

Step by Step, On-Site SEO Tutorial

Sure, there's a lot about SEO (search engine optimization) that has to do with how Google and other search engines do things but there's actually a LOT you can do yourself – on your own website. When you optimize your website and what content you post, you can get higher rankings pretty easily.

That is what SEO is – optimizing your website for search so that it ranks higher, to send more traffic to your website.

On Site SEO – Definition

On site SEO refers to the optimization tactics you employ within your own website to make your website more search engine friendly, increasing the chances that search engines will want to rank it higher.

How You Benefit

You might jump from page 3 to page 1 pretty easily by just making a few tweaks. Some fine tuning can be done site-wide while some of these on page optimization techniques can be done on each new post (article) you put online. You can even go back and apply I to help it rank higher and get more traffic.

SITE STRUCTURE
PAGE STRUCTURE
PAGE CONTENT

The latest on page SEO techniques will vary

as time goes on but the basics come down to good site structure, page structure and, of course, great content.

So here are the steps this article will go through:

1. How to optimize your website for search engines
2. How to optimize posts/articles for more traffic
3. How to convert traffic

When you go through all the steps here, **your website will definitely rank higher** because you're helping the search engines better understand your website. Your website becomes a better result by doing this work and search engines will want to rank your

website higher... it just makes sense.

I'm going to mainly focus on WordPress websites. If your website doesn't use WordPress, these tips and techniques will still apply but you'll have to make the changes a different way than what I list here.

Keyword Research First!

And then you'll need to do some good keyword research before you start optimizing – that's step #0.

You will want your article to rank for a related cluster of keywords, not just one keyword. If your article is 1000 words, then shoot for at least 40 good keyword phrases – preferably more. About 10 of those will be your main keyword and the rest will be low competition keyword phrases.

With that many keyword phrases, you're not going to stuff the article with phrases... no! Stop that! You'll work them in naturally. If you do it right, your research will guide your writing. You can even use synonyms for keywords – that's totally fine and encouraged.

Where to Find Good Keywords

Where you get your keywords is from a variety of sources. The primary tools are use are LSI (Latent Semantic Indexing) keywords from Google, the Google Keyword Tool/Planner, Ubersuggest (which is great for LSI keywords) and LSIGraph. These LSI keywords are great for working in naturally.

Get your list together. I like to get a list of around 100 that I might use even though I won't use them all. I then plan my article based on the LSI keywords because this is what people want to know. The low competition keywords from the Google Keyword Planner are also great to use in your content.

I love doing keyword research because I first start off with an idea in mind for an article but then I do research and I see what people really want (what they're searching on) and my article takes a different route than what I had originally planned but that's alright – the article will be even better.

Let's get going!

1. How to Optimize Your Website for Search Engines

We're going to start at the website level first. Changes here can affect your whole website – giving you better rankings within days – unless your website is already optimized, of course.

A. Categories and Permalinks

A good website takes careful planning. I admit that when I planned this website, I wasn't sure where I was really going with it until I got in a ways so the structure isn't perfect. If you plan your website out well, you'll have better structure. What I mean is, categories will make sense.

Do you ever see breadcrumbs at the top of pages? They look something like this:

Home > SEO > Keyword Research > LSI Keywords

which is:

Home > [category] > [sub-category] > [article]

If you got to a page called "LSI Keywords" and saw the breadcrumbs like that at the top of the page, you'd have a good understand where you entered the website, right? That's good structure.

You also want your URLs to match that structure. So, in keeping with our example, the URL should look like this:

Copy

```
http://yourdomain.com/seo/keyword-research/lsi-keywords/
```

That's one way to do it.

The other way is just to have short URLs, like this:

Copy

```
http://yourdomain.com/lsi-keywords/
```

Some people say to always go with short URLs and I agree with that but if you're going to have a large website (which should be your goal), then I think longer URLs are fine if they show the structure of the website.

Don't include smaller words (a, and, the, etc.) in the search engine friendly (SEF) URL.

B. Schema Structure

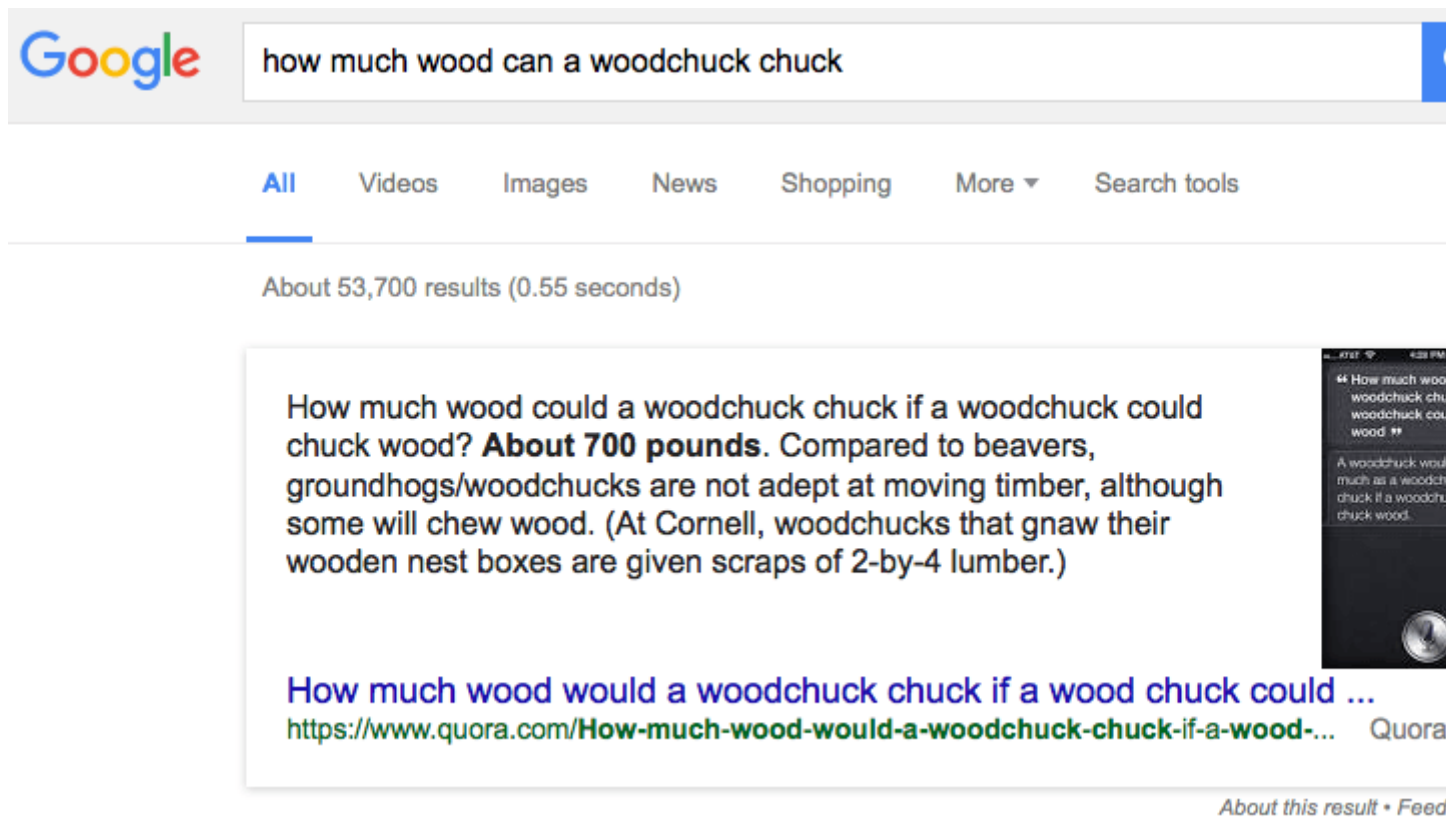
Next, your website should use the correct schema structure. What schema does is classify the data in your article or on a page/area of your website. Once it's classified as being a certain type of data, search engines can do more with it. One example of this is **voice search**.

Voice search is basically Siri on an iPhone, Google on an Android phone and Alexa on the Amazon Echo or Tap.

When your website provides data that these devices needs, **your website can become a result** for information people ask for, which can set up your website to be an authoritative source, rank higher and get more traffic.

Besides voice search, Google is using this data in its results. You see things like definitions or other questions people ask. The main thing is the word "ask" here. That means your content should contain those questions along with answers (remember that when writing).

Here's an example:



Someone is asking a question here. When Google sees that, they change how the results look.

Schema can be everything from an address, store hours, movie titles and lots more. It's like the new version of meta data.

The long, boring and technical explanation is over at [Schema.org](https://schema.org). Schema is also called microdata and structured data.

Schema markup can be used for things like:

- events
- organizations
- people
- places
- reviews

You'll use this plugin:

[Schema App Structured Data](#)

You can test your schema data here by plugging a URL into the testing tool:

<https://search.google.com/structured-data/testing-tool>

C. Make Sure Your Website is Healthy



Next, login to your [Google Search Console](#) account and make sure everything there is copacetic. If you haven't set it up yet, then [learn how to set up Google Search Console](#) now and start gathering data – this step is HUGE with any website. It's the “secret sauce” to SEO if you know how to use it right.

You'll need to make sure you have an [XML site map set up](#) and all that good stuff. You even want to make sure you [have the right icons set up on your website](#). Basically, [make sure your website is Google ready](#).

When you run through the checks in your Google Search Console account, one thing you'll see is that Google asks how to display your website – [with or without the “www” in it](#). You need to make sure only one of those shows your website – the other one should redirect. If this isn't right, then your one website could be showing up under more than 1 domain and

could be counted as having duplicate content – against itself. That’s a ranking penalty and one you have control over.

D. Your Website Needs to Load Fast

A website that loads quickly provides a better user experience because people aren’t waiting very long. Google tests this and you can run the test yourself at [Google PageSpeed Online](#).

Probably the best cheat here is to have **fast website hosting** – website hosting that is tuned for WordPress. Just doing that can take care of all the technical minutiae of getting a **good Google PageSpeed score**. The best website host for that is [A2 Hosting](#) because they set you up good. They give you fast hosting and if you use their installer, your WordPress website is **automatically tuned** to load quickly.

I set up a WordPress website on [A2 Hosting](#) with a theme from [MyThemeShop](#) and here are the scores I got, right out of the box:

- Mobile: 92/100
- Desktop: 92/100
- User Experience: 99/100

Anything above an 85 is passing, so this site passes **easily**.

I’ve seen countless hours spent on getting a passing PageSpeed score and you can literally get a website that passes PageSpeed in about 15 minutes with this method. Don’t spend thousands of dollars to get a passing score – just do it the easy way.

E. Your Site Design Needs to be Mobile Responsive

The best way to make sure your website is responsive is to start with a WordPress theme that is responsive. It’s just easy and fast. Themes aren’t too expensive either. I like using either [MyThemeShop](#) or [ThemeForest](#).

If you’re not sure your website passes the test, then guess what? Google gives you a tool for that, too!

<https://www.google.com/webmasters/tools/mobile-friendly/>

If it doesn’t pass, then you might need to hire a website designer to help you or else modify your theme yourself so that it passes (this can be a lot of technical work if you don’t know what you’re doing).

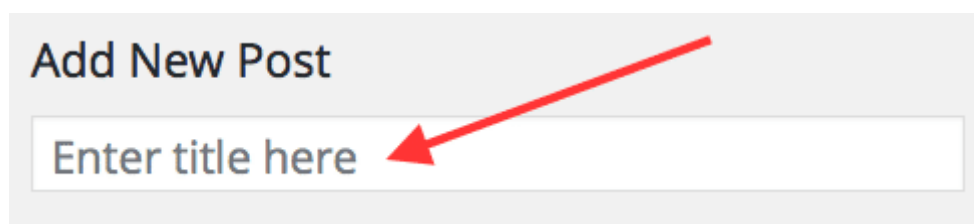
2. How to Optimize Posts/Articles for More Traffic

A. Your Post Title

With your post title, remember that you have that (the title of the post) and then you have the title tag of the page. They can be the same or different. You can make the page title different from the post title by using an SEO plugin.

Here is what I mean...

This is your post title (in WordPress):



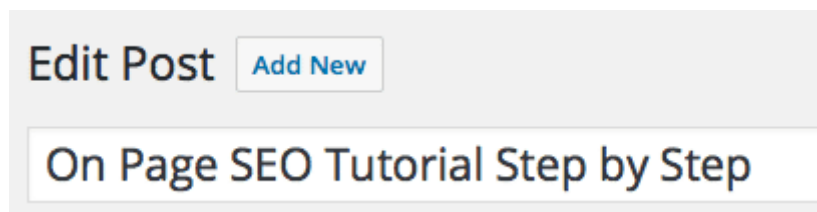
This is your page title (in your SEO plugin):



I like to start with them being the same at first and then optimize it later, once some time has gone by (when I have more data).

Set the post title with SEO in mind. Assuming you've already done your keyword research, set the first few words (4-5 words) of the post with your keyword in mind.

For example, if I'm targeting (on-page SEO) for my post title, I'd use "On Page SEO Tutorial Step by Step" for the post title (which I did):



Page Title Character Limits

Of course, the title character limit needs to be under 55-60 characters so that it displays fully in search engine results. It's best to go to 55 characters since some characters take up more space than others. If you use a lot of characters in your title that take up space,

then your title may be cut off after 55 characters.

For example, the title of my post is (33 characters):

On Page SEO Tutorial Step by Step

but I also have this added on to all my page titles (17 characters – there's a space at the beginning):

| TonyHerman.com

which makes the full page title look like this:

On Page SEO Tutorial Step by Step | TonyHerman.com

and that's 50 characters.

Since that's not a lot of characters, you need to also make sure you have a compelling title using power words (also called title tag modifiers). When your title is compelling, you get more clicks and that's more traffic.

With this one, the words “tutorial” and “step by step” indicate that it's easy and it you will be guided and that gives people assurance that it's a good result.

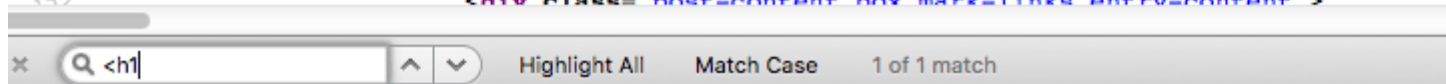
B. Each Page's Title Needs to be in an H1 tag

Your H1 tag is a “heading 1” tag and it's the strongest. It indicates the strongest text on the page.

Most WordPress themes now do this automatically but you need to check this to make sure. The rule is that **you should use your H1 tag once** on a page and then you can use the H2 tag and any others as many times as you want.

To do this, view the HTML source of a page and then so a search for “<h1” to see what shows up. It should look like this:

```
345     <article class="ss-full-width">
346 <div id="content_box" >
347     <div id="post-6506" class="g post post-6506 page type-page
348     <div class="single_page">
349     <header>
350     <h1 class="title entry-title" align="center">Free Books Bun
351     </header>
352     <div class="post-content box mark-links entry-content">
```



Keep searching for “<h1” and see what you get. Only one thing should show up. If none do, then adjust your theme so that the title of the post is in an h1 tag. If more than one h1 tag shows up, then either adjust your theme or content.

Put subheadings in h2 tags. I even use h3 tags on some sub-sub-headings. This article even has an h4 tag or two in it.

C. Make Sure You Use Images and Video



Adding multi-media to your page does a few

things. For one, it just looks better – more complete. It looks like some good time was spent on an article and that means higher quality. Secondly, it adds to the content. Pictures add 1,000 words, so videos must add 10,000 words, right?

When you have video on a page, people might click it and hang out on the page longer. Google measures what is called “dwell time” on a page because that’s an indicator of how good the content is. If people hang out on a page longer, it’s probably better than a page where someone went to it and left right away (referred to as a “bounce”). Videos keep people on a page longer, so a long video that is entertaining or has good content will keep people on the page.

When you use images on your website, make sure they’re optimized so that they load quickly.

And use images you have the rights to use, of course. I have a [list of a lot of websites where you can get free images](#).

D. Put Keywords in the First 100 Words and at the End

That’s pretty self-explanatory.

Your best keywords (the ones you’re targeting) should be in the first 100 words and then include some at the very end as well. Don’t put them all there but put a good amount of them there.

I like to do a conclusion at the end of the article to review what the article was about and to give more advice and that’s a great place to add in some of the keywords I researched and

want to use.

E. Link to High Authority (High Value) Sources

You don't want to go crazy with this because Google is testing for sites that do this too much but do it where it makes sense. Basically, link to other websites that can help your website visitor. I've done it a number of times in this article already. It shows that your website is a resource and that you're linking out to other websites that have good content.

F. Link Between Pages on Your Site

In order to spread the "link juice" (an SEO term) to other pages on your website, you should be linking to them within your content. I'm doing that a lot here, actually. If you have a page on your website that relates to something, then link some text to it. A link to a page gives more meaning to that page with the text that is being used as the link.

G. Post Long Articles

Shoot for articles that are 2500 words or more (this one is over 3000 words). Of course, don't write just to get to a word count but write great articles that will help people. A longer article makes for a better resource if it contains good information and it increases dwell time, keeping people on your website longer.

3. How to Convert Traffic

Now that I've stated ways to have good on-site SEO, which will help get people to your website, another important topic that can't be ignored is how to convert that traffic.



The word “conversion” is a marketing term and it

means to turn traffic into sales or leads or have the website visitor complete an action. The “ask” can be big or small. A big ask is to take out their wallet and buy something. A small ask is to like or share a page.

There are other things in the middle like:

- make a phone call
- fill out a contact form
- join a newsletter
- read another article
- subscribe to your blog (RSS or notify)
- download something
- leave a comment

You do this with a “call to action” (CTA) statement. You ask people to do something.

I’ve evaluated a lot of websites in my days and we run into lots of websites where they don’t have enough call to actions in them. They might have great content but they leave the website visitor wondering what to do next when they get to the end of the page.

Your CTA statements shouldn’t just be at the end of an article either. Put them in the middle, along the side, even way at the top. Yes, you might sell someone right away, so why make them go through your whole article – ask them to do something right away. It really cannot hurt.

How You Write Matters

If you are writing a landing page where you’re selling pretty hard, then make sure you structure the page right. There’s a whole science to building great landing pages and you might not hit the best possible converting page right off the bat and that’s why you need to

test pages.

First, here's a good article of mine about how to create good landing/sales pages:

[A Winning Sales Pitch Page Formula for Online Marketing \(tonyherman.com\)](http://tonyherman.com)

Secondly, you want to test your landing pages. Set one up, see how much traffic it gets and then how many actions you get, then make a change and track the same statistics. Keep doing this until you find what works the best.

You might change one word in the headline and test that page. You might change an image. You might remove a bunch of text.

I've done that – I've removed a bunch of text on a page and I found out that the less I said, the better it converted... crazy.

Conclusion

This article discussed on-page SEO. I defined it and gave you steps on how to help get it done on your website. I went over keyword research, how to optimize your website for search engines, how to optimize posts/articles for more traffic and how to convert traffic into sales or leads or use some kind of call to action.

If you apply what is mentioned here to each article on your website, your website will start to rank higher.

I've seen some websites in really bad shape – we then applied some things mentioned here and they jumped up 2-3 pages in rankings. That's 20-30 positions and it only took a few days. This is powerful stuff and the reason is because you're helping the search engines.



Think about it...

If you show up to help a friend move and you get to their house and they don't have hardly anything packed, you know it's going to be a long day of tedious work. But if you show up, they have everything in boxes, all lined up at the door, you're more happy to do the work for them, right?

It's the same with your website and search engines. If you have things ready to go on your side where everything is nice and neat, they're happy to come by and help you. If it's a mess, they'll just come back later when you're ready.

If you read this and aren't sure what to do and if this sounded like Greek to you (no offense to any Greek people reading this), then I've got an offer for you. I have a **website maintenance team** that knows this stuff inside and out. We've done it a lot and we can help you get your website sorted out and ranking higher by doing on-site SEO.

There's even a special offer you can get in on – **go and learn more**.

More SEO Resources:

- [Beginner's Guide to SEO](#) (YouTube.com)
- [SEO for Small Business](#) (TonyHerman.com)
- [SEO Services](#) (Webstix.com)

Original article: <https://tonyherman.com/on-site-seo/>

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