

Getting Started with On-Page SEO

A QUICK-REFERENCE CHECKLIST

To create this checklist, the Leadpages content team adapted the guidelines we ourselves turn to when thinking about optimizing content resources for search. If you work with writers or anyone else on your team who creates content but may not be an SEO expert, this can get them off on the right foot.

Choosing Your Keyword(s)

To do predictably well in organic search, content pages should be centered around a keyword (or a group of closely related keywords.)

- Select a keyword or keyword group related to your content topic.
- Enter your keyword(s) into Google and see what appears on Page 1. Ideally, there should be some results similar in scope and kind to the content you're planning, but there should also be **room for a new angle** that'll make your content stand out from (and get higher clickthrough rates than) the pack.
- Research your keyword(s) in Google's Keyword Planner or another tool. The most promising keywords will have **relatively high search volume with relatively low competition**.
- Gut check: will your keyword(s) **occur naturally and frequently**—along with synonyms and related words—inside the content you're planning to write?
- Gut check: will your content match the **search intent** of your keyword? Would someone entering your chosen keyword(s) in a search engine be satisfied by the content you're creating?
- Think about other content you've created for your business. Will your new page **compete with any existing resources** for the same search traffic? (If so, consider optimizing your existing content rather than creating a new page.)

Title

Titles are crucial to creating content that gets clicks and high search rankings. Here are some quick suggestions for your title tag.

- Keep titles under 60 characters; anything longer will typically be truncated in the search results.
- Try to write a title containing your primary keyword, preferably intact, ideally as close to the beginning of the tag as is feasible without distorting user readability. But don't sweat it if an exact match doesn't fit here—as search algorithms become increasingly sophisticated, it becomes less and less important to include the full keyword in the title and elsewhere.
- Make sure your title contains copy that compels the user to click through—this will create a virtuous cycle as more viewers lead to higher search rankings.
- For core pages of your site, make sure to include your brand/company name in the title.

Page URL and Meta Description

The page URL and meta description also give important information to search engines and users.

- Use hyphens to separate words in your URL slug (think **/summer-camp-minnesota** instead of **/summercampminnesota**).
- URLs should be related to your keyword and topic while remaining fairly brief—shorter URLs tend to rank better, and the ends of very long URLs are likely to get truncated on SERPs anyway.
- The meta description should inspire interest and clicks from SERPs and social media.
- The meta description should be no longer than 160 characters.

Body

A variety of best practices should be employed within the body of the page:

- Each page should target a primary keyword phrase and, if desired, several closely related phrases and/or synonyms.
- The content of the page should reflect the user's single intent for the given query. Think about who is likely to be searching for your keyword(s), what they hope to find, and where they might fall into your marketing funnel.
- Content should be logical and comprehensive, employing terms and ideas that are naturally related to your keyword(s).
- Images on the page should employ descriptive, keyword-rich alt attributes and file names.
- When linking to other pages you own, use descriptive anchor text in line with the primary keyword of the destination page.
- Content should support rich snippets and microformatting, if possible.