

WORDPRESS HACKS FOR EVERY BLOGGER

Designing and optimizing your blog to ensure it's visually appealing and easy to use.

Introduction

Your blog is key to connecting with your audience and can help you build brand awareness and reach your marketing goals. As a blogger, you want to ensure your site is functional, attractive, easy to navigate, and easy to maintain.

So, use the following WordPress hacks to achieve precisely that.

1. CUSTOMIZE YOUR HOMEPAGE

WordPress is designed to display your latest posts on your homepage and it's not ideal since you are a blogger and want to use your blog to connect with your audience and market to them. But the great news is that you can change that.

Remove the latest posts from showing on your website's homepage and create a 'Home' page instead. After that, add a new page and call it 'Blog.' This is where all your blog posts will go. This makes it easy for visitors to easily access your content, navigate your site, and find the information they need.

After creating your pages, go to your WordPress admin and click on 'Settings' then 'Reading.' Navigate to 'Frontpage displays' and choose 'A static page.' Select 'Home' for the front page and 'Blog' for the posts page.

Customize your posts page and control the number of posts that your page displays. Go back to your dashboard and click on 'Posts' then select your post to make any additional changes. For example, you can change the author name, add multiple authors, and so on.

2. PASSWORD PROTECT THE ADMIN DIRECTORY

Add an extra layer of security to your site to prevent unauthorized access and keep your website safe. Go to your WordPress admin directory and enable password protection. Login to your cPanel and scroll down to the 'Security' section. Select 'Password protect directories.' When prompted to choose the directories to protect, select the /wp-admin/ folder. Next, add a username and a strong password. Save the changes.

Go to your wp-admin and try to access it to check if your changes have been implemented. You should be prompted for a username and password.

Note: if any of your installed plugins are using the Ajax functionality on your website's front- end, adding a security layer to your admin directory will break the Ajax functionality and you will receive errors.

3. LIMIT LOGIN ATTEMPTS

By default, WordPress has an unlimited number of login attempts. Meaning a user can try to log into your site multiple times without having your login details and end up getting it right without being blocked. This is one of the most common cyber attacks that hackers use to get into your site and it is called Brute Force.

So, use the Login LockDown plugin to prevent it from happening.

Use it to limit the number of retries and protect your blog from hackers. Specify allowed entries and set the number of failed attempts that a user is allowed to make before their IP gets blocked.

Determine how long users are allowed to wait before trying to log in again and more.

4. USE CUSTOM PERMALINKS

By default, WordPress permalinks are set to 'plain' and this is not ideal for SEO because they often include dates or numbers at the end. So, customize your permalinks or use post names as your links instead.

Go to your WordPress admin dashboard and click on 'Settings' then 'Permalinks.' You will have several options to choose from. However, we recommend you choose 'Post name' and save your changes.

This allows browsers to rank your posts on the top of search engine results pages and is great for search engine optimization.

5. COMPRESS ALL IMAGES

Compress your images to save storage space, improve your website speed, and give users the best experience. Remember, keeping visitors on your blog and retaining them is difficult if your site is slow and it takes minutes to load images, videos, and other related content.

So, speed up your page load times to retain blog readers and ensure your website loads faster.

Always check your image sizes before uploading them to your site.

Use TinyPNG, JPEG Optimizer, or Online Image Optimizer to compress images and ensure faster loading times. These image compression tools are free and easy to use. Simply search for the one you want on your favorite browser, upload your image, and hit 'compress.'

Using the compression tools doesn't affect the quality of your picture. You also get to set the preferred quality for your compressed image before reducing the size.

6. ADD NAVIGATING TO THE NAVIGATION MENU

Add image icons to your navigation menu to attract attention and keep your blog appealing to readers. You can either do it manually or install a plugin and speed up the process.

If you choose to do it manually, go to 'Appearance' on your dashboard and select 'Menus.' Click on 'Screen Options' and click on the 'CSS Classes' box.

Go to your navigation menu and select one menu item. Add different CSS Classes on each menu and save your changes. Return to the dashboard and go to 'Media' then 'Add new media' to upload your images. Copy your image URLs once you add them to your library.

Select your active theme by going to 'Themes', 'Customize', then 'Additional CSS.' Use the following code to add your custom CSS;

```
.homenavicon {  
background-image: url (add image source);  
background-position: left;  
background-repeat: no-repeat;  
padding-left: 10px; or set preferred number of pixels  
}
```

If you prefer using a plugin, install the best plugin to ensure desired results. Install and activate the Menu Image Plugin by going to 'Plugins' on your dashboard and then 'Add new.' Search for 'Menu Image, Icons made easy' and click on install. After that, click on 'Activate' to activate the plugin and use it.

Next, go to 'Appearance' then 'Menu' to upload your images and add them to the navigation menu.

7. ADD A USER REGISTRATION FORM

If you have a membership site or want your blog readers to subscribe to your newsletter or premium content, allow user registration on your site. Go to 'Settings', 'General', and then click on 'Anyone can register' next to 'Membership.'

Choose the default role that is going to be assigned to everyone who registers. Choose 'Subscriber' if you are unsure.

You can also enable user registration to allow users to comment on your articles, add posts, and so on.

Create your form with WPForms or Contact Form 7.

8. INSTALL AN SEO PLUGIN

Search engine optimization is key to growing your readership and ensuring your content ranks high on search engines. You can either hire an SEO expert or web designer on freelancing sites like Fiverr and Upwork or install an SEO plugin.

SEO plugins analyze your content and help you rank for certain keywords and appear on the SERPs. They greatly speed up the entire process and ensure your blog ranks high on searches.

Use Yoast SEO to ensure the best results. The plugin has over 20 000 5-star reviews and 5 million+ active installations.

The best part is that it comes with a free plan plus you gain access to countless features with the free plan. Upgrade to the premium plan for additional features.

Other great SEO plugins to look into are All-In-One SEO, SEOPress, and WP Rocket.

9. INSTALL GOOGLE ANALYTICS

Track site performance and study user behavior with Google Analytics. Know where most of your traffic is coming from, how long people stay on your blog and your most visited pages. Use the information you gather to improve your content strategy, grow your audience, and retain readers.

Install the MonsterInsights plugin and use it to install Google Analytics. This is the easiest and most effective way to install Google Analytics on your site.

Measure your blog's performance, analyze your audience, and gain access to important data straight from your WordPress dashboard.

Both plugins are free and have a user-friendly interface. Take the above-mentioned steps to install your plugins.

10. INSTALL A SECURITY PLUGIN

Your blog is vulnerable to malicious attacks the minute it's launched. The more success you have the greater the attempts by hackers to gain administrative access and this is why over 20 000 websites are hacked daily.

So, install the best security plugin to secure your blog and keep it safe from hackers. Install Sucuri Security which offers all-around protection. You gain access to countless features to protect your blog, for example, monitoring and detection, file integrity monitoring, security alerts, blacklist monitoring, the prevention of SEO spamming, and so much more.

It comes with a free plan and a paid version. The free plan has many great features and you can still meet your goals without upgrading to the paid plan. However, if you have specific needs or need access to more features, upgrade to the premium plan and enjoy additional benefits.

Other reputable security plugins to consider are BulletProof Security, iThemes Security, and All In One WP Security and Firewall.

11. LIMIT YOUR PLUGINS

Plugins add more functionality to your blog and help you add unique and must-have features like contact forms and live chat to your site with little or no effort. However, installing too many plugins can slow down your site and make it vulnerable to attacks.

So, limit your plugins and only install the most important and necessary ones. For example, install ones that will help with your search engine rankings, add extra security to your blog, and ones that will benefit both your website and users.

Read user reviews and check ratings plus the number of active installations before installing your plugins to ensure you choose the best plugins that will not give you headaches down the line.

12. ADD TWO-FACTOR AUTHENTICATION

Install and activate the Two Factor plugin to add an extra layer of security and keep hackers out of your site. After activating your plugin go to 'Users' then 'Your profile.' Customize your settings and set your preferences. Enable multiple options for better security.

Some options include email notifications, verification codes, and a time-based one-time password.

If you choose the email option, you will receive a code on your email address each time you log in.

13. MANAGE COMMENTS

Allow users to leave comments on your posts to boost engagement and get them to interact better with your content.

Manage comments and control which ones appear on posts to avoid having inappropriate comments on your pages. Go to 'Settings' then 'Discussions' to set your preferences.

Display the number of comments, likes, and shares that each post receives to attract attention and boost engagement. Activate and install the Simple Blog Stats plugin to display the total number of comments per post. Install the Comments Like Dislike plugin to display the number of likes or dislikes per article.

Use Recaptcha to avoid spam. Use Google reCAPTCHA by BestWebSoft or set up and use reCAPTCHA in WPForms.

14. USE ALT TEXT

Add alternative text to your images to make it easy for search engines to understand your images and ensure people with disabilities understand the purpose of the image. Make sure every image has a title and description. Write short and clear descriptions to improve the user experience.

Title tags and alt text are great for SEO and ensure your content appears on searches. So, don't skip this part.

Simply go to 'Media' then 'Library.' Select the image you want to use and add a title and alt text.

15. ADD FEATURED IMAGES

Featured images appear as thumbnail images on your posts and are a great way to command attention and boost engagement. So, add a featured image on all your posts for interactive content and to attract your users to your blog.

Go to 'Posts' then 'Add new post' or click on your existing posts and navigate to 'Add featured image' on your right. Upload the image you want and save changes. Choose an image that goes well with your content and one that makes it easy for users to understand what the post is about.

16. DISPLAY RELATED POSTS

One of the most effective ways to keep readers on your blog and keep them engaging with your content is by displaying related posts after each post and suggesting related articles.

This is the most effective way to pique interest and get users to click on your articles.

So, display related posts below every article or on your sidebar with the JetPack plugin. Install and activate it. Customize your settings and choose your preferred options.

If you want to display random posts instead, use the Advanced Random Posts Widget plugin. After successfully installing and activating it go to 'Appearance' then 'Widgets.' Add the widget to your preferred sidebar and set its location and position.

17. ADD SOCIAL MEDIA BUTTONS

Social media buttons make it easy for users to share your posts with their friends and are a great way to increase blog traffic. They help you build social proof, generate leads, and increase your social media following.

Use the JetPack plugin, the Shared Counts plugin, or whichever you prefer. After installing and activating the plugin go to 'Settings' then select the installed plugin. If you choose Shared Counts, scroll down to the 'Display' section and add your share buttons. Go through all the options and set your preferences. Click on 'Save Changes' once you are done.

18. HIDE WP-CONTENT

Hide directory browsing to deny users access to your themes and plugins or ensure site visitors don't see which theme or plugins you are using on your website. This is standard security practice and a great way to ensure attackers don't exploit your site or hack into it using the displayed information.

So, hide wp-content, wp-includes, and wp-uploads. Edit your .htaccess file via

your website's root directory. Add Options – Indexes at the bottom of your .htaccess file and save changes.

Go to 'yourwebsite/wp-includes/js/jquery/.' to check if changes were implemented. You should receive a 403 or forbidden error message.

19. ADD YOUR GRAVATAR IMAGE

Set up your Gravatar to make it easy for people to identify you and give your blog a professional touch. WordPress uses a default image as your gravatar if you don't set one and that image is called 'Mystery Person'. So, add your image to ensure the right picture appears next to your comments and author bio.

Go to 'Media' then 'Add a new image.' Choose the image you want to use as your gravatar image and add it to your WordPress library.

Go to your profile and navigate to your profile picture. Click on 'Gravatar.' You will be redirected to the gravatar website. Upload your image and set it as your gravatar image. Don't forget to link the image to the email address you registered your account with to ensure it gets uploaded to your WordPress account.

20. KEEP YOUR SITE UPDATED

Last but not least, keep your site updated and always make sure it's running on the latest WordPress version. Constantly check for updates and keep your theme and plugins up-to-date to improve website security and protect your blog from vulnerabilities.

Turn on auto-updates for your themes and plugins or update them manually by selecting the plugin and clicking on 'Update.'

The great thing about WordPress is that it notifies you when your theme or plugins are outdated and there are new updates available. So, you never have to worry about missing an update. All you have to do is go to 'Updates' on your dashboard and update your theme and plugins to the latest and recommended versions.