



Make Sure Prospects Find You

Growing Your Google Presence

When someone searches “yoga” or “gym” in Google, and they’re within a particular radius around one of your locations, you want to ensure that your business’s website is one of the first results in the search results list. That’s what SEO is all about and if your website isn’t optimized for search engines, your prospects are going to click on one of your competitor’s websites instead.

The reason search engine optimization is so valuable is that it’s a way to let prospects qualify themselves. If someone searches for one of your keywords (we’ll cover that in this e-book) that means they’re showing an interest in what your business does and therefore is way more qualified to become a prospect, and eventually a paying member.

This e-book does not cover every possible SEO technique or strategy as 500-plus-page books have been written on the topic. This e-book was written to give you an understanding of SEO, how it benefits your gym or studio business, what you should be doing, and how to do it.

What is SEO?

SEO stands for “Search Engine Optimization.”

We all think of Google as a government utility, but it’s very much a business and Google wants to show their customers (otherwise known as *searchers*) the content that they think best fits their customer’s searching needs. The better optimized your website is to being the source of that information, the more likely Google is to show it to their customers.

**Please,
Google! I’ll do
whatever you
want. Just
show my
website first.**



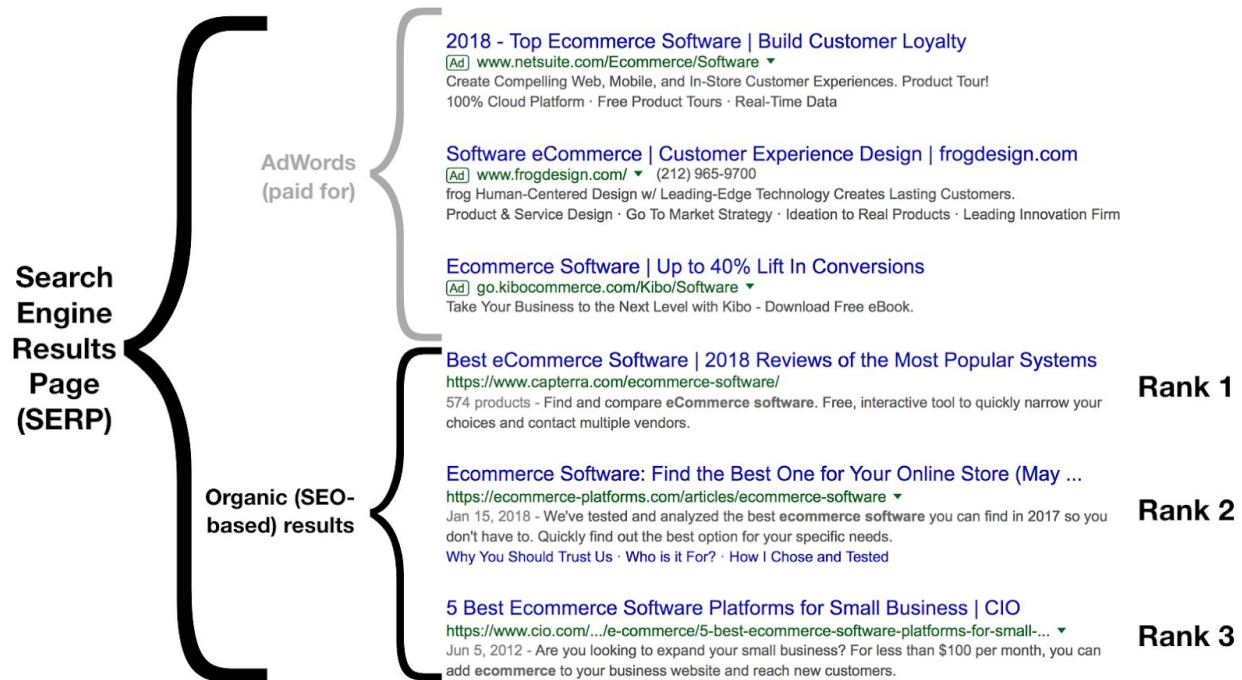
With SEO, you’re trying to tell Google “*Hey! We’re a great resource for that thing the searcher is looking for! Show our website first!*” That’s the whole point of SEO, to be shown at the top of Google searches for whatever it is your potential members are searching for.

How long SEO takes to show results.

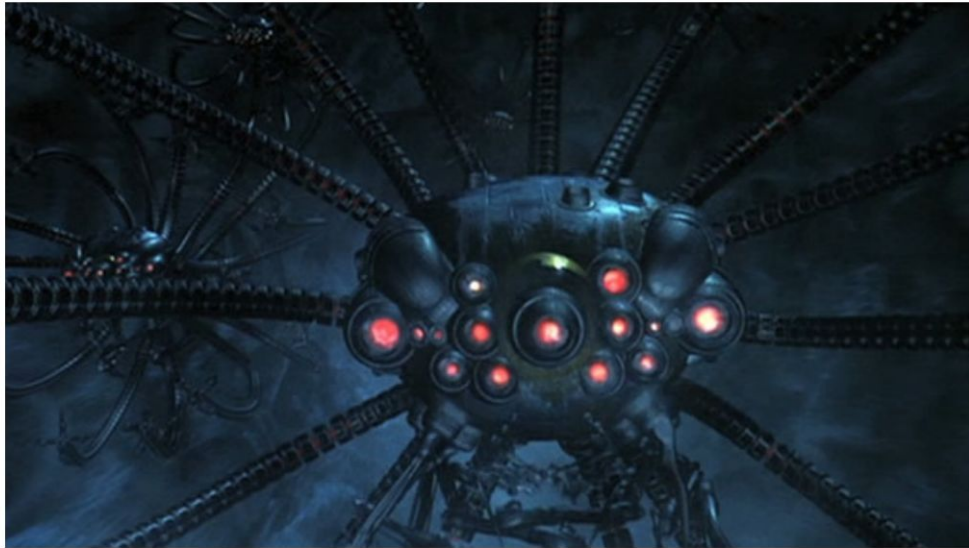
Optimizing your website for search engines does not generate success overnight. SEO is a long term investment, but you will eventually see dividends if you commit to certain strategies.

Important Terms

Before we really dive in, let's review the elements of a Google search results page even though there isn't anyone reading this e-book that isn't already familiar with them:



- At the top level we have what's known as the **Search Engine Results Page**. This is just a fancy way of saying "the page Google shows the results for whatever was searched." Most internet users see this page every single day.
- Then we have **AdWords**. Those are the ads that usually show up when we perform a search. *Google ads are not SEO*. Ads are a way for companies to pay to be placed above organic web page search results. It's like cutting in line and paying for the privilege. There's nothing wrong with that, but it's not SEO.
- After that we have our **organic search results** that appear in a specific order based on SEO.
- That specific order is known as a **rank or position**. This is a webpage's placement within the search engine results page. The point of SEO is to rank at the top. As with most things in life, you want to be number one. Your chances of having one of your webpages clicked from a search engine results page go down the lower you rank on the list and if you're not on page one then you might as well be on page 2,000 cause no one's going to find you.



Google web crawler (not actual photo)

- The **Google crawler** is what scours the internet looking for new or updated websites to “crawl” which is how Google gathers information on what websites to show when specific searches are performed.

How SEO helps your bottom line.

More targeted visitors to your website = more money in your bank account.

While not quite as simple as what we’ve written above, it is the basic idea.

The more Google serves up your website pages on their search engine results pages, the more clicks you get and therefore the more money you make because targeted people are landing on your website.

You want to make sure Google knows it should show your website and also to know that your website is valuable enough to the searcher that it should rank your web pages at the top of the search engine results page.

Let's talk about your website.

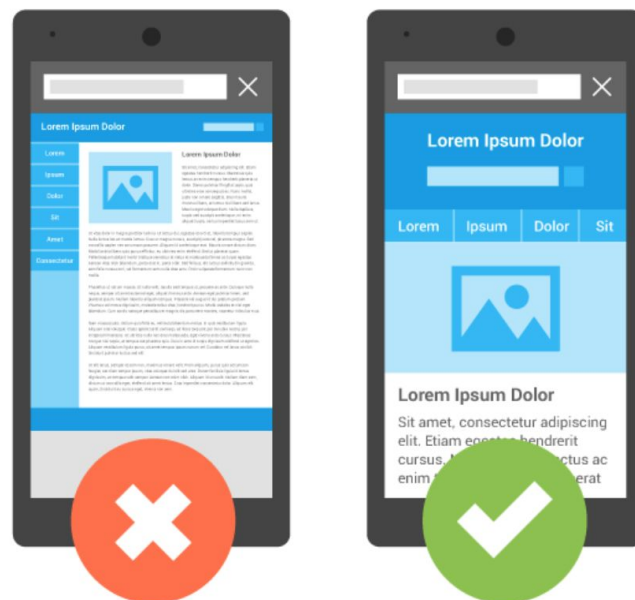
As we've already mentioned, SEO is about your website and getting more **targeted** people visiting it.

In order to do that, you have to make sure you follow Google's rules. Later on in this e-book we'll tell you some specific ways on how to get people to actually visit your website, but before that we have to make sure Google knows you have a website to begin with, and that it's worth showing in search results.

Mobile-friendliness

Having a mobile-friendly website is no longer optional. It's something that without, your business will start to suffer as Google will stop ranking your website as highly as otherwise possible.

Without a mobile-friendly website, Google will punish you because your website isn't taking care of Google's customers as most of them are now searching for things on their phones and if your website doesn't give them a good mobile experience, Google isn't going to show your website to their customers, the searchers.



If you want to ensure your website is mobile-friendly, just type the words “mobile friendly” into Google. You should see a form at the very top which is Google’s own way of saying, *“Hey, make sure your website is mobile-friendly.”*

Is your web page mobile friendly?

[Feedback](#)

And just because you have a mobile-friendly website doesn’t let you off the hook. ***Your mobile website needs to load fast.***

The speed in which your mobile-friendly website loads is a newly confirmed Google ranking-factor. And as a reminder, ranking is where your website shows up in the search engine results page. The higher you rank, the more likely people will be to click on your website and therefore the more likely they’ll be to become a prospect than a member.

Sitemaps

Having a sitemap as part of your website’s behind-the-scenes structure can be important when trying to tell Google *“Hey, here are the awesome pages of my website that I’d like your weird robot crawler to index.”*

This XML file does not appear to have any style information associated with it. The document tree is shown below.

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8" ?>
<urlset xmlns="http://www.sitemaps.org/schemas/sitemap/0.9" xmlns:image="http://www.google.com/schemas/sitemap-image/1.1">
  <url>
    <loc>https://www.squarespace.com/marketing-tour-gallery</loc>
    <changefreq>daily</changefreq>
    <priority>0.75</priority>
    <lastmod>2013-06-12</lastmod>
    <image:image>
      <image:loc>
        http://static1.squarespace.com/static/5134cbefe4b0c6fb04df8065/51b8b639e4b0fed3ca1ee0d/51b8b899e4b0deaf13225ad3/1371060377867/tour-hero-alder.jpg
      </image:loc>
      <image:title>Marketing Tour Gallery</image:title>
    </image:image>
    <image:image>
      <image:loc>
        http://static1.squarespace.com/static/5134cbefe4b0c6fb04df8065/51b8b639e4b0fed3ca1ee0d/54c96a6ee4b09f9a7eabdc4/1422486129676/artist-hero.jpg
      </image:loc>
      <image:title>Marketing Tour Gallery</image:title>
    </image:image>
    <image:image>
      <image:loc>
        http://static1.squarespace.com/static/5134cbefe4b0c6fb04df8065/51b8b639e4b0fed3ca1ee0d/54c96a6ee4b0d8d26f9d8f4/1422486136448/commerce-hero.jpg
      </image:loc>
      <image:title>Marketing Tour Gallery</image:title>
    </image:image>
    <image:image>
      <image:loc>
        http://static1.squarespace.com/static/5134cbefe4b0c6fb04df8065/51b8b639e4b0fed3ca1ee0d/54c96a6ee4b0718fb5383bb2/1422486134932/music-hero.jpg
      </image:loc>
      <image:title>Marketing Tour Gallery</image:title>
    </image:image>
    <image:image>
      <image:loc>
        http://static1.squarespace.com/static/5134cbefe4b0c6fb04df8065/51b8b639e4b0fed3ca1ee0d/54c96a6ee4b0565c2a7e18d/1422486130841/photographer-hero.jpg
      </image:loc>
      <image:title>Marketing Tour Gallery</image:title>
    </image:image>
    <image:image>
      <image:loc>
        http://static1.squarespace.com/static/5134cbefe4b0c6fb04df8065/51b8b639e4b0fed3ca1ee0d/51b8b899e4b05a5e47063adc/1371060730913/tour-hero-graham-withers.jpg
      </image:loc>
      <image:title>Marketing Tour Gallery - Brand</image:title>
    </image:image>
  </url>
</urlset>
```

We won't go into sitemaps aside from telling you that you should have one. To make sure that you do, visit this website and enter in your website's URL:

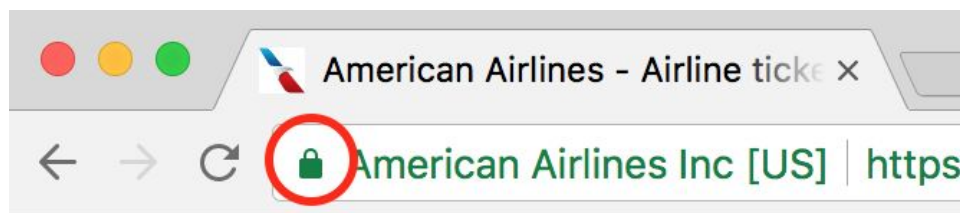
<https://seositecheckup.com/tools/sitemap-test>

SSL - The importance of having a secure website.

Having a website that uses an SSL certificate used to only be important for ecommerce websites. However, that's no longer the case.

Google has recently announced that any website without an SSL certificate will be marked as "not secure" within the Chrome browser, the world's most popular browser. This means you need to get an SSL certificate for your website.

It's easy to see if your website has an SSL certificate. Simply load your website in a web browser then look in the search/website address field. If you see a little lock icon then your website has SSL.



Getting an SSL certificate depends on your website's hosting company, so check with them. If you use Squarespace then your website automatically has SSL. If you use Wix then you may already have one, but should check.

Website loading speed.

Just like with your mobile-friendly website, the desktop version needs to load as fast as possible too. Google uses this as a ranking factor. If your website loads slowly, Google won't want to show it to their customer, the searcher, because it's a bad user experience.

The easiest way to see if your website load time can be improved is to run it through a free testing tool like the one Google offers.

<https://developers.google.com/speed/pagespeed/insights/>

Once you allow Google to scan your website, it'll show you exactly what to fix. Usually it's as simple as reducing the file sizes of your images.

http://amazon.com/

ANALYZE



Mobile



Desktop

Speed

Average

0.8s FCP 1.7s DCL

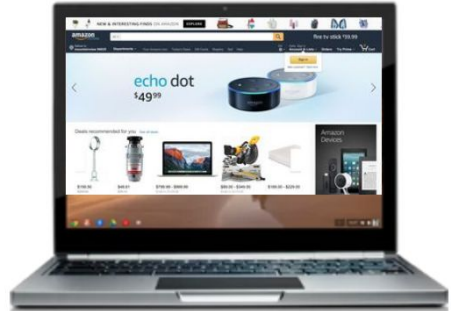
Optimization

Medium

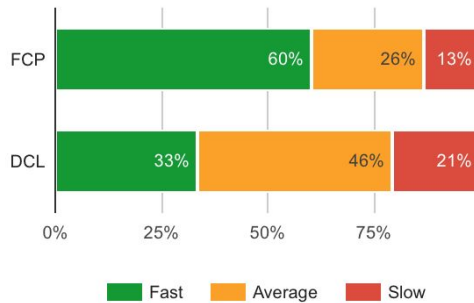
75 / 100

Data from the Chrome User Experience report indicates this page's median **FCP** (0.8s) and **DCL** (1.7s) ranks it in the middle third of all pages. This page has a medium level of optimization because some of its resources are render-blocking. [Learn more.](#)

Report for: <https://www.amazon.com/>



Page Load Distributions



Meta descriptions

Meta descriptions are the groups of text that appear under the main title of web pages on search engine results pages. There's a good chance you already have some meta descriptions, but an even better chance that you can improve them.

Meta descriptions do not help your website rank higher in search results, but they do get people to click on your website from the search engine results page which in-turn *does* help your SEO.

Gym in Tallinn | Tallinn Viimsi SPA Fitness Club

www.spatallinn.ee/en/fitness-club/gym-and-personal-training/ ▼

Tallinn Viimsi SPA's Fitness Club in Tallinn, Estonia has a 600 m2 gym that is equipped with professional devices. From a cardio park you can find suitable training equipment: bicycle exerciser, spinner, rowing machine, ellipse trainer or skiing machine. ... In addition to the price ...

People Fitness Tallinn

<https://peoplefitness.eu/estonia/en/> ▼

gym Group classes Cardio cinema Co-working area Free trial. HI TECH EQUIPMENT. COSY ATMOSPHERE. We offer you only the most modern and professional fitness equipment from world leaders: Life Fitness, Hammer Strength, MyRide, TRX and Bosu. Comfortable to use for any enthusiast and different levels and ...



Fitness centre in Tallinn | Kalev Spa

<https://kalevspa.ee/en/services/fitness-centre/fitness-centre-in-tallinn/> ▼

Kalev Spa Fitness Centre offers a wide selection of group workouts and spacious and well-lit gym with windows overlooking the Tallinn Old Town and the park.

What makes a good meta description? Anything that would encourage someone to click on the page that the meta description is talking about. Since your actual meta description doesn't affect your ranking, you should focus on showing people only the information they need in order to get them to click or tap.

That's why our favorite example above is the bottom one. It focuses on what we, the searcher, need to know and doesn't distract with stuff we don't care about. The only thing missing is a call to action like "learn more."

As for changing the meta descriptions you have, that depends on the software your website was built in. Our suggestion is to perform your own Google search with something like "how to change wordpress meta descriptions."

Let's talk about your website content.

Keywords - What are they?

Keywords are what searchers use to find businesses like yours on search engines. They're also what Google uses as signifiers to spotlight what people search for and then ultimately what webpages they click on.



For example, if you search "cheap shoes" online, those two search words are also known as keywords. It's as simple as that.

How to find your keywords.

If you run a gym then one of your keywords would be "gym." Being a business with a physical location is a major SEO benefit when trying to rank for broad keywords like "gym." If you were an ecommerce website catering to the entire US you would have an immense amount of keyword competition trying to rank first in search results with the keyword "gym."

Sorry to bother, but have you seen my keywords?



Your physical location benefit is due to Google getting smarter and realizing that if someone in Austin, TX is searching the word “gym” that they don’t mean “show me all gyms in the world.” They mean gyms near where they’re searching from.

Even though local SEO makes it easier to show up for broad keywords like gym or yoga, it can vary depending upon how much direct competition you have in your area or even how many indirect competitors are trying to rank for those same keywords (like sporting goods stores, rehabilitation centers, etc.).

This means you will want to go through a keyword exercise to ensure that you’ve covered your bases and that your website content reflects what your potential members are searching for online.

More than likely, you already naturally feature relevant keywords throughout your website. If you own a gym, your website probably talks about how your business is a gym and not, say, an oyster bar. Even still, there are some less-than-obvious, though still organic ways, of ensuring Google’s crawlers know your website is important and relevant, especially to people searching for what you do.



How to find your core keywords.

One of our favorite keyword discovery methods, especially if you've never done any search engine optimization, is to simply type out what someone would type into Google when trying to find a business like yours.

You may have a lot of competition in your area, and sure every little edge you can have over them is great, but that doesn't mean people searching on Google are going to be any more clever with their searches. You still have to create copy and content that's relevant to real humans that are making real, organic searches into Google.

If you have a gym in Austin, TX you might type out the following possible searches that real people would make.

- gyms in austin
- gyms in austin texas
- gym
- gym austin
- gym austin tx
- workout austin
- gyms
- gyms near me
- gyms around austin
- health club austin

- new to austin workout
- austin fitness

As you can see, each of the keywords and keyword strings above are variations of what someone would type into Google when trying to find information on gyms in Austin, TX.

How to establish the value of each keyword and keyword string.

Isolating some relevant keywords and keyword strings for your business's SEO strategy is great, but some will be more valuable than others. As a gym or studio business, there are only so many relevant core keywords your business can focus on. That's where it can become incredibly competitive as your competitors will be focusing on the same if not similar keywords.

The easiest way to establish what keywords to focus on is to simply type them into Google yourself and see what comes up. This is also a great way to see what the websites that rank at the top of the search results for those keywords are writing about. If you see that a competitor is ranking #1 for "austin gym" go ahead and click on that link and see what's so special about the page. You may also see that the search results show some photos or how many Google reviews they have. Those things also affect rankings and we'll cover that soon. For now, back to keyword value.

Another way to check keyword value is to use a service that will show you approximately how many searches each keyword string gets per month. You can simply Google "keyword research" and find some valuable free tools online.

If you have a Google AdWords account then you can use Google's own keyword research tool called [Keyword Planner](#).

Even if you don't plan to pay for Google ads, we highly suggest that you create an account so that you can access this tool. The great thing about Google's keyword planner is that you can narrow down your results by location as shown in the screenshot.

Find new keywords and get search volume data


▼ Search for new keywords using a phrase, website or category


Enter one or more of the following:


Your product or service


Your landing page


Your product category


Targeting 


Austin, United States 

All languages 

Google 

Customize your search 

Keyword filters 

Keyword options 

Show broadly related ideas

How to use keywords.

Now that we've reviewed how to isolate your core keywords, let's talk about how and where to use them.

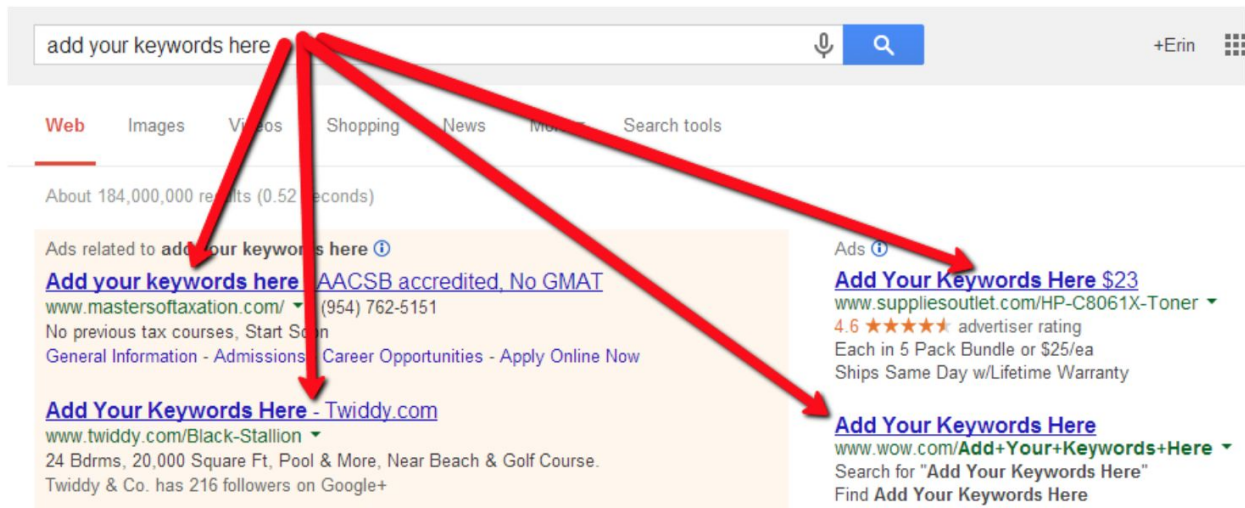
Keywords can be used in various places. However, where they're most valuable is on your website, but not just within the text you write within it. You also need to know where to put keywords in your webpage titles, meta descriptions, and other places. We'll cover that in a moment.

First, we want to talk about how isolating valuable keywords helps you on social media with the use of #hashtags.



While social media hashtags won't specifically help your Google rankings, they will indirectly help in that they help your audience find your social content and then click on what you're posting which will then help your SEO directly.

Isolating your most valuable keywords can also help with online advertising as you'll know what potential customers are searching for when searching for a business like yours. You then simply use those keywords in your ads to ensure the right audience is seeing them.



Knowing your best keywords can even help you with your general marketing copy. If you know what your potential clients or members are searching for when it comes to your business, you can know exactly how to write for them.

Our point is, you should spend time isolating important keywords as they'll help you even beyond SEO. However, for our purposes we'll focus on how to use them on your website.

Using keywords in your web page titles.

Using keywords in each webpage title of your website is incredibly important for SEO. Not only is this something Google uses to inform its ranking order, it's what searchers see when your website is displayed on a search engine results page.



Shopping in the Village at Snowshoe Mountain Resort | Stores & Brands
<https://www.snowshoemtn.com/things-to-do/shopping>
 With a variety of unique shops and outfitters, shopping options at Snowshoe seem endless. Find your favorite stores and brands here.

Welcome to the Snowshoe Mountain Resort Online Store!
[https://store.snowshoemtn.com/eStore/\(S\(dqr55qis3ylapct5acn05fod\)\)/Default.aspx](https://store.snowshoemtn.com/eStore/(S(dqr55qis3ylapct5acn05fod))/Default.aspx)
 Resort Discounts. 10% Off Non-Holiday Lodging 10% Off Snowshoe Retail and Restaurants. Shopping Cart (0). edit. Your shopping cart is empty. If you encounter issues purchasing your passes, please contact central reservations at 877.441.4386. Privacy Policy Contact Us 877.441.4386 ...

Snowshoe Mountain | Ski Resort in West Virginia Near DC
<https://www.snowshoemtn.com/>
 Snowshoe is home to 257 acres of skiable terrain, 1500 vertical feet, 60 trails and the best snow around. Book your lodging and vacation packages here.

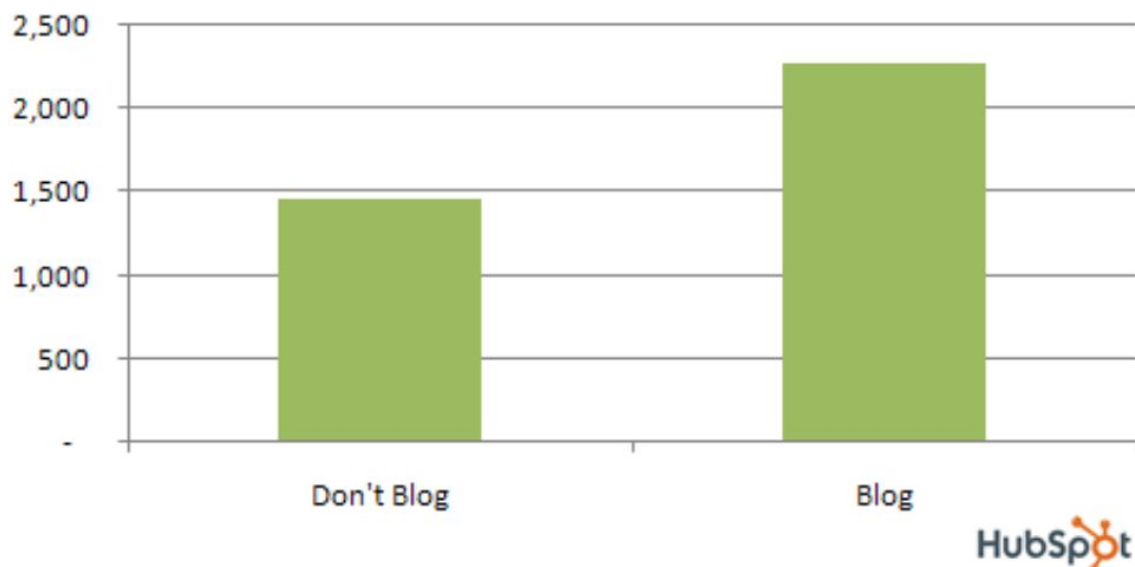
So if you know what keywords your searchers are using in Google, that's what you should put in your webpage titles. This way not only will your website come up when someone searches using those keywords, but they'll immediately see the connection between your website and what they searched for.

No matter what website creation software you use, you have access to changing web page titles. Right now your titles might be stuff like your company name or just boring things like "About Us" or "Schedule" but that's ok because it means you have an opportunity to make changes using the relevant keywords and you'll almost definitely see improvements.

Using keywords as part of a blogging strategy.

You may think that because you're a local business focused on a particular studio or fitness niche that you don't need to blog. In actuality, that's exactly why you should.

55% More Website Visitors for Companies That Blog



The benefits of blogging are numerous and not just for SEO:

- It gets your current members engaged and helps with retention.
- It can get your employees involved if you have them help write articles.
- But most importantly, and for our purposes with keywords and SEO, blogging helps attract targeted prospects to your website and once they're on your website, specifically your blog in this case, they'll start to warm up to your business. You'll be providing them with value before they even spend money with you. This increases the chances that they will.

This is because your blog content will help your website rank higher in Google search results. The more related-to-what-you-do content you post to your website, the more likely it is Google will show it to people online.

To find your blog via a Google search, your potential prospects may perform a search that doesn't have to do exactly with your main business offering like working out or yoga classes. They may find a blog entry you've posted on eating to compliment a yoga practice or the benefits of incorporating mindfulness into gym workouts.



Be creative, but stay within the boundaries of what your audience is interested in. That doesn't mean to be boring. You should be the opposite. Keep it related, but don't just write about your business. Write about developments in yoga mat technology, or weightlifting techniques, or nutrition.

You want to focus on engaging content which will in turn help with other aspects of SEO like overall website **dwell time** which is a huge ranking factor and takes into account both how long someone spends on your website and how many people bounce which means they don't spend long at all.



A long session is good, a short session, otherwise known as a bounce, is bad. This relates to blogging because the more engaging content you provide, the longer a person will spend on your website.

Some blogging guidelines:

- Post consistently. This means posting once every 3 months isn't going to cut it.
- Each blog should contain a minimum of 500 words, but the ideal is between 1,250-1,500 words.
- Each blog post should include links to other pages of your website, especially other blog posts you've written.
- And one bonus guideline that's not related to SEO, make sure to include call to actions on your blogs so that people can take advantage of intro offers or otherwise reach out to you.

How to use keywords on your blog (or anywhere on your website):

Don't use them where they don't organically fit and don't overuse them even when they do fit.

Some places you want to use your most valuable, yet still related to whatever the page content is, keywords:

- Include keywords in your blog titles
- Include keywords in your actual blog article
- Include keywords in your alt text for your blog images (we'll explain alt text in images in a moment)
- Include keywords in the URL of your blog — and while we're on the subject of URLs....

Keywords and your web page's URL structure.

The main thing you want to be aware of with website URLs is that they should be readable by humans, not just deciphered by Google's prowling robots.

Having URLs with words in readable order ensures humans can read and trust them making your links more clickable and thus helping your SEO.



yourwebsite.com/posts/443146?45_45vfffw



yourwebsite.com/gym-schedule



yourwebsite.com/blog/we-are-the-best-gym

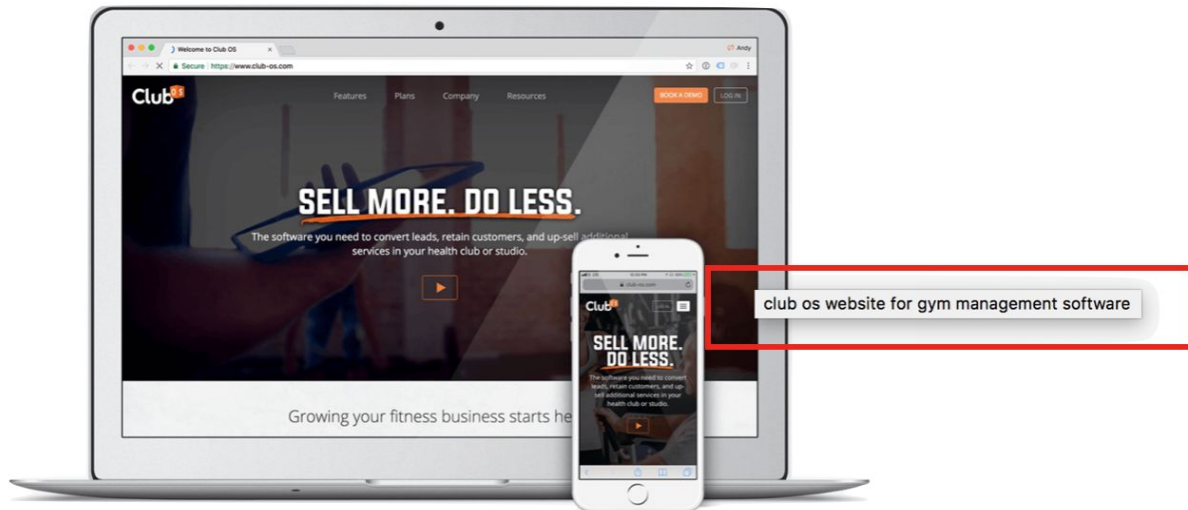
You should strive to use keywords in your URLs if possible, but again, don't force them if they don't make sense.

NOTE: If you decide to make changes to existing web page URLs, know that changing your URLs could break any existing links if your website software doesn't automatically redirect from the previous URL.

Using keywords within image alt text for SEO and accessibility.

Having alt text within your images provides a text-based *alternative* to images on a webpage, thus the word "alt" being used.

Even if you haven't heard of alt text before, you've probably seen some if you've left your mouse hovering over an image on a webpage. It's that text that pops up until you move your mouse away like in the example below taken from a Club OS blog post.

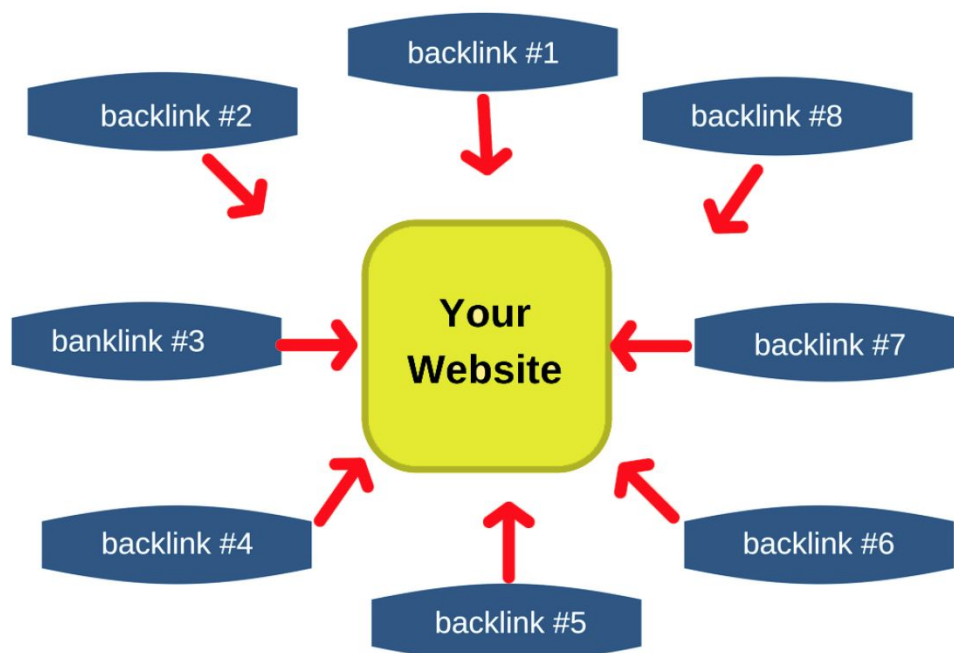


Having alt text helps in two ways:

1. Since Google's creepy crawlers can't actually see your images (at least not yet, but they're getting there), you want to help them understand what images you have on your web pages.
2. Making sure your website has descriptive alt text for images also helps with the accessibility of your website. If someone can't see, alt text makes it much easier for your website to be read to them.

Using link building as an external SEO strategy.

Now that we've covered your website and keywords, let's talk a little bit about what you can do to help your SEO efforts out in the real world. There's really only one thing we want to cover here and that's something called link building.



One of the single best things you can do to increase Google's trust in your own website is to have other websites link back to you, especially those that are relevant to what you do. This is commonly known as "link building" or "backlinks."

How can you build links?

The key to successful link building is to focus on getting your website linked to by other websites that are related to what you do. That doesn't always have to be the case as a nice write-up on your local paper's website isn't a bad thing. That will definitely give you some clout in Google's eyes, but you also need to have backlinks from people related to your industry like nutritionists, or personal trainers, or teachers, or professional bloggers that write about your industry. You get the idea.

What doesn't count as a backlink:

- Having someone link to your Facebook page instead of your website. This gives Facebook the win, not you.
- Having someone post a link to your website from their social media does not help either. Sure, that may send people to your website, which is awesome, but those are not true backlinks.
- Having links within emails.

Internal link building.

Backlinking isn't just for external websites.

You should also have an internal link building strategy where you link to your own web pages within your own website. This also includes within your blog articles.

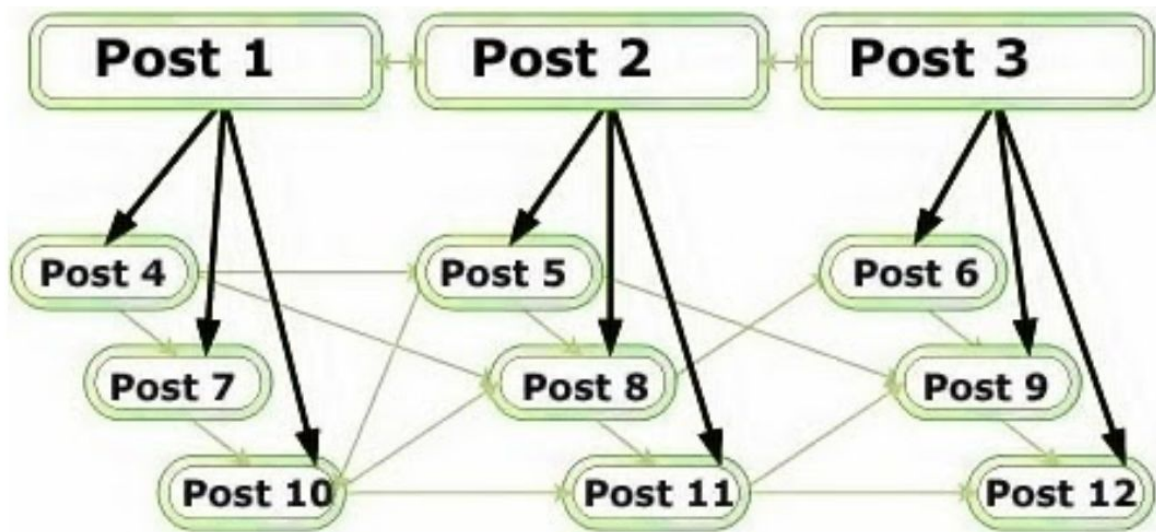


Image: <https://www.shinemat.com/2013/11/tips-to-improve-internal-linking.html>

While not as beneficial to SEO as external link building, it's still valuable and shows Google there are connections between the things you write about.

Local SEO

As mentioned earlier, by having a physical location you have some inherited SEO benefits, but that doesn't mean Google automatically knows you're a local business nor does it let Google know you're a local business worth highlighting in search results for what your business does.



To ensure Google knows about your business, you need to use “Google My Business.” This is where you can edit your business hours, your location, set your industry settings so that Google knows what kind of business you are, and more.

Go to business.google.com to make sure you're set up correctly and to fill in any gaps in information.

Here are a few less obvious things you can do to enhance your local SEO strategy:

- On your website you should consider having your physical address in the footer which means it'll appear on every webpage of your website. If you have multiple locations, at least make sure all physical addresses are featured on a page or two (or more).
- You should also consider embedding a Google Map on your website as well.
- **Get more positive reviews on Google.** That is a confirmed local SEO ranking factor as the more reviews a business has, the more prominence Google gives to that business. You can manage Google reviews from your Google My Business account.

Bringing it all together.

If you take the time to care about your SEO, you need to also make sure it's as easy as possible for website visitors to hand over their contact information. That's what it's all about.

Once a person is viewing your website, you need to show them the information they expect to see and then make sure they know how to contact you or take advantage of an intro offer or join your mailing list - whatever you want. Just make sure they don't look around then leave. Who knows if they'll come back.

Get them to your website with SEO. *Make it easy to take an action.*

And once you do have their contact information, you can use a system like [Club OS](#) to automatically follow-up with them until they become a paying member.

What makes SEO seem complex is that it requires effort. If you're going to blog, you can't just blog for a month and be done with it. If you're going to find your core keywords, you have to continue using them in various ways to avoid any competitors outranking you. If you're going to build links on other websites, you have to do it continuously.

And as we just mentioned, if you get targeted visitors to your website, make sure they can easily take a desired action so that it's not all for nothing. And once they take that action, use a service like [Club OS](#) to automate your sales process so that they easily go from website visitor to paying member.

We hope you enjoyed this SEO e-book!

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