



WORDPRESS MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST

Professional Edition

Protect your investment. Prevent disasters. Maintain peak performance.

WHY THIS CHECKLIST MATTERS

WordPress powers over 40% of all websites, making it the most targeted platform by hackers. Regular maintenance is crucial for keeping your site secure, fast, and functioning optimally. This checklist prevents 90% of common WordPress issues and protects your business from costly downtime.

Business Impact of Poor Maintenance:

- **Security breaches:** Average cost €100,000+ in GDPR fines alone
 - **Site downtime:** 1 hour costs €25,000+ for e-commerce sites
 - **Performance issues:** Slow sites lose 53% of visitors and 7% conversion rate per second delay
 - **Recovery costs:** 10x more expensive than prevention
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MAINTENANCE PREREQUISITES

Essential setup before starting maintenance routine

Required Infrastructure

- ☐ **Staging/Development Environment** - Set up dev[.]yourdomain[.]com or staging[.]yourdomain[.]com for safe testing
- ☐ **Automated Backup System** - Configure daily backups before any maintenance begins
- ☐ **Monitoring Tools** - Install uptime and security monitoring solutions
- ☐ **Emergency Access Documentation** - Maintain current records of all login credentials and hosting access
- ☐ **Professional Email Setup** - Configure proper SMTP for reliable email delivery

⚠ Critical Rule: Never perform updates or testing on your live website. Always use a staging environment to test changes before applying them to your production site. This prevents disasters and maintains professional standards.

DAILY TASKS(2-5 minutes)

Critical monitoring that prevents disasters

Security & Uptime Monitoring

- ☐ **Security scan status check** - Verify security plugin alerts and malware scanning results
- ☐ **Site accessibility verification** - Automated uptime monitoring tools like WP Umbrella or Hyperping provide instant alerts
- ☐ **SSL certificate status** - Ensure HTTPS is working correctly
- ☐ **Admin login attempt monitoring** - Check for unusual login activity or brute force attempts

Performance Monitoring

- ☐ **Page speed status check** - Monitor Core Web Vitals and loading times
- ☐ **Error log review** - Check for PHP errors or plugin conflicts
- ☐ **Server resource usage** - Monitor CPU and memory consumption

User Experience

- ☐ **Contact form testing** - Ensure forms are working and emails are being sent
- ☐ **Comment moderation** - Review and manage new comments
- ☐ **Broken link detection** - Quick check for 404 errors

Communication

- ☐ **Email deliverability check** - Use WP Mail SMTP plugin to monitor email failures
 - ☐ **Backup verification** - Confirm automated backups completed successfully
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WEEKLY TASKS(15-30 minutes)

Proactive maintenance that prevents major issues

Updates & Security

- ☐ **Staging environment verification** - Ensure staging site is current and accessible
- ☐ **Plugin update review** - Check for plugin updates and security patches

- ☐ **Theme compatibility check** - Test ALL updates on staging environment first, never on live site
- ☐ **WordPress core update evaluation** - Keep WordPress updated for security patches
- ☐ **Security audit of user accounts** - Review user privileges and remove unnecessary accounts

Database Maintenance

- ☐ **Database optimization** - Use WP-Optimize to clean unnecessary data and optimize tables
- ☐ **Post revision cleanup** - Limit revisions to 10 per post to prevent database bloat
- ☐ **Spam comment removal** - Delete spam comments to improve database performance
- ☐ **Transient cleanup** - Clear expired transients to reduce wp_options table size

Performance Optimization

- ☐ **Cache clearing and optimization** - Clear and optimize caching systems
- ☐ **Image optimization** - Compress and optimize images using tools like Imagify or Smush
- ☐ **Plugin performance audit** - Remove unused plugins that can create security vulnerabilities

Content Quality

- ☐ **Internal link verification** - Check for broken internal links
- ☐ **SEO health check** - Review meta descriptions and titles
- ☐ **Content update review** - Identify outdated content for refresh

MONTHLY TASKS(1-2 hours)

Comprehensive review and optimization

Security Deep Dive

- ☐ **Complete security audit** - Full malware scan and vulnerability assessment
- ☐ **SSL/HTTPS verification** - Ensure SSL certificate is properly configured
- ☐ **Firewall rule review** - Update and optimize firewall settings
- ☐ **Two-factor authentication check** - Verify 2FA is working for all admin users
- ☐ **Password strength audit** - Enforce strong passwords and update credentials

Performance Analysis

- ☐ **Site speed comprehensive test** - Full Core Web Vitals assessment and optimization
- ☐ **Server resource analysis** - Monitor hosting performance metrics
- ☐ **Database size and health check** - Analyze database growth and optimize structure
- ☐ **CDN performance review** - Optimize content delivery network settings

Content Management

- ☐ **Content audit and cleanup** - Review and update outdated content
- ☐ **Media library organization** - Remove unused images and optimize media files
- ☐ **SEO performance review** - Analyze search rankings and optimization opportunities
- ☐ **Analytics data analysis** - Review Google Analytics for insights

Technical Maintenance

- ☐ **Staging-to-production deployment** - Safely move tested changes from staging to live site
- ☐ **Plugin and theme updates** - Apply all pending updates after thorough testing on staging
- ☐ **Database table optimization** - Optimize all database tables for improved performance
- ☐ **Backup restoration test** - Test backup restoration to ensure recovery capability
- ☐ **404 error page audit** - Fix broken links and improve user experience

QUARTERLY TASKS(2-4 hours)

Strategic maintenance and planning

Security Hardening

- ☐ **Complete security penetration test** - Professional security assessment of vulnerabilities
- ☐ **Staging environment security audit** - Ensure staging site doesn't expose sensitive data
- ☐ **Access control audit** - Review all user permissions and roles
- ☐ **Server configuration review** - Optimize server settings for security and performance
- ☐ **Backup strategy evaluation** - Test and improve backup and recovery procedures

Legal Compliance

- ☐ **GDPR compliance audit** - Review data processing and privacy compliance
- ☐ **Privacy policy update** - Ensure policies match current data collection
- ☐ **Cookie consent review** - Verify cookie compliance and management
- ☐ **Terms of service update** - Update legal documents as needed

Strategic Planning

- ☐ **Performance benchmark analysis** - Compare current vs. previous quarter metrics
 - ☐ **Technology stack review** - Evaluate hosting, plugins, and tools
 - ☐ **Business continuity planning** - Update disaster recovery and incident response plans
 - ☐ **Budget planning for tools and services** - Review maintenance tool costs and ROI
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EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

When disaster strikes - your action plan

Security Breach Response

1. **Immediate isolation** - Put site in maintenance mode to prevent further damage
2. **Change all passwords** - WordPress admin, hosting, FTP, database access
3. **Scan and clean malware** - Use security plugins like Sucuri or Wordfence for cleanup
4. **Update all software** - WordPress core, themes, plugins immediately
5. **Restore from clean backup** - If cleaning fails, restore from pre-infection backup
6. **Security audit** - Full security review to prevent reinfection

Site Down Recovery

1. **Identify the cause** - Check hosting status, plugin conflicts, or server issues
2. **Emergency maintenance mode** - Display professional maintenance page
3. **Use staging for troubleshooting** - Never debug issues on live site
4. **Plugin deactivation** - Deactivate all plugins to identify conflicts
5. **Theme rollback** - Switch to default theme if theme-related issue
6. **Database restoration** - Restore from latest working backup if necessary
7. **Communication plan** - Notify stakeholders and provide status updates

Backup Restoration Process

1. **Assessment** - Determine extent of data loss or corruption
2. **Backup selection** - Choose appropriate backup point before issue occurred
3. **Staging restoration** - Test restoration on staging environment first
4. **Production restoration** - Apply restoration to live site only after staging verification
5. **Verification** - Comprehensive testing of all site functions
6. **Security check** - Ensure restoration didn't reintroduce vulnerabilities

PROFESSIONAL TOOLS & RESOURCES

Security Monitoring

- **Wordfence Security** - Real-time threat detection and firewall
- **Sucuri Security** - Malware scanning and cleanup services
- **Jetpack Security** - Automated security monitoring by Automattic
- **Patchstack** - Cloud-based vulnerability monitoring

Performance Monitoring

- **WP Umbrella** - All-in-one WordPress site monitoring
- **Divi Dash** - Automated updates and maintenance

- **Google PageSpeed Insights** - Core Web Vitals monitoring
- **GTmetrix** - Comprehensive performance analysis

Backup Solutions

- **Duplicator Pro** - Professional backup and migration
- **UpdraftPlus** - Automated backup scheduling
- **BackupBuddy** - Complete site backup solution
- **Cloudways Backup** - Hosting-level automated backups

Database Optimization

- **WP-Optimize** - Database cleanup and optimization
 - **Optimize Database after Deleting Revisions** - Specialized revision cleanup
 - **WP-Sweep** - Advanced database cleaning
 - **phpMyAdmin** - Direct database management
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WHEN TO HIRE A PROFESSIONAL

Red Flags Requiring Expert Help

Immediate Professional Assistance Needed:

- **Security warnings you don't understand** - Modern attacks require expert-level response
- **Performance issues affecting revenue** - Professional optimization needed
- **Compliance requirements** - GDPR, industry-specific regulations
- **Complex customizations breaking during updates** - Expert troubleshooting required
- **Database corruption or significant data loss** - Professional recovery services

Signs You Need Ongoing Professional Maintenance:

- **Monthly revenue >€10,000** - Downtime costs exceed maintenance investment
- **High-traffic website** - Enterprise-level monitoring and optimization needed
- **E-commerce operations** - Security and performance are business-critical
- **Limited technical expertise** - Professional maintenance provides peace of mind
- **Multiple websites to manage** - Professional tools and expertise scale efficiently

Cost-Benefit Analysis

DIY Maintenance Costs:

- Time investment: 3-5 hours weekly
- Tool subscriptions: €200-500 monthly
- Learning curve: 50+ hours initially
- Opportunity cost: Lost revenue from time not spent on core business
- Risk of mistakes: Potentially €10,000+ in damages

Professional Maintenance Benefits:

- Expert knowledge and tools
 - 24/7 monitoring and response
 - Guaranteed security and performance optimization
 - Business insurance and liability protection
 - Focus on core business instead of technical maintenance
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MAINTENANCE SUCCESS METRICS

Key Performance Indicators

Security Metrics:

- Zero security incidents per quarter
- 100% of updates applied within 48 hours
- All security scans showing "clean" status
- Two-factor authentication on all admin accounts

Performance Metrics:

- Page load times under 3 seconds
- 99.9% uptime or higher
- Core Web Vitals in "Good" range
- Database queries optimized (*<200ms average*)

Operational Metrics:

- Daily automated backups with 100% success rate
 - Zero data loss incidents
 - All forms and functionality working correctly
 - Regular content updates and optimization
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NEXT STEPS

Professional WordPress Maintenance Consultation

If implementing this checklist feels overwhelming, or if your business depends on your WordPress site, consider professional maintenance services.

Free 30-Minute WordPress Maintenance Audit:

- Current security and performance assessment

- Customized maintenance plan for your business
- Risk analysis and prevention strategies
- Cost-benefit analysis of DIY vs. professional maintenance

Built With Intent Maintenance Services:

- **Sites I Built:** €150/month - Seamless continuation from development
- **Existing Sites:** €200/month - Includes comprehensive setup audit
- **Enterprise Sites:** Custom pricing for high-traffic, mission-critical sites

Book Your Consultation: builtwithintent.eu/contact

Questions?: hello@builtwithintent.eu

CHECKLIST SUMMARY

- ✓ Print this checklist and keep it handy
- ✓ Set calendar reminders for each maintenance period
- ✓ Bookmark essential tools and resources
- ✓ Test emergency procedures before you need them
- ✓ Consider professional help for business-critical sites

DISCLAIMER

This maintenance checklist is provided for informational purposes only and is based on general WordPress best practices as of 2025. While these recommendations follow industry standards and proven methodologies:

- **No Guarantees:** This checklist is provided "as-is" without any warranties or guarantees of specific results
- **Professional Consultation Recommended:** Every WordPress site is unique - consider professional assessment for business-critical applications
- **Backup First:** Always create complete backups before implementing any maintenance tasks
- **Test Environment:** Test all changes on staging sites before applying to production
- **Individual Responsibility:** Users are responsible for testing and validating all recommendations for their specific environment

Built With Intent disclaims any liability for damages resulting from the use of this checklist. For personalized guidance, professional consultation is recommended.

*This professional checklist is based on 9+ years of WordPress consulting experience and current 2025 best practices.
For the latest updates and additional resources, visit builtwithintent.eu/blog*

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