

On-Page SEO Checklist

The elements that matter, their ideal shape, and the myths to ignore.

The elements

Element	Ideal	What it does
Title tag	~50–60 chars, keyword near front, click-worthy	The clickable headline in results. Most important on-page element; a ranking factor.
Meta description	~150–160 chars, keyword natural	Summary under the title. Not a ranking factor, but drives clicks.
H1	One per page, states the topic	The on-page headline. Keyword natural.
H2 / H3	Mirror the sub-questions	Structure for skimmers — and for AI extraction later.
URL slug	Short, lowercase, hyphenated, descriptive	Readable address; mild signal + trust.
Body	Keyword in first ~100 words, then cover the topic	Satisfy intent; synonyms > repetition.
Alt text	Honest description of the image	Accessibility first; image-search bonus.

Do / Don't

Do	Don't
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place the keyword naturally, once, where it fits Write titles humans want to click Cover the topic fully (synonyms, related terms) Match the intent before tweaking tags 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stuff exact-match keywords ("car dealer San Diego" ×10) Chase a keyword-density number Buy "power words" formulas Leave the meta description blank on key pages

60-second pre-publish check

- Title has the keyword near the front and is under ~60 chars
- Meta description sells the click, ~155 chars
- One clear H1; H2/H3 cover the sub-questions
- Slug is short, lowercase, hyphenated
- Keyword in the first paragraph — naturally
- Every meaningful image has honest alt text
- The page actually answers the query better than what ranks now