Getting Started:
The Essential Semrush Checklists

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Getting Started with Semrush

Are you ready to start your journey with Semrush? Follow these checklists to dive in!

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The Only SEO Checklist You Need

SEO basics

- ☑ Set up GSC and Bing Webmaster tools
- ☑ Set up Google Analytics
- ☑ Install and configure an SEO plugin (WordPress)
- ☑ Generate & submit a sitemap
- ☑ Create a Robots.txt file
- ☑ Check Search Console for manual actions
- ☑ Make sure that your website is indexed

SEO Basics Tools

- Google Search Console
- Google Analytics
- Bing Webmaster Tools
- Yoast
- Dynomapper

Keyword Research

- ☑ Identify your competitors
- ☑ Conduct a keyword gap analysis
- ☑ Find your main 'money' keywords
- ☑ Find long-tail keyword variations
- ☑ Find question keywords
- ☑ Analyze the intent of pages that rank
- ☑ Create a keyword map
- ☑ Prioritize by search volume & keyword difficulty

Keyword Research Tools

- Semrush Keyword Magic Tool
- Google Ads
- Semrush Topic Research
- People Also Ask
- Answer The Public

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Technical SEO

- ☑ Leverage "Inspect URL" feature in GSC
- ☑ Ensure your website is mobile-friendly
- ☑ Check your site's loading speed
- ☑ Make sure you are using HTTPS
- ☑ Find & fix crawl errors
- ☑ Check the page depth

- ☑ Check for duplicate versions of your site
- ☑ Identify & fix broken links
- ☑ Use an SEO-friendly URL structure
- ☑ Find & fix orphaned pages
- ☑ Check canonical tags
- ☑ Add structured data

Technical SEO Tools

- GSC & GA
- PageSpeed Insights
- Google's Mobile-Friendly test
- Semrush Site Audit
- Structured Data Markup Helper

On-Page and Content

- ☑ Fix duplicate, missing, & truncated title tags
- ☑ Find & fix duplicate, missing meta descriptions
- ☑ Find and fix multiple H1 tags
- ☑ Improve title & meta tags and page content

- ☑ Run a content audit and prune content
- ☑ Optimize images for SEO
- ☑ Organize topic clusters
- ☑ Find & fix keyword cannibalization
- ☑ Update outdated content
- ☑ Improve content readability

On-Page and Content Tools

- Semrush Content Audit
- Semrush Topic Research
- Semrush SEO Writing Assistant

Off-Page SEO

- ☑ Analyze your competitor's link profile
- ☑ Conduct a link intersect analysis
- ☑ Steal your competitors' broken backlinks
- ☑ Leverage digital PR

- ☑ Implement the Skyscraper technique
- ☑ Turn unlinked mentions into links
- ☑ Set up and optimize Google My Business

Off-Page SEO Tools

- Semrush Backlink Audit
- Semrush Backlink Analytics
- Semrush Backlink Gap
- Semrush Link Building tool
- HARO
- Prowly
- Google My Business

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Improve a Website's Health Score

If you need help discussing what a particular score means with your client, feel free to use this reference table. To get Site Health data for a particular website, go to Semrush Site Audit, crawl the site, and click on the Site Health metric.

Site Health %	On-Page SEO essentials	What it means	What you should do
Below 50	Not optimized	**Dangerous technical issues.** Sites with such low health may have problems that prevent proper crawling and indexing by Google bot, or could even be completely excluded from SERPs.	☑ In order to compete successfully, we recommend creating a plan for massive improvements. ☑ The "fix all errors" method is fine for small sites. ☑ For large sites, we recommend putting together a step-by-step improvement project.
50–70	Between 40%–50% of the site is optimized	**Below the industry average.** The technical quality of the site should be an important part of your SEO strategy going forward.	☑ After analyzing the current situation, we recommend identifying the individual critical errors and eliminating them first. ☑ These early measures create a good basis for the entire strategy in the future. ☑ Extra steps may be included in the work plan depending on their priority.

Site Health %	On-Page SEO essentials	What it means		What you should do

70-90

Over 50% of issues have been solved

An average site in its industry. There are not many errors in it, but there is room for improvement and optimization. There is potential for improvement and better ranking results.

☑ Some errors and bottlenecks might be preventing you from reaching the top positions, so focus on spotting bottlenecks.

☑ A strategy for this kind of a site could be prioritization and finding bottlenecks.

Over 90

Most issues solved or particular check is left

In the top 10% of the most optimized sites on the internet. As a rule, professional SEO specialists work on such sites or they were originally designed for further promotion in the SERP.

☑ The most important task should be to maintain the quality of the site and monitor new critical errors.

☑ If you notice any drops in Site Health, you can go to the Compare Crawls and Issues tab of the Audit to find out what changed.
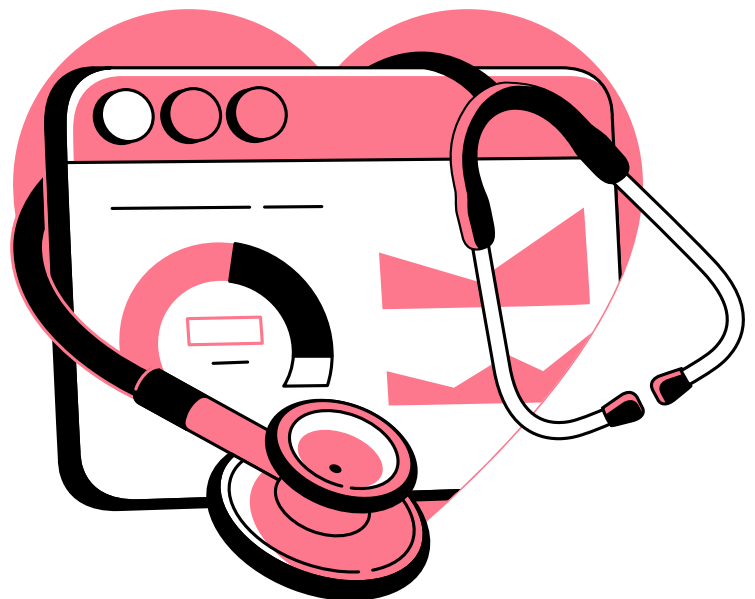
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Improve Local SEO

For a local business, it can be hard to compete with the big names online. But if you're strategic in your approach and have the right tools, you can easily grow your sales by improving your local SEO performance. Here are five steps using Semrush that can help with local SEO ↗ :

	What	Why	How
1	Unify Business Listings	Help people and search engines find you easier.	☑ Listing Management
2	Track Keyword Positions	Understand how high you're ranking. Spot local keyword opportunities on a Heatmap in real time.	☑ Position Tracking ☑ Listing Management
3	Manage Google My Business	Directly share updates about your business online, collect and reply to reviews.	☑ Listing Management ☑ Social Media Poster
4	Audit Your Website	Find and fix issues and errors on your website to improve your visibility.	☑ Site Audit
5	Find Local Content Ideas & Build Links	Gather ideas to create quality content for your site. Use this content to build links.	☑ Topic Research ☑ SEO Writing Assistant ☑ Link Building Tool

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13 Features
to Try Out in the Semrush Position Tracking Tool

The Position Tracking ↗ tool has long been one of the most beloved tools on Semrush. Next time you set up a campaign, here are 13 of its best features to take advantage of.

Hyper Targeting by ZIP Code

Track down your local SEO results on a ZIP code level for even more specific reporting.

Devices and Locations Report

Track your target keywords across multiple targeting, with the combination of location, device, and language.

Competitors Discovery Report

Add your rivals to the Competitors list and see who is winning in the Top 3, Top 10, Top 20, and Top 100.

Google Data Studio Integration

Create stunning visual reports and dashboards in Google Data Studio using your Position Tracking campaign.

Cannibalization Report

Analyze the affected keywords per page, total estimated traffic, and the pages most affected by keyword cannibalization among the keywords you're tracking.

Filtering by SERP Feature

See which of your target SERP features are already occupied by your rivals and where you are targeting a SERP feature or already managed to earn one.

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Featured Snippets Report ☑

See the Featured Snippets that you occupy, where you've lost any, and which keywords started or stopped triggering Featured Snippets in your location.

Tracking Local Pack Results ☑

See where you've managed to get into those Local Packs and where Google doesn't show your website.

Interface Language Selection ☑

Track search results in specific languages as they appear in browsers in your target location.

Tags ☑

Assign categories to your keyword groups so you can easily sort them at any time while looking at your reports.

Customized Alerts ☑

Customize your alerts based on any major gains or drops in your SERP position that might need your attention.

Stunning PDF Reports ☑

Eliminate the need to create reports by hand. Automatically update your results and send it out to your custom list of recipients.

Tracking On the Go ☑

View all your projects running in the tool from a mobile device with our Position Tracking mobile app for Android and iOS.

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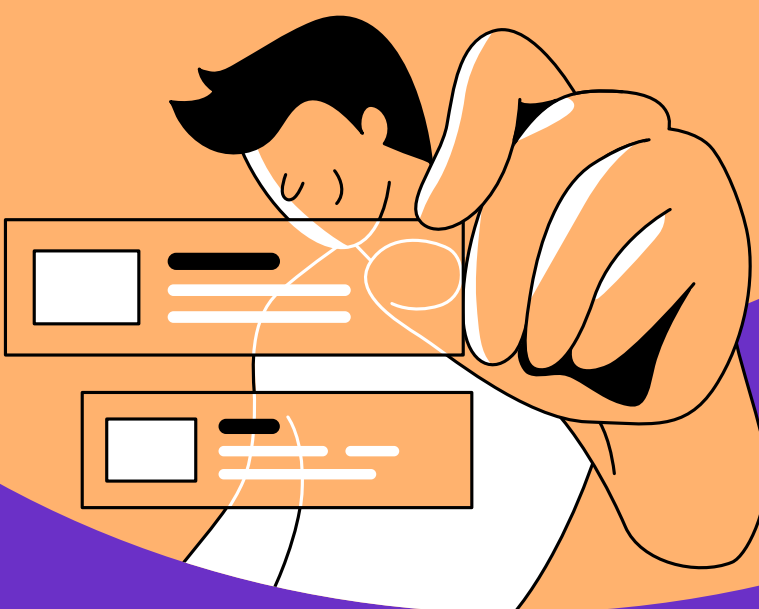
Competitive Analysis: Organic Keywords

Dive into your competitors' keyword strategy with Organic Research and Keyword Gap Analysis. Once you know their strengths and weaknesses, you can pinpoint where to position yourself to get your brand ahead.

1	**Identify your competitors**	Find out whose keyword portfolio closely resembles yours.	☑ Organic Research Competitors report
2	**Pinpoint their strengths**	See which pages on their site have the most organic keyword rankings and organic traffic. Study what makes this content good enough to rank well in search.	☑ Organic Research Pages report ☑ Keyword Gap Filter keywords by "Strong" and "Unique" filter
3	**See how you stack up**	Compare the exact similarities and differences in your keyword portfolios.	☑ Keyword Gap
4	**Find your opportunities**	Identify the gaps in your keyword lists where your competition is getting organic traffic but you are not.	☑ Keyword Gap "Untapped" filter "Missing" filter, "Weak" filter
5	**Execute the next steps**	Optimize your pages via technical SEO, internal linking, and SEO basics. Create new content to target new keywords for your site.	☑ Site Audit ☑ On Page SEO Checker ☑ SEO Content Template ☑ SEO Writing Assistant

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Competitive Analysis:Backlinks

Studying your competitors' backlinks will help you gather new ideas for your own link building strategy. Take a careful look at your competitors' link profiles and make a list of domains from which they've acquired their most valuable backlinks.

1	**Identify your competitors**	Find out whose keyword portfolio closely resembles yours.	☑ Backlinks Competitors report
2	**Pinpoint their strengths**	See which pages on their site have the most trusted backlinks and the highest number of backlinks. Study what makes this content good enough to get link.	☑ Backlink Analytics Overview ☑ Check Authority Score ☑ Backlink Gap
3	**See how you stack up**	Compare your complete backlink profiles side by side.	☑ Backlink Gap
4	**Find your opportunities**	Identify the gaps in your keyword lists where your competition is getting organic traffic but you are not.	☑ Backlink Gap "Best" prospects ☑ Link Building Tool
5	**Execute the next steps**	Conduct outreach to gain your links and regularly audit your backlink profile to avoid any spammy links.	☑ Link Building Tool ☑ Backlink Audit

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Keyword Research Solutions

Keyword research ↗ is a crucial part of any search strategy, and Semrush has the tools to make you effective.

1. Get a Quick Analysis — **Keyword Overview**

2. Build a Master List — **Keyword Magic Tool**

3. Find a Competitive Edge — **Keyword Overview**
   Use bulk analysis and measure Keyword Difficulty

4. Discover Organic Competitors — **Organic Research Competitors**

5. Pinpoint Rivals in Paid Search — **Advertising Research Competitors**

6. Compare Keyword Portfolios — **Keyword Gap**

7. Find (Not Provided) Keywords — **Organic Traffic Insights**

8. Optimize Your Ad Groups — **PPC Keyword Tool**

9. Measure Off–Site Content Performance — **Post Tracking**

Use these tools to:

☑ Understand and reach your audience
☑ Find new relevant topics to cover on your site
☑ Get qualified leads

☑ Increase sales
☑ Improve ad campaigns, get clicks and impressions
☑ Build awareness of your brand

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Find Low Competition Keywords

Build Your Initial Keyword List

1

- ☑ In Organic Research, enter a competitor's domain and look through their keywords
- ☑ Filter and select keywords with low KD% and add to a new list in Keyword Manager
- ☑ Go to the Keyword Gap tool to collect keywords between up to 5 domains to find more long-tail queries and keywords with low KD%
- ☑ Select keywords with low KD% and add to your Keyword Manager list

Organic Research   Keyword Gap   Keyword Manager

Expand Your Keyword List

2

- ☑ Enter a term from your initial list of search terms in the Keyword Magic Tool
- ☑ Use filters and groups to find phrase matches and related keywords
- ☑ Add these keywords to your Keyword Manager list

Keyword Magic Tool   Keyword Manager

Filter for the High-Volume Keywords With Less Competition

3

- ☑ In your Keyword Manager, filter for low competition and sort by volume
  - Look for keywords with KD% less than 60
  - Sort by volume to find your high volume and low difficulty opportunities
- ☑ Export your list to a file to save your research

Keyword Manager

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How to Build Your Content Marketing Workflow

If you can establish a solid workflow, use data to make your content decisions, and automate some of your efforts, you can create better content more efficiently. Follow these 7 ways Semrush can help you take your content plan to the next level.

Audit and Update Your Existing Content

1

- In **Content Audit** ↗, select the website subfolder you want to analyze or upload a list of URLs

- Select the "Table" view to analyze the aggregated data from Semrush, Google Analytics, and Google Search Console and see how each of your pages is currently performing

- Head to the "Content Sets" tab to receive automatic recommendations on which pages to rewrite, update, or improve

- Audit your content at least twice a year to rank higher and generate more organic traffic with your existing pages

Find Ideas for New Content and Design Your Content Hubs ↗

2

- In Topic Research ↗, type in a keyword or topic you believe is relevant to your audience.

- Discover a list of related subtopics, which you can use to enrich your content plan and design topic clusters.

- Explore the most popular headlines, questions, and related searches and use them to map out the outline for your article.

- Click the "Trending topics first" button to see topics that have been especially popular lately and make sure to create social media or blog content about them.

- Use Marketing Calendar ↗ to organize your content plan and decide when you'll write about each topic.

Create Your Optimized Content

3

- Enter your target keyword(s) into the SEO Content Template ↗ and receive a template with recommendations for target text length, related keywords, readability, backlinks, and much more for a new piece of content.

- Download your template and share it with your copywriters.

- While you or your writer draft the content directly in Google Docs, MS Word, or WordPress, you can check the readability, SEO-friendliness, tone of voice, and originality of the copy with the SEO Writing Assistant ↗.

Track Your Content's Performance

4

- After promoting your content, track your site's content performance in the Content Audit ↗ table.

- Follow the impact of your off-site content (e.g. guests posts) with the Post Tracking ↗ tool to see total shares, backlinks, and referral traffic.

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How to Run a Successful PPC Campaign

This SEM checklist will help you research paid keywords, study competitors, plan ad groups, and track rankings for a campaign, all aimed to improve pay-per-click management.

1. Keyword Research

- Analyze any keyword's advertising value with a Keyword Overview ↗ and review its advertising history with the Ad Copies widget.

- Then, discover related ideas and build a master keyword list with the Keyword Magic Tool ↗.

3. Planning Ad Groups and Landing Page

- The PPC Keyword Tool ↗ can help you organize your ad groups to eliminate wasted ad spend and get the most out of your budget.

- Set up cross-group negative keywords in one click

- Generate single keyword ad groups for more control over your targeting and ad copy

2. Competitor Research

- First, discover your PPC competitors with the Advertising Research Competitors ↗ report.

- Then, run the Ad History report to see all of their past ads and paid keywords.

- Look at their campaign's specific headlines, URLs, and body copy in the Ad Copies report.

- Identify their lost, new, declined, and improved keywords in the Position Changes report.

4. Competitor Tracking

- Launch Position Tracking to track the SERPs and advertising activity on your target keywords

- Set the keyword "type" as Google Ads instead of organic to track Google ads rankings

- Discover and follow your closest competitors in the Competitors Discovery tab

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Semrush Backlinks:
9 Link Building Moves to Make

[Backlinks ↗](#) are one of the top factors in Google's organic ranking algorithm, so building and managing a successful backlink profile is a major part of SEO.

1	**Check What's New in Your Backlink Profile**	Use the "New" filter to find the newest links in your backlink profile and evaluate your recent efforts.	[Backlinks Report ↗](#)
2	**Get Back Any Links You've Lost**	Use the "Lost" filter and sort by descending page Authority Score to find your site's biggest recent losses.	[Backlinks Report ↗](#)
3	**Cherry-pick New Link Building Ideas from the Right Rivals**	Find your top competitors in terms of backlinks and discover the sites that link to your competition.	[Backlink Competitors Report ↗](#) [Referring Domains Report ↗](#)

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4	**Find Content Ideas to Attract Links**	Look at your competitor's content that attracted the most quality links and referring domains.	[Indexed Pages Report ↗](#)
5	**Implement Redirects for Previously Successful Pages**	Filter your backlink profile for "broken pages" to find any links that are pointing to pages no longer on your site. Then, set up a redirect to redirect the link to a live page.	[Indexed Pages Report ↗](#)
6	**Implement Redirects for Previously Successful Pages**	Review all of the top anchors used in your backlink profile and spot any overused anchors or vague anchors like "click here" that could be made more specific.	[Anchors Report ↗](#)
7	**Get Rid of Toxic Backlinks**	Review all of your links for any toxic signals that could lead to a potential Google Penalty.	[Backlink Audit Tool ↗](#)
8	**Set Up An "Alarm" Security System**	Turn on notifications for your Backlink Audit campaign to stay aware of any link-related spam attacks or irregular activity in your link profile.	[Backlink Audit Tool ↗](#)
9	**Automate Your Link Building Ideas Search**	Get a list of prospects, draft your own outreach email templates, and conduct link building outreach without leaving Semrush.	[Link Building Tool ↗](#)

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About Semrush

Since 2008, Semrush has served more than 10 million marketing professionals around the world. Our goal is to help our users understand their competitors' marketing strategies, uncover growth opportunities, build brand reputation, and produce valuable content that delivers on brand goals.

By the Numbers (as of May 2022)

- **21B** keywords
- **142** geographic databases
- **808M** domain profiles
- **10M** people have already tried Semrush

Trusted By

TESLA   DECATHLON   P&G   SAMSUNG   Forbes   IBM   Walmart

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