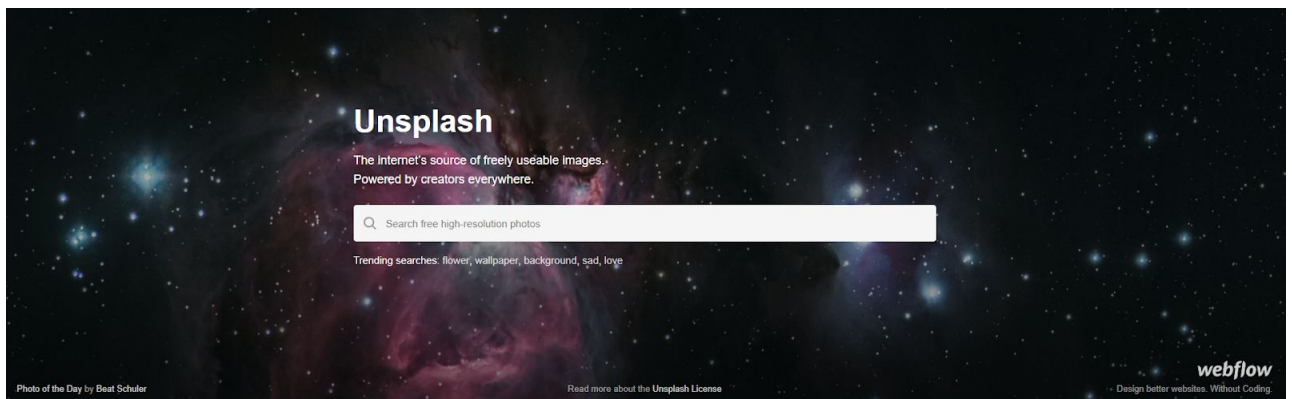
We know SEO can be a little daunting the first time, so now let's have some fun and turn to adding images to your site!

You can write the best content in the world, but without images the truth is nobody is likely to stay on your page long enough to read it. **People love pictures, especially on the internet.**

More specifically, people love high quality, fast-loading pictures. This means finding professional photos – preferably for free, right?

Try out some of the following websites for free and paid professional photos:

- [Unsplash](#) – free images
- [500px](#) – free and paid images
- [GettyImages](#) – paid images



What kinds of images should you look for? Here are some hot tips on using the *right* images for your website:

- **Use high quality images.** Avoid fuzzy, pixelated, stretched, or squashed photos!
- **Use unique images.** No fake, cringey, stock photos allowed.
- **Use images that have meaning.** Don't just cram a few in for the sake of it.
- **Use images with faces.** People pay more attention to images with faces, and even follow the gaze of the person in the photo!

Images are perfect for catching attention and boosting engagement, but they have their drawbacks. **They can slow down your page's loading speed**, which is *bad* for keeping visitors on your site.

The way to get around this is to **compress your images**. This reduces the picture's file size, without visually affecting the quality (unless you compress it too many times). There are plenty of free compressing tools online that make compressing images quick and easy.

Our favorite is [Kraken.io](https://kraken.io), but others include:

- [TinyPNG](https://tinypng.com)
- [ImageResizer](https://image-resizer.com)
- [JPEG Optimizer](https://jpegoptimizer.com)
- [Optimizilla](https://optimizilla.com)
- [CompressNow](https://compressnow.com)

They're all free and super easy to use. Upload your photos to these tools, compress them, and then download the final version of your image to put on your site.

Simple!

Before you move on, make sure you have:

- Had fun exploring professional photos
- Chosen some images to put on your site
- Compressed them using a free compressor tool

15. Set Up a Professional Email Address

Not all websites will need a professional email address, but if you're running a **business website or online store**, then this is another must-have.

So what is a professional email address, and how can you get one?

Imagine contacting a business and finding their email is homer.simpson96xoxo@yahoo.com. It wouldn't fill you full of confidence, would it? **Using a personal email isn't very professional** – instead, you can have an email that looks more like this: info@mybusiness.com.

Some builders provide you with a professional email address on certain paid plans – for example, [Squarespace's Business plan](#) provides you with a professional email from Google. Other builders offer this as a paid extra, so it's worth checking what your builder provides.

However, if your builder *doesn't* throw in a professional email, you'll need to go looking elsewhere. Popular tools include Google's G Suite and GoDaddy – unfortunately **you won't find a professional business email for free**, and some options are cheaper than others.

For example, GoDaddy's cheapest options starts at just **\$4.99 per user, per month**, which isn't too bad!

To get a professional business email, **you'll need to have a registered domain name** (to replace the @yahoo.com bit of the email address!) So make sure you've got that sorted before attempting this step.

Before you move on, make sure you have:

- Decided if your website needs a professional email
- Checked if your website builder can provide you with a professional email
- Created a professional email address for your site

16. Want to Sell Online? Add a Store to Your Site

This guide has been showing you how to build a “normal,” or non-ecommerce website. But at some point **you might want to sell a few products**, in which case you'll need to add a store to your site.

If you're not aiming to create an online store, skip straight to the next step!

We'll give you a few pointers on getting started, but you should know that if you want to set up a serious online store, then the building process is pretty different. We've got in-depth guides on [how to build an online store](#), but for now **here's some quick tips:**

- **Upgrade your plan** – you'll need an ecommerce plan to sell online. These are usually more pricey because they come with more advanced features.
- **Add products** – upload product information, photos, prices, and more to display on your site. Be as descriptive and thorough as possible to help your customers decide!
- **Connect a payment gateway** – without this, you can't get paid. PayPal, Square, and Stripe are all examples of payment gateways.

- **Set your shipping options** – do you want to offer free shipping? Which courier service will you choose? These are all things you manage in your shipping settings.
- **Check for transaction fees** – some builders will charge you a transaction fee for each sale you make. Check if this applies to you so you're not caught by surprise.

Not all builders support online selling, and some just aren't very good. **If you want to add an online store to your existing website, the best builders are:**

- **Wix**
- **Squarespace**
- **Weebly**
- **GoDaddy**

If you want to build a full-blown online store, you'd be better off with a dedicated ecommerce builder instead. These work the same way as website builders, but they're designed to help you build a store from the very beginning, and come with specialist features.

We've tested out the [best ecommerce builders](#), and we particularly loved Shopify and BigCommerce. They're the best at what they do, aren't super expensive, and come packed with powerful tools to help your store succeed.

But, if you don't want to add a store to your site, you can simply carry on building without one – instead, get started on the next step, which is one that's important for everyone to read...

Before you move on, make sure you have:

- Decided if you want an online store as part of your website
 - Upgraded your plan
 - Added products
 - Set your shipping options
 - Connected a payment gateway
-

17. Make It Mobile Friendly

Remember when you were choosing your website builder? You looked out for builders that had **mobile responsive templates**. That means your website will automatically reformat to fit whatever screen it's being viewed on.

Why is having a mobile friendly website so important? [48% of web page views worldwide come from mobile devices](#), meaning that if you don't have a mobile-friendly site you're leaving out almost half of internet users!

Because of that, **Google places a lot of importance on having a mobile responsive site**. There's no getting around it: if you want to rank well in the search results, your website must look good on mobile.

With most builders, you should be able to preview your site as though being viewed on a mobile screen. Clever, right?

Some even let you edit in mobile view so that you can adjust any bits that don't fit right. This won't affect the desktop version and is a great way of making sure your site looks amazing no matter what device it's viewed from.

Other builders go one step further, letting you actually edit from your mobile.

If in doubt, simply use your phone to visit your site once you've made it live – you'll soon know if it's mobile-friendly or not.

Before you move on, make sure you have:

- Made sure your site is mobile friendly
 - Previewed your site in mobile view
 - Edited your site so it looks good on mobile
-

18. Link to Social Media

There are three ways you can link to social media on your website. One is to include social buttons which visitors can use to visit, view, interact, and follow your social accounts.

The second option is to include social sharing buttons which your visitors can use to like or share your content across their own social profiles.

Thirdly, you can embed a social feed on your website. This means all your latest posts will automatically appear on your site, showing people that you're active and keeping them up to date with your latest work or adventures.

Of course, you can also share your own content across your social channels, as this is a great way of growing your audience and keeping everyone up to date with your site's progress.

Social media marketing can be super successful, but it can also be a bit overwhelming to start with. When you're getting started, make sure you:

- **Keep it professional** – if you have a business site, create separate accounts for your website and your personal life. You may have looked great at that weekend barbeque, but if it's not relevant to your website, your visitors won't want to know.
- **Don't spread yourself too thin** – pick a couple of the most relevant social channels that will appeal to your target audience, and which are manageable for you. For example, if you're a photographer, then using Instagram makes total sense.
- **Try to post regularly, but don't exhaust yourself** – being consistent and posting quality content is much more important than posting five times every day. In fact, if you post too much, you could actually annoy your followers!
- **Keep it relevant** – have fun, but always make sure you're providing value to your followers.
- **Avoid being salesy** – maybe you're promoting your resume, or maybe you've got a new blog you just want to share with the world. But don't constantly push and sell your site from every angle. Remember, social media is where people go to relax.
- **Engage, interact, and stay in touch** – pay attention to your followers! Ask questions, reply to comments and share mentions or posts you're tagged in.

Linking to your social media is only worth it if you're actually *active* on your social media accounts, so try to follow these tactics to get the most out of your social channels.

Before you move on, make sure you have:

- Decide how you want to link to social media on your website
- Set up professional social accounts
- Start posting, engaging, and sharing on your social channels

19. Preview Your Website

Before hitting publish, it's important to preview your website first. Any good quality website builder will have the function to preview your site – there's usually a "Preview" button near the "Publish" button.

Previewing your site shows you how it would look live, without actually publishing it on the internet yet.

Previewing your website stops you publishing any mistakes or incomplete pages, lets you iron out any design wrinkles, and lets you sit back and admire your work before anyone else sees it.

Here are a few things to look out for when you're previewing your site:

- **Broken links** – click on any links in your menu, text, and buttons, and make sure they take you to the right page.
- **Spelling mistakes** – it happens to the best of us, so take one last look for any spelling, grammar, or factual mistakes.
- **Design issues** – is any text overlapping? Any images awkwardly placed? Is that menu in the right place? Check everything is laid out properly.
- **Images not loading** – make sure images load, and load quickly. If you haven't compressed your images, make sure to do this before publishing!
- **Mobile view** – no harm in checking this one more time!
- **Settings** – if you've provided contact information, make sure it's all up to date.

It's a good idea to get friends and family to look over your site before you hit publish. They might spot mistakes you've missed, and it's better for friends to point these out than your visitors!

Before you move on, make sure you have:

- Previewed your site
 - Checked for any mistakes (and corrected them)
 - Asked friends and family to check your site too
-

20. Publish Your Website

This part is super simple and extremely exciting. Once you're sure your site is looking its best, you can go ahead and hit that 'Publish' button. This will put your website live on the internet.

You can type in your website URL into the address bar, and hey presto! **Your site will appear before you.**

Don't expect your site to magically appear in Google searches straightaway, though. Google's bots need time to 'crawl' your site, and figure out what it's all about and where it should go. If you've covered the SEO basics then hopefully your site should turn up in Google's search results in a few days... or a few months.

The truth is, **there's no way to tell how long it will take for your site to appear on Google**, so keep checking and sharing the exact URL for your site instead of getting people to Google it. That way, you can be sure they'll find it rather than leaving it up to chance.

Once your site is live, you might want to make changes to it. In fact, you *should* make changes to it, to keep it up to date and fresh for your visitors. **Always preview first, then hit publish to make your changes live.**

Before you move on, make sure you have:

- Published your website
 - Shared your web address with friends, family, colleagues, and on social media
-

Website Building Checklist

After Publishing



21. Set Up Google Analytics

Your website is live, but there are a few more things you can do to really make the most of your site.

The first is to set up [Google Analytics](#). This is an online tool that tracks all sorts of data on your website. It's fantastic for measuring the success of your site, which pages are the most popular, and which pages aren't performing so well.

Here are just a few of the things Google Analytics tracks:

- How many people visit your site
- Which countries people visit from
- What devices people use to view your site
- How long people spend on your pages
- Whether people leave your site straight away (or, 'bounce')
- Where you get traffic from (such as Google or social media)

This data is essential for understanding how people are engaging with your website. Are people spending ages on your homepage, or bouncing straight off? By getting to grips with how your audience is behaving, you can make adjustments to make them happier and, in turn, to make your site more successful..

Some website builders, like Squarespace, actually come with a **built-in Google Analytics integration**, which makes setting up Google Analytics super simple.

It's free to set up Google Analytics – here's how to get started:

- Go to <http://www.google.com/analytics/>
- Click "Start for free."
- Set up a property – in this case that's your website, so Google Analytics knows where to collect data from.

- Set up a reporting view – this lets you filter the information you see.
- You'll be given a **tracking ID** by Google Analytics – copy or make a note of this!
- Follow the instructions to add your tracking code to your website.

There's a lot more you can do with Google Analytics, but these are the basics for getting started.

A lot of website builders also come with their own **in-house reporting tools** to help you track your site's success. If you don't fancy using Google Analytics, then you can stick to your builder's analytics tools – but be aware the results won't be so detailed or in-depth.

Before you move on, make sure you have:

- Checked out your own builder's reporting tools
- Decided if you want Google Analytics
- Created a free Google Analytics account
- Copied your tracking ID to integrate it with your builder

22. Run a Site Speed Check

Soon after publishing your website, you can run a **site speed test**. Slow loading websites are bad news – they make visitors frustrated and they're frowned on by Google. Even a [one second delay](#) in page response can reduce conversions by 7%!

By seeing how quickly your site loads, you can figure out whether you need to make improvements or not.

It's easy to run a site speed check. Of course, you could just load up your site and time it, but that's not very accurate unless your website is taking forever to open. Instead, make use of a free online tool like [Pingdom](#), [Google PageSpeed Insights](#), or [KeyCDN](#).

All you have to do is enter your URL into the tool, then sit back relax as the tool analyzes your site for you. Your site will be given a speed rating, along with suggestions on how you could improve your loading times.

Before you move on, make sure you have:

- Tested your site to see how fast it loads
-

23. Analyze Google Analytics Results

Now that your site has been live for a little while, it's time to analyze the data collected in Google Analytics.

Maybe you've already had a look at your Google Analytics dashboard. If you weren't sure about what you saw, or even if you took one look and closed it straight away, don't worry. We get it – **Google Analytics can be pretty confusing**, especially when you're first starting out.

To help you get started, here's a quick and basic overview of what you can find in each area of your menu:

- **Audience reports:** This is where you find all your visitor information; think age, gender, interests, location, language, how often they visit, and what device they use.
- **Acquisition reports:** This is where you can understand how your visitors got to your site, under the "All Traffic" category. Under the "Social" section you can also learn about traffic from social channels.
- **Behavior reports:** This reveals data about your content. Examples would be the most popular pages, which pages people land on first, and which pages most visitors leave your site from.

There's much, much more to Google Analytics, but hopefully this will help you to start finding your way around and understanding what each section is showing you.

Once you're a Google Analytics pro (it'll happen sooner than you think!) you can start analyzing and making decisions based on the data it gives you.

Before you move on, make sure you have:

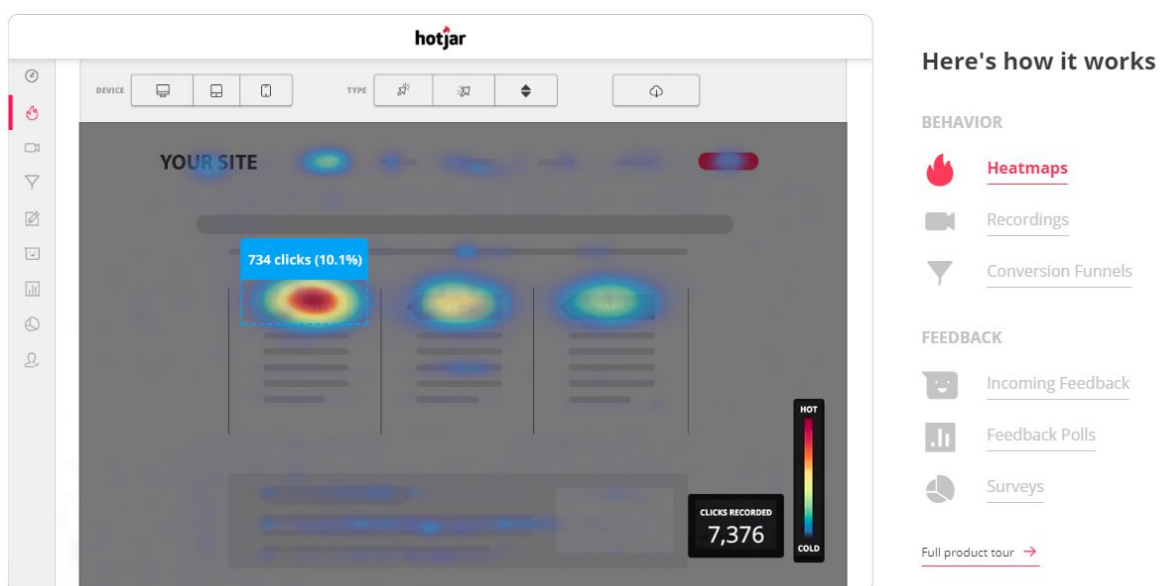
- Explored Google Analytics
- Looked through the data
- Taken some time to understand how it relates to your site
- Make some changes based on the data you see

24. Add Hotjar to Check Your Site's UX

Are you a little bit nosy? Do you want to know exactly what people are doing on your website? If you could see where they're clicking, scrolling, and tapping, would you jump at the chance?

If the answer to any of those questions is yes, then you might enjoy trying out [Hotjar](#). This is a heat mapping tool that lets you see how people are interacting with your website.

A *heatmap*? What's that? A heatmap uses colors to show the areas of your site that receive the most attention. You'll see an image of your website with blues, greens, yellows, and reds scattered around depending on where your visitors click the most. (Red shows where people pay most attention to.)



As well as being generally fascinating, heatmaps can also be invaluable for understanding where your visitors are focusing on your site, which bits they're ignoring, and how far down your pages they're actually scrolling.

This can tell you a lot about your site's user experience, or "UX". Using this information, you can make changes to better engage your visitors and help them get the most out of your website!

Hotjar has a basic version that's totally free to use, as well as a 15-day free trial of its more advanced version.

Before you move on, make sure you have:

- Tried Hotjar for free
- Looked at heatmaps of your site
- Made any changes from your findings

Finally, Keep Going!

This checklist has walked you through every step of building a website, from the very first question – “Why do I need a website?” – to launching your project and seeing your site live on the internet.

We know that building your own website can be daunting, and there's a lot of information out there. Even this checklist probably looked a little overwhelming to start with.

But building a website is also exciting, and we're here to help you every step of the way. With over [10 years' experience](#), you can bet we made every mistake in the book – which means we can help you make a success of your site the first time round.

We hope this checklist has inspired you to get started, and more importantly, not to stop once you've built your website. Keep editing your pages, keep adding new content, and keep learning as you go – then [come back and let us know how you got on!](#)