

The Complete Website Maintenance Guide

Every task worth doing, grouped by how often to do it

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A website is not a finished object, it is running software. Left alone it drifts out of date, slows down, and eventually becomes a target. The good news is that keeping one healthy is mostly routine. This guide lays out every task worth doing, grouped by how often it needs doing, so you can run it yourself or hand it to whoever does. Nothing here depends on a particular plugin or tool.

Daily

Mostly automated. Set these up once and let them run.

- ☐ **Confirm the site is up**
An uptime monitor should alert you the moment it goes down, not a customer.
- ☐ **Confirm backups ran**
A backup schedule is worthless if it silently fails. Check it succeeded.
- ☐ **Watch for security alerts**
A monitoring service should flag file changes, failed logins and malware early.
- ☐ **Skim key metrics**
A sudden drop in traffic or enquiries is easiest to fix on the day it starts.

Weekly

A short, hands-on pass. Fifteen minutes prevents most bad months.

- ☐ **Apply plugin and theme updates**
The most common cause of a hacked site is out-of-date software.
- ☐ **Test on staging first**
Update a copy, confirm nothing breaks, then update live.
- ☐ **Submit and clear a contact form**
Confirm enquiries still send and still arrive in a monitored inbox.
- ☐ **Check for broken links**
Broken internal and outbound links frustrate visitors and hurt SEO.
- ☐ **Clear spam and pending comments**
Housekeeping that keeps the database and inbox clean.
- ☐ **Verify the latest backup restores**
A backup you cannot restore is not a backup.

Monthly

A deeper look at health and performance.

- ☐ **Apply core software updates**
Test on staging, back up first, then update the platform itself.
- ☐ **Review site speed**
Measure load time on a real connection. Speed drifts as content grows.
- ☐ **Optimise new images**
Uploads at full resolution are the most common cause of a slow page.
- ☐ **Tidy the database**
Clear old revisions, transients and orphaned data that accumulate over time.

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☐ Review analytics

Which pages bring enquiries, which leak visitors, what changed this month.

☐ Check search performance

Impressions, clicks and any new crawl or indexing errors.

☐ Review user accounts

Remove access nobody uses. Every unused login is a way in.

☐ Confirm SSL is valid

A lapsed certificate breaks trust and blocks visitors instantly.

Quarterly

The audits that catch slow-building problems.

☐ Run a full restore test

Rebuild the whole site from a backup on a staging environment, end to end.

☐ Audit security settings

Logins, permissions, firewall rules and hardening, reviewed properly.

☐ Audit content

Fix outdated information, thin pages and anything that no longer reflects the business.

☐ Review keywords and rankings

What you rank for, what you have lost, and where the gaps are.

☐ Walk the site as a customer

On a phone. Every key journey, from landing to enquiry, start to finish.

☐ Review plugins in use

Remove anything unused or abandoned. Fewer moving parts, fewer risks.

☐ Check hosting headroom

Storage, bandwidth and performance against what the site now needs.

Annually

The big-picture review.

☐ Renew domain and certificates

A lapsed domain or SSL takes the site down. Diarise renewals early.

☐ Review the design and structure

Does the site still match the business and how customers now behave?

☐ Run a full technical and SEO audit

A thorough once-over of everything the routine checks miss.

☐ Test disaster recovery

If the site vanished today, exactly how, and how fast, would you rebuild it?

☐ Review accessibility

Confirm the site is usable for everyone, which is both right and lower risk.

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The parts that actually cause outages

Backups done properly

- Keep more than one recent copy, not just last night's.
- Store at least one copy separate from the site and its host.
- Include both files and the database. One without the other cannot rebuild the site.
- Automate it. A backup that depends on someone remembering will eventually be missed.
- Test a restore before you need one. Most backup failures are only discovered during an emergency.

Security as a routine

- Keep core, plugins and themes current. Unpatched software is the number one way in.
- Give every person the least access they need, and remove accounts the moment they are unused.
- Enforce strong, unique passwords and two-factor authentication on every admin login.
- Keep the whole site on HTTPS, with no insecure content and a valid certificate.
- Monitor for file changes, failed logins and malware, so a compromise surfaces in hours not weeks.
- Limit login attempts and hide obvious admin entry points to blunt automated attacks.

Keeping it fast

- Serve images sized and compressed for the web, in a modern format, never at full resolution.
- Remove plugins and scripts that are not earning their place. Every one adds weight.
- Use caching and a content delivery network so pages are served quickly everywhere.
- Keep the database tidy so queries stay quick as content grows.
- Measure load speed on a real mobile connection, not just a fast office one.
- Re-check speed after every significant change. Sites get slower one small addition at a time.

When something breaks

- Do not panic and do not start changing things at random. That usually makes recovery harder.
- If you have a recent, tested backup, restoring it is often the fastest route back to working.
- Note what changed most recently. New updates, new plugins and new code are the usual culprits.
- Put up a holding message rather than leaving visitors on a broken or error-filled page.
- Once recovered, find the root cause so the same failure cannot happen again next week.

NO TIME TO RUN THIS?

Website management exists so you never have to think about this list.

Book a free strategy session and we will keep your site fast, secure and working.

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