

WordPress SEO audit checklist

The checks that catch most of the damage, in the order to run them.

SCOPE	TIME NEEDED	YOU NEED
Any WordPress site	20 minutes for the short version	Admin access, Search Console

1. The 20-minute version

Short on time? This sequence tells you whether you are dealing with a catastrophe or a tuning job.

TIME	CHECK	WHERE
10 s	The "Discourage search engines from indexing this site" box is unchecked.	Settings, Reading
2 min	The result count is in the same universe as your real number of pages. A gap above 30% deserves an investigation.	Google, site:yourdomain.com
5 min	What sits in "Crawled, currently not indexed" and "Excluded by noindex".	Search Console, Pages
2 min	Exactly one SEO plugin active, exactly one sitemap submitted.	Plugins screen
5 min	Mobile LCP under 2.5 seconds, on the homepage and on one post.	PageSpeed Insights
1 min	The browser tab shows the title you meant to write.	A post, private window

2. Which auto-generated pages to keep

WordPress creates a page for every tag, category, author and month. Sort them before Google does.

PAGE TYPE	VERDICT	ACTION
Main categories	Useful if you work on them	Keep, add a description, link internally
Tags	Almost always noise	Noindex, or delete if nobody visits them
Date archives	No search value	Noindex
Author pages	Only useful on multi-author sites	Noindex on a solo blog
Attachment pages	Empty content	Redirect to the file or the parent post

Do not noindex categories on reflex. Noindex is for empty pages, not for neglected pages that could still become useful.

3. The full checklist

Tick each line once it is done, in this order.

VISIBILITY

- ☐ Discourage-search-engines box unchecked, permalinks set to post name
Ticked by mistake, that box removes the whole site from Google.

AUTO-GENERATED PAGES

- ☐ Tags, date archives and author pages triaged: keep, improve or noindex
Dozens of empty pages dilute the index.
- ☐ Attachment pages redirected to the file or the parent post
They carry no content of their own.

SEO PLUGIN

- ☐ Exactly one SEO plugin active, exactly one sitemap submitted
Two plugins mean duplicate tags and competing sitemaps.
- ☐ Title and meta templates defined per content type, no raw variable showing in the results
Check real pages in Google, not only the settings screen.

SPEED AND MARKUP

- ☐ Mobile LCP measured on the homepage, post and page templates
Good threshold: under 2.5 seconds.
- ☐ Unused plugins uninstalled, not just deactivated
Test with a default theme on a staging copy to isolate the cause.
- ☐ Images in WebP or AVIF, resized, lazy loading on, alt text where it carries meaning
The most mechanical fix on the list: automate it.
- ☐ Structured data validated, no duplicate schema between the theme and the SEO plugin
If duplicated, disable the theme output.

EXTERNAL CRAWL

- ☐ Full external crawl run, orphan pages and redirect chains listed
None of this shows in the WordPress admin.

After a bulk fix, Google needs several weeks to recrawl each URL. Judge the effect at 6 weeks, not 6 days.

What a checklist cannot see

Orphan pages, redirect chains inherited from old redesigns and indexed tag pages nobody knew about only show up when the site is crawled from the outside, the way Google does. Bloomwise runs that crawl on your WordPress site and ranks the problems by impact. 14-day trial, no card required: bloomwise.io