

On-Page SEO Checklist 2026

15 Proven Ranking Factors | Built from 20+ Years of Real Data | SEOBANK Digital Marketing

How to Use This Checklist

Run this checklist on every page you publish or audit. Check each box as you complete the step. Revisit priority pages every 90 days to keep rankings fresh. Priority levels: **Critical** = do first, **High** = do next, **Medium** = do when possible.

FOUNDATION: Match Intent & Control SERP Appearance

<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Match User Search Intent	Analyze top 10 results for your target keyword. Match the page type, format, and depth that Google already ranks.	Critical
<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Optimize Title Tags	Under 60 characters. Primary keyword front-loaded. Add a year, number, or benefit modifier to boost CTR.	Critical
<input type="checkbox"/> 3 Write Descriptive Meta Descriptions	140-155 characters. Include target keyword once. End with a clear action. Every page needs a unique description.	High

STRUCTURE: Organize for Humans & Crawlers

<input type="checkbox"/> 4 Use One H1 Tag Per Page	One H1 per page containing the primary keyword. Mirrors the title tag without copying it word for word.	High
<input type="checkbox"/> 5 Build Semantic Header Structure	H2 for major sections, H3 for subtopics. Use question-style headers for AI extraction. Never skip heading levels.	High
<input type="checkbox"/> 6 Create Short, Descriptive URLs	Under 60 characters. Lowercase, hyphens, no filler words. Include the primary keyword. No dates on evergreen content.	Medium

CONTENT DEPTH: Build Authority & Earn Rankings

<input type="checkbox"/> 7 Place Keywords in the First 100 Words	Mention target keyword naturally in the opening paragraph. One clear mention beats five forced repetitions.	Critical
<input type="checkbox"/> 8 Deliver Comprehensive, Original Content	Cover the topic more thoroughly than page-one competitors. Add original data, case studies, and expert insights.	Critical

■ 9	Strengthen Internal Linking	3-5 contextual internal links per page. Descriptive anchor text. Audit for orphan pages monthly.	High
■ 10	Link to Authoritative External Sources	2-3 outbound links to trusted sources per article. Original research, government data, or recognized publications.	Medium

TECHNICAL: Speed, Mobile & Structured Data

■ 11	Optimize Images and Alt Text	Compress all images. Use WebP format. Descriptive file names and alt text. Target under 100KB per image.	High
■ 12	Design for Mobile First	Google indexes the mobile version. Test on real phones. Thumb-sized buttons. Readable text without zoom.	Critical
■ 13	Hit Core Web Vitals Targets	LCP under 2.5s. INP under 200ms. CLS under 0.1. Check PageSpeed Insights monthly using real user data.	Critical
■ 14	Add Schema Markup	JSON-LD format. Article, LocalBusiness, FAQ, Product, Review schema types. Validate with Rich Results Test.	High
■ 15	Remove Intrusive Interstitials	No full-screen pop-ups on mobile. Exit-intent only after engagement. Cookie banners and small bars are fine.	Medium

BONUS: AI Search Readiness Checklist

■ ★	Inverted Pyramid Answers	Place a 30-50 word bolded answer immediately after every H2 heading. Must make sense if extracted out of context.	2026
■ ★	Entity Definitions	Define technical terms inline the first time they appear. Teaching signals authority to AI citation engines.	2026
■ ★	Cited Statistics	Reference specific data from named sources. "A SISTRIX study found..." is citable. "Speed matters" is not.	2026
■ ★	FAQ Schema	End pillar pages with 3-5 voice-search-phrased FAQs. Mark with FAQPage schema. Captures AI answer citations.	2026

Page Notes

Need help running this checklist on your website?

SEOBANK has spent 20+ years helping Windsor and Essex County businesses double their sales through proven SEO. Book a free SEO consultation and get a complete audit of your on-page performance.

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