

Technical SEO checklist

Seven groups, in the order to work through them. If a page cannot be crawled, nothing below that matters yet.

Work top to bottom. The order is deliberate: crawling and indexing come first because every other check below assumes Google can reach the page and has chosen to keep it.

Crawling and indexing

- ☐ robots.txt does not block anything you need crawled -- check it, do not assume
- ☐ The pages you care about return 200, not 3xx or a soft 404
- ☐ Search Console Pages report shows indexed counts close to submitted counts
- ☐ No page you want indexed carries a noindex tag left over from staging
- ☐ XML sitemap lists only canonical, indexable, 200-status URLs
- ☐ Sitemap is submitted in Search Console and reports no errors
- ☐ No orphan pages: everything important is linked from somewhere crawlable

Canonicals and duplicates

- ☐ One hostname only -- pick www or apex and 301 the other
- ☐ HTTP redirects to HTTPS in a single hop
- ☐ Every page has a self-referencing canonical
- ☐ Trailing slashes are consistent, so /page and /page/ are not two URLs
- ☐ Parameterised and filtered URLs do not create indexable duplicates
- ☐ Uppercase and lowercase paths do not both resolve

Redirects and migrations

- ☐ Every legacy URL redirects in ONE hop to a genuinely equivalent page
- ☐ No redirect chains, and no redirect loops
- ☐ Nothing is swept to the homepage -- Google largely discards an irrelevant redirect
- ☐ Internal links point at the final URL, not through a redirect

On-page basics

- ☐ Every page has a unique title under roughly 60 characters
- ☐ Every page has a unique meta description
- ☐ Exactly one h1 per page, and headings do not skip levels
- ☐ Images have alt text that describes the image, not the keyword
- ☐ Internal links use descriptive anchor text rather than "click here"

Speed and Core Web Vitals

- ☐ LCP under 2.5s on mobile, measured on field data rather than lab data alone
- ☐ CLS under 0.1 -- every image and embed has explicit width and height
- ☐ INP under 200ms; check what your third-party scripts cost you
- ☐ Fonts are self-hosted or preloaded, and no more than you need

Structured data and rendering

- ☐ Structured data describes what is visible on the page, and validates
- ☐ Content is present in the HTML rather than requiring JavaScript to appear
- ☐ Mobile and desktop serve the same content

Measurement

- ☐ Search Console verified for the exact property you are reporting on
- ☐ Analytics fires exactly once per page -- check, this is wrong more often than not
- ☐ Conversions from non-paid search are tracked and tested end to end
- ☐ Bing Webmaster Tools verified as well. It takes ten minutes and it is free

Which tool answers which question

Every check above can be answered with a free tool. This is which one.

What you need to know	Use	Note
Indexing and coverage	Google Search Console -- Pages report	Your own data. No tool estimate beats it.
Crawl the whole site	Screaming Frog or Sitebulb	Free up to 500 URLs in Screaming Frog.
Core Web Vitals, field data	Search Console -- Core Web Vitals	Real users. Lab tools are for diagnosing, not judging.
Core Web Vitals, lab data	Lighthouse or PageSpeed Insights	Use it to find the cause once the field data shows a problem.
Structured data	Rich Results Test and the Schema validator	Validates syntax, not honesty. It must match visible content.
Redirects and status codes	curl -I, or the browser network tab	Check the hop count, not just the destination.

The three that cost the most when skipped

- One hostname, one hop. www or apex, HTTP to HTTPS, in a single redirect. Duplicate hostnames split every signal you have.
- Legacy URLs redirected to a genuinely equivalent page. Sweeping them to the homepage discards years of accumulated links in an afternoon.
- Analytics firing exactly once. Double-fired conversions make every downstream decision wrong, and nothing on the surface looks broken.

Your score

Count the unticked boxes per group. Fix the group with the most gaps before starting anything new.

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