

# **108 Quick SEO Tips Even Your Mother Would Love**

by

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**Here are 108 quick tips** for search engine optimization that even your mother could use to get cooking. Well, not *my* mother, but you get my point. Most novices with *some* web design and beginner SEO knowledge should be able to take these to the bank without any problem.

*(Note: This list of tips is an update to the original post [55 Quick SEO Tips Even Your Mother Would Love](#). I also provide a presentation version for the attendees of local [Palm Springs SEO training classes](#). Contact me if you would like for me to do one for your organization.)*



- 1.** If you absolutely **MUST** use Java script drop down menus, image maps or image links, be sure to put text links somewhere on the page for the spiders to follow.
- 2.** Content is king, so be sure to have good, well-written and unique content that will focus on your primary keyword or keyword phrase.
- 3.** If content is king, then links are queen. Build a network of quality backlinks using your keyword phrase as the link. Remember, if there is no good, logical reason for that site to link to you, you don't want the link.
- 4.** Don't be obsessed with PageRank. It is just one isty bitsy part of the ranking algorithm. A site with lower PR can actually outrank one with a higher PR.
- 5.** Be sure you have a unique, keyword focused Title tag on every page of your site. And, if you **MUST** have the name of your company in it, put it at the end. Unless you are a major brand name that is a household name, your business name will probably get few searches.
- 6.** Fresh content can help improve your rankings. Add new, useful content to your pages on a regular basis. Content freshness adds relevancy to your site in the eyes of the search engines.

- 7.** Be sure links to your site and within your site use your keyword phrase. In other words, if your target is “blue widgets” then link to “blue widgets” instead of a “Click here” link.
- 8.** Focus on search phrases, not single keywords, and put your location in your text (“our Palm Springs store” not “our store”) to help you get found in local searches.
- 9.** Don’t design your web site without considering SEO. Make sure your web designer understands your expectations for organic SEO. Doing a retrofit on your shiny new graphics-based site after it is built won’t cut it.
- 10.** Use keywords and keyword phrases appropriately in text links, image ALT attributes and even your domain name.
- 11.** Check for canonicalization issues – www and non-www domains. Decide which you want to use and 301 redirect the other to it. In other words, if <http://www.domain.com> is your preference, then <http://domain.com> should redirect to it.
- 12.** Check the link to your home page throughout your site. Is `index.html` appended to your domain name? If so, you’re splitting your links. Outside links go to <http://www.domain.com> and internal links go to <http://www.domain.com/index.html>. Ditch the `index.html` or `default.php` or whatever the page is and always link back to your domain.
- 13.** Frames, Flash and AJAX all share a common problem – you can’t link to a single page. It’s either all or nothing. Don’t use Frames at all and use Flash and AJAX sparingly for best SEO results.
- 14.** Your URL file extension doesn’t matter. You can use `.html`, `.htm`, `.asp`, `.php`, etc. and it won’t make a difference as far as your SEO is concerned.
- 15.** Got a new web site you want spidered? Submitting through Google’s regular submission form can take weeks. The quickest way to get your site spidered is by getting a link to it through another quality site.
- 16.** If your site content doesn’t change often, your site needs a blog because search spiders like fresh text. Blog at least three times a week with good, fresh content to feed those little crawlers.
- 17.** When link building, think quality, not quantity. One single, good, authoritative link can do a lot more for you than a dozen poor quality links, which can actually hurt you.

- 18.** Search engines want natural language content. Don't try to stuff your text with keywords. It won't work. Search engines look at how many times a term is in your content and if it is abnormally high, will count this against you rather than for you.
- 19.** Not only should your links use keyword anchor text, but the text around the links should also be related to your keywords. In other words, surround the link with descriptive text.
- 20.** If you are on a shared server, do a blacklist check to be sure you're not on a proxy with a spammer or banned site. Their negative notoriety could affect your own rankings. Google says it can tell the difference between you and the bad guys, but why take a chance?
- 21.** Be aware that by using services that block domain ownership information when you register a domain, Google might see you as a potential spammer.
- 22.** When optimizing your blog posts, optimize your post title tag independently from your blog title.
- 23.** The bottom line in SEO is Text, Links, Popularity and Reputation.
- 24.** Make sure your site is easy to use. This can influence your link building ability and popularity and, thus, your ranking.
- 25.** Give link love, Get link love. Don't be stingy with linking out. That will encourage others to link to you.
- 26.** Search engines like unique content that is also quality content. There can be a difference between unique content and quality content. Make sure your content is both.
- 27.** If you absolutely **MUST** have your main page as a splash page that is all Flash or one big image, place text and navigation links below the fold.
- 28.** Some of your most valuable links might not appear in web sites at all but be in the form of e-mail communications such as newsletters and zines.
- 29.** You get **NOTHING** from paid links except a few clicks unless the links are embedded in body text and **NOT** obvious sponsored links.
- 30.** Links from .edu domains are given nice weight by the search engines, but **NOT** necessarily more than .com domains. However, they certainly can't hurt and are frequently authority sites that would carry good link juice. Run a search for possible non-profit .edu sites that are looking for sponsors.

31. Give them something to talk about. Linkbaiting is simply good content.
32. Give each page a focus on a single keyword phrase. Don't try to optimize the page for several keywords at once.
33. SEO is useless if you have a weak or non-existent call to action. Make sure your call to action is clear and present.
34. SEO is not a one-shot process. The search landscape changes daily, so expect to work on your optimization daily.
35. Cater to influential bloggers and authority sites who might link to you, your images, videos, podcasts, etc. or ask to reprint your content.
36. Get the owner or CEO blogging. It's priceless! CEO influence on a blog is incredible as this is the VOICE of the company. Response from the owner to reader comments will cause your credibility to skyrocket!
37. Optimize the text in your RSS feed just like you should with your posts and web pages. Use descriptive, keyword rich text in your title and description.
38. Use captions with your images. As with newspaper photos, place keyword rich captions with your images.
39. Pay attention to the context surrounding your images. Images can rank based on text that surrounds them on the page. Pay attention to keyword text, headings, etc.
40. You're better off letting your site pages be found naturally by the crawler. Good global navigation and linking will serve you much better than relying only on an XML Sitemap.
41. To NOT see Google's Personalized Search results, click on **Web History** at the top right of a Google results page and then click "Disable customizations based on search activity."
42. Links (especially deep links) from a high PageRank site are golden. High PR indicates high trust, so the back links will carry more weight.
43. Use absolute links. Not only will it make your on-site link navigation less prone to problems (like links to and from https pages), but if someone scrapes your content, you'll get backlink juice out of it.

**44.** See if your hosting company offers “Sticky” forwarding when moving to a new domain. This allows temporary forwarding to the new domain from the old, retaining the new URL in the address bar so that users can gradually get used to the new URL.

**45.** Understand social marketing. It IS part of SEO. The more you understand about sites like Digg, Yelp, del.icio.us, Facebook, etc., the better you will be able to compete in search.

**46.** To get the best chance for your videos to be found by the crawlers, create a video sitemap and list it in your Google Webmaster Central account.

**47.** Videos that show up in Google blended search results don’t just come from YouTube. Be sure to submit your videos to other quality video sites like Metacafe, AOL, MSN and Yahoo to name a few.

**48.** Surround video content on your pages with keyword rich text. The search engines look at surrounding content to define the usefulness of the video for the query.

**49.** Use the words “image” or “picture” in your photo ALT descriptions and captions. A lot of searches are for a keyword plus one of those words.

**50.** Enable “Enhanced image search” in your Google Webmaster Central account. Images are a big part of the new blended search results, so allowing Google to find your photos will help your SEO efforts.

**51.** Add viral components to your web site or blog – reviews, sharing functions, ratings, visitor comments, etc.

**52.** Broaden your range of services to include video, podcasts, news, social content and so forth. SEO is not about 10 blue links anymore.

**53.** When considering a link purchase or exchange, check the cache date of the page where your link will be located in Google. Search for “cache:URL” where you substitute “URL” for the actual page. The newer the cache date the better. If the page isn’t there or the cache date is more than an month old, the page isn’t worth much.

**54.** If you have pages on your site that are very similar (you are concerned about duplicate content issues) and you want to be sure the correct one is included in the search engines, place the URL of your preferred page in your sitemaps.

**55.** Check your server headers. Search for “check server header” to find free online tools for this. You want to be sure your URLs report a “200 OK” status or “301 Moved Permanently” for redirects. If the status shows anything else, check to be sure your URLs are set up properly and used consistently throughout your site.

**56.** Use Google Alerts to be alerted about back links – <http://www.google.com/alerts>. Add *link:www.yourdomain.com* to the Search Terms box to get notified by e-mail when someone links to you.

**57.** Optimize your press releases just as you would a web page. Use your keywords, keyword anchor text and headlines in a way that will maximize your visibility without being spammy. In addition to possible pickup by major news sites, these releases are archived on the web. And, remember, don't put out press releases to sites like PRWeb unless you have **REAL** news to share.

**58.** Move JavaScript and CSS to external files whenever possible. This will make your code tighter, move your content up higher, the page will load faster and the spiders will have fewer possible roadblocks in their quest to devour all that good content you wrote for tip #2.

**59.** Build pages around phrases like **Where can I** or **How can I** because there are a TON of searches for variations of these. Just search for one of these phrases using the free [WordTracker Keyword Suggestion Tool](#) and you'll see what I mean.

**60.** If you write articles for distribution to article sites for mass distribution (a great way to get back links), be sure to publish the article on *your own site first* and give the spiders a chance to crawl it. That identifies you as the originator of the content. Then push the article out for distribution across the web, making sure you have a link back to your site in the article content.

**61.** Tweak and test. Make one change at a time and evaluate what effect it had on your ranking, if any. Changing too many things at once can confuse things to the point where you don't know which change you made did what.

**62.** Local search is getting hot! Create a local listing for all locations if you have more than one. Don't just create a local listing for the main one. Get them all in there! Start with local listings at [Google](#) (also known as Google Maps), [Yahoo!](#) and [Bing](#). Include photos, videos, links, web pages and coupons if available. It's quick, easy, free and gives you one more opportunity to rank. Frequently, a local map with business links will be the top search result. For example, try a search in Google for "palm springs bars" and see what comes up as the first results.

**63.** Don't try to fake it. Those 50 domains you bought in 1998 with dummy content all linking back to your main site might have made you #1 last decade, but now they can get you booted from the rankings altogether. The "mini-net" is dead.

**64.** If you aren't doing e-mail marketing, consider it. Not only is it the most frequently used form of web marketing, if done right it can be extremely effective and can indirectly lead to social bookmarking and back links to your site pages.

**65.** Test domains should be invisible. If you are using a domain simply for testing new designs, functions, etc., *be sure it is not accessible to spiders or users*, who will both be confused about which domain is the real thing. If the spiders can get to it, you could be in for big duplicate content issues. A simple way to block all spiders is with the [robots.txt](#) file.

**66.** For the most part, short domain names with your primary keyword or phrase are best. Something like **your-keywords.com** will work, but **your-keyword-phrase-plus-more.com** will be pushing it. The advantage to having your keywords in the domain name include perceived authority and keyword-rich back link juice.

**67.** Although there's nothing wrong with .net, .org, .info and other domain extensions (search engines tend to give them equal weight), what you really want is the .com extension. People just assume a domain (especially in the USA) ends in .com, so understand that if you get any other domain extension, you'll probably be losing at least some traffic to whoever owns the .com version.

**68.** Make sure your web server is fast. A dedicated server is best because if someone on your shared server gets slammed with traffic, it can affect your site, too. Plus, the faster the server, the more likely you'll get lots of social media back link love. No one likes to click on a link and have it time out!

**69.** Google is NOT your competition. Your competition is the list of sites ranking above you for a keyword or phrase, so research what they are doing to outrank you rather than try to game Google.

**70.** Avoid link farms, where you participate in mass link exchanges. These are usually automated and frowned upon by the search engines. You can actually be banned for participation in these.

**71.** Need to do a redirect? Use a 301 redirect rather than a meta refresh or javascript redirection. A 301 redirect is seen as a "permanent" redirect that is more SEO friendly.

**72.** Offer a good, easy to navigate sitemap for your visitors. Not only will it help them find what they want on your site or blog, but search engine spiders will follow it, too.

**73.** Only bold text on a page when it makes sense to do so and use `<em></em>` or `<strong></strong>` instead of `<b></b>` which is apparently being deprecated, meaning you won't get much value from it SEO-wise.

74. Be sure that the text in your meta tags match the copy on each and every page.
75. Select a keyword rich domain name (*keyword.com*) if possible. This makes every link to your domain a keyword anchor link, great for SEO.
76. Check your source code for any legacy or left over code that might include links that are invisible to the user, but visible to spiders. Sometimes web developers/programmers leave invisible code on pages that not only bloat the page size, but can contain links that only the spiders see. This can get you into trouble as it looks like you are hiding content whether you mean to or not. Clean up your code and offload any CSS or javascript that you can to external files as mentioned in tip #58.
77. Flash is like wine. When used appropriately (and in moderation), it can enhance the user experience. Used inappropriately, it's a serious distraction that leaves the user with a nasty headache.
78. Want to link to a certain scene in a YouTube video? You can. Let's say you want to jump 25 seconds into this video, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sqXdDVqCQ10>, to the scene where Olympian Kerri Walsh is featured. Simply add **#t=0m25s** to the YouTube link so that it is <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sqXdDVqCQ10#t=0m25s>. The extra code translates to zero minutes and 25 seconds.
79. Treat your YouTube videos just like HTML pages. In other words, give them a title, description, tags and make sure the very first thing in the description is the URL you want folks to land on.
80. There is no magic keyword density for a page. That's so 1998! Make your text natural language with your primary keyword phrase included two or three times on a page, ideally above the fold. That's it.
81. Keep your site structure as close to the root as possible. In other words, don't create subdirectories that aren't absolutely necessary.
82. Link to your social media profile pages. Make sure visitors can find your social site pages. Make your very *first* weighted link to your profile pages a link from your company site.
83. Realize that *social* search is different than *web* search because in social search, it's about sourcing information from **trusted people** as opposed to general information that is dished out by a search engine.
84. [Twitter](#) is incredibly powerful for weighting in the search engine results pages, so use it! Just be sure to grab your name before someone else does!

**85.** Make sure your database is spider friendly. The last thing you need is to spend time, money and effort developing your site only to find the database or shopping cart functionality is not search engine friendly. Test before you commit. Use online tools like [SEO Chat's spider simulator tool](#) or client spidering tools like the one built into [iBusiness Promoter \(IBP\)](#) to test spidering.

**86.** Get visitors to take action. Include clear calls to action on the page (Add to Cart, Shop Now links) and make them obvious and easy to find. Make the offer compelling with incentives (free shipping, bonus items, etc.) and make ways to contact you easy and upfront (800 number, e-mail link, address, online chat). Too many online sites make contact too difficult by hiding behind a contact form and providing no other way to be contacted. That's not a recipe for trust from either the visitor or the search engines. And, to be an authority, you need trust.

**87.** Keep in mind that a *log-based analytics tracking* system will track *every* action on your site – clicks, server calls, spidering, whatever. If you want to use analytics that depend on *tracking code* on your pages, be sure you have the code on **ALL** pages. Anything without the tracking code will be invisible to your analysis software or service.

**88.** Customize your YouTube video thumbnail. YouTube gives you a selection of three images from your video to use as your thumbnail. These are pulled from the 1/4, 1/2 and 3/4 marks in time in your video, so try to work it so that a scene in your video shows up in one of those points that would be appropriate for the thumbnail. Consider having your URL or telephone number show up at one of those points.

**89.** YouTube tells you popular related phrases in the search drop down as you type. In a way, they are doing your keyword research for you. Pay attention!

**90.** If you are planning to advertise with Google Adwords, make sure your landing pages don't have the BACK button disabled. Google will not let you advertise sites whose landing pages disable the BACK button.

**91.** Buy text links. I can already hear the SEOs moan! There's a twist to this recommendation, however. Buy the text links to point to, say, your video to generate traffic. As long as the video, podcast or whatever is on one of the major media sites like YouTube, you'll have no fear of being penalized by Google since the purchased link points to the media site and not your site or blog.

**92.** Did you know you have a Personal PageRank? You do. Google assigns values to you as a searcher based on your search history (See tip #41 for opting out). Pages you stay on longer get more weight in your personalized search results. All the more reason to keep make your site sticky and keep visitors there. Google reads Google Bookmarks, too, so try to get your visitors to Google Bookmark your site.

**93.** Link out to authority sites of your choice. I know, conventional wisdom has it that you don't want to leak link juice, but in this case, Google *thinks* the visitor found what they wanted on your site and gives your site the weight.

**94.** Use descriptive verbs in your body text. These are great for catching long tail searches. And remember to write for the reader, not just spiders.

**95.** 301 redirects carry 100% link juice, according to the Big 4 search engines, within reason, meaning don't do a zillion of them!

**96.** Changing ownership of a domain should not affect search engine rankings.

**97.** Your search engine optimization strategy **WILL** be messed with by your I.T. department, so plan for it.

**98.** Try to keep your directory structure no more than three levels deep. Search engines will see links buried deep as not as important.

**99.** Before you request a link from a related site, check to make sure the links are followed and don't have a **nofollow** attribute attached to them. A quick, easy, code-less way to check for *nofollow* links on a web page is with the [NoDoFollow Firefox](#) extension, which will highlight *nofollow* links on a page. You want to maximize the link juice you get back from links by getting as many as you can that are followed. With a link with a *nofollow* attribute, you don't get any of that backlink credit from the search engines.

**100.** Make sure the page title, HTML title and ALT attributes match for each page..

**101.** Check case in your URLs. Let's say you have URLs that look like this – <http://www.yoursite.com/SamplePage-qamb-pr-l.html>. Check to see if an all lower case version – <http://www.yoursite.com/samplepage-qamb-pr-l.html> – works, too. If it does, you have potential for major problems. First, all it takes is for one link to the lower case version to cause the entire site to be respidered in an all lower case version in addition to your upper/lower version. Second, not only do you wind up with two spiderable versions of your site, you'll be splitting you link juice with some links going to each. If you see this issue, get with your I.T. folks and come up with a strategy to 301 redirect to your preferred URL version.

**102.** Use synonyms in your body copy. These are great for catching additional related search queries. One easy way to find synonyms is by using the “~” operator in a Google search. For instance, to search for synonyms to “SEO” on my The Web Optimist, I'd search for **~seo site:weboptimist.com** .

**103.** Transcribe your podcasts and post the text on your blog. The search engines are working on crawling audio, but aren't quite there yet, so post the textual content where the spiders can crawl it easily.

**104.** Same goes for video. Include a transcription of your video content on the page for spidering purposes.

**105.** Google can now crawl on-page javascript links, so use external javascript instead if you want certain links to not be crawled or even identified by the spiders as links.

**106.** Place the index page for every section of your site in the root. This keeps them higher up in the hierarchy. Other pages for each section can still go in the appropriate folders.

**107.** Robots.txt is case sensitive, so make all site URLs lower case. Less chance of spiders slipping through that way. See tip #101 for other good reasons to use lower case URLs.

**108.** Be sure to also check out my [Free eBook: The Web Optimist's S E O 101](#)



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