



## Yoast SEO Sitemap Setup Checklist

Complete Step-by-Step Guide • Updated January 2026

### Time Required: 10-15 Minutes

Follow this checklist to set up your WordPress XML sitemap correctly. Check off each item as you complete it!

### Before You Start

- WordPress website is live and accessible
- You have **admin access** to WordPress dashboard
- Created a **Google Search Console** account (free at [search.google.com/search-console](https://search.google.com/search-console))
- Verified your website in Google Search Console

### Step 1: Install Yoast SEO Plugin

- Login to WordPress dashboard
- Navigate to **Plugins** → **Add New**
- Search for "Yoast SEO" in search bar
- Click **Install Now** on Yoast SEO by Team Yoast
- Click **Activate** after installation completes

## Step 2: Enable XML Sitemap

- Go to **SEO** → **General** in WordPress dashboard
- Click on the **Features** tab
- Find "XML sitemaps" option
- Toggle switch to **ON** (should turn green)
- Click **Save Changes** at bottom

## Step 3: Find Your Sitemap URL

- Click the **question mark (?)** icon next to "XML sitemaps"
- Click "**See the XML sitemap**" link
- Verify your sitemap opens in new tab

### **Your Sitemap URL**

Your sitemap will be located at:

`https://yourwebsite.com/sitemap_index.xml`

Bookmark this URL - you'll need it for Google Search Console!

## Step 4: Customize Sitemap (Optional)

- Go to **SEO** → **Search Appearance**
- Check **Content Types** tab - ensure Posts and Pages are set to "Show"
- Check **Taxonomies** tab - configure Categories and Tags
- Check **Archives** tab - disable Author/Date archives if not needed

### Include in Sitemap

- ✓ Blog Posts
- ✓ Pages
- ✓ Categories (if you use them)
- ✓ Tags (if relevant)

### Exclude from Sitemap

- ✓ Author archives (single author sites)
- ✓ Date archives
- ✓ Format archives
- ✓ Empty categories/tags

## Step 5: Submit to Google Search Console

- Go to [search.google.com/search-console](https://search.google.com/search-console)
- Login with your Google account
- Select your website property
- Click on **Sitemaps** in left sidebar
- Under "Add a new sitemap", enter: **sitemap\_index.xml**
- Click **Submit**
- Wait for success message confirmation

### Processing Time

Google needs 24-48 hours to fully process your sitemap. For new sites, it may take up to 1-2 weeks. Be patient!

## Step 6: Verify Everything Works

- Visit [yoursite.com/sitemap\\_index.xml](https://yoursite.com/sitemap_index.xml) in browser to confirm it loads
- Check for "Success" status in Google Search Console → Sitemaps (after 24-48 hours)
- Publish a new test post and verify it appears in sitemap within minutes
- Confirm "Discourage search engines" is **unchecked** in Settings → Reading

### Common Issues & Quick Fixes

#### **✗ Problem: Sitemap shows 404 error**

**Solution:** Go to Settings → Permalinks and click "Save Changes" (don't change anything). This regenerates your .htaccess file.

#### **✗ Problem: "Sitemap could not be read" in Search Console**

**Solution:** Clear your site cache if using caching plugin (WP Rocket, W3 Total Cache). Wait 24 hours and resubmit.

#### **✗ Problem: New posts not appearing in sitemap**

**Solution:** Check post is "Published" (not draft). Verify it's set to "index" in Yoast SEO meta box on the post edit page.

#### **✗ Problem: Google not indexing pages**

**Solution:** Check Settings → Reading: "Discourage search engines" must be UNCHECKED. Also verify robots.txt isn't blocking Google.

### Ongoing Maintenance

- Weekly:** Check Google Search Console for any new errors
- Monthly:** Review indexed pages count - should increase as you publish content
- After major changes:** Force sitemap refresh by toggling XML sitemaps OFF/ON in Yoast
- Quarterly:** Clean up old/thin content that's not providing value

## **Maximize Your Sitemap's Impact**

- 1. Submit to Bing too:** Visit [bing.com/webmasters](https://bing.com/webmasters) and submit your sitemap there (millions more potential visitors!)
- 2. Build internal links:** Link related posts to help search engines understand your site structure
- 3. Update old content:** Refresh older posts regularly - Google rewards fresh content
- 4. Check mobile usability:** Use Google's Mobile-Friendly Test tool
- 5. Monitor Core Web Vitals:** Check page speed in Search Console → Core Web Vitals

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## **Congratulations! Your Sitemap is Ready!**

### **Need More Help?**

Visit: [InfoLifeHub.com](https://InfoLifeHub.com)

Watch Video Tutorial: [InfoLifeHub.com/yoast-sitemap-tutorial](https://InfoLifeHub.com/yoast-sitemap-tutorial)

Email: [hello@infolifehub.com](mailto:hello@infolifehub.com)

### **More WordPress Tutorials Available:**

- [How to Create Pages with Elementor](#)
- [Custom Header Design Guide](#)
- [WordPress Speed Optimization](#)
- [Complete SEO Checklist](#)

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