



TOP TEN RULES FOR BASIC SEO

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Beginning SEO!

Along with the list of my top ten rules for basic SEO technology I am including a short description as well as the HTML basic code that makes it all happen. This list is in no way the end all for SEO it is the place where I always start when I review a site.

- 1 Title Tag
- 2 Description Meta Tag
- 3 Keywords & Keyword Phrases
- 4 Keywords Meta Tag
- 5 Image Alt Tags
- 6 Heading Tags
- 7 Internal Link or Anchor Text
- 8 Robots.txt file
- 9 Sitemap.xml file
- 10 .htaccess file

Title Tag

The Title tag is the element defines the title of the page.

The correct syntax for the Title HTML tag is:

```
<title>Page Title goes here.</title>
```

While technically not a meta tag, this tag is frequently used in conjunction with the "Meta Description Tag." The contents of this tag are generally shown as the title in search results (and in the user's browser when visiting the page or viewing bookmarks). Title Tags must be unique to each page and should contain at the minimum the most important keyword or keyword phrase on that page.

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Description Meta Tag

The Meta description tag is a HTML code snippet that resides inside the head(<head> </head>) section of a web page. It usually is placed after the Title tag and before the Meta keywords tag, although the order is not important.

The correct syntax for the Meta description HTML tag is:

```
<meta name="description" content="The well thought out of your page in a sentence or two goes here.">
```

The Meta Description Tag provides a short description of the page. In some situations this description is used as a part of the snippet shown in the search results. The Meta Description Tag should be your best Marketing foot forward. In the case where the search engine uses your Meta Description Tag for the text in the search results, this description must convince the searcher to click on your link.

Meta Description Tags must be unique and relevant to each page and should contain at the minimum the two or three most important keywords or keyword phrases on that page. Remember you are writing your Meta Description Tag for your readers not the search engines.

Keywords & Keyword Phrases

Keywords and keyword phrases are what the searchers enter into the search engines to initiate a search. This is how your site is found on the internet. You can't expect your site to be listed in a search engine for a word or phrase that is not even contained in your site. The search engines rank your site by what is actually on it not by what it is about. If you want to be found by a particular phrase you need to have it in your page.

Keywords Meta Tag

On the web, a keyword is a reference to the content and/or the type of meta element included in a given web page's HTML code to aid in the page's indexing. A keyword meta element may include several comma-separated keywords (or keyword phrases, each of which may contain several individual words).

The correct syntax for the Meta keyword HTML tag is:

```
<meta name="keywords" content="keyword, another keyword, one more keyword">
```

While the meta keyword debate rages on ... Are they really of value? Should I use them? My position is that I use them, qualified by, "if you are going to use meta keywords you might as well use them right." Search engines may not give them much value but if you use meta keywords in your tags that you don't use on the page you might be penalized.

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Image Alt Tags

Alt tags are the image descriptions that originally were intended to replace the image in text readers. You want to make sure to make use of your alt tags search engines can't read images and must rely on your alt tags to help define the page. Alt tags aren't as important to search engines as actual text but everything adds up.

The correct syntax for the Alt HTML tag is:

```

```

Heading Tags

Heading tags are very important they can give the search engines clues to the most important topics on your pages. Each page should have only one H1 tag. You may use as many of the others as you'd like. Make sure you don't break the order and skip a number. (e.g. 1 2 4). when used properly your heading tags should look like an outline.

The correct syntax for the Heading HTML tag is:

```
<h1>The main topic of the page</h1>
```

```
<h2>sub topic for the page</h2>
```

Internal Anchor Text

Anchor text is the words that are the link to another page or place within a page. It is like the URL in an email typically blue and underlined. Search engines take particular notice of what the words are that are actually providing the link to information. Internal links are just that the links that you use to navigate around your site. If you use images or flash for navigation you will be losing important link juice.

The correct syntax for the Anchor HTML tag is:

```
<a href="this_is_url_for_the_link.html">this is your anchor text</a>
```

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Robots.txt File

A robot.txt file can be very useful. It is used to tell the search engines what folders to stay out of and where your sitemap.xml file is located. If you have an area of your site you don't want displayed by the search engines this is what you use to accomplish it. (e.g. you have special landing pages for your pay-per-click or other campaigns that contain duplicate content search engines might penalize you for duplicate content.)

The correct syntax for the Robots.txt file is:

/robots.txt file for <http://www.yourdomain.com/>

User-agent: *

Disallow: /_private/

Disallow: /_vti_bin/

Disallow: /_vti_cnf/

Disallow: /_vti_log/

Disallow: /_vti_pvt/

Disallow: /_vti_txt/

Disallow: /awstats/

Disallow: /cgi-bin/

Disallow: /Scripts/

Disallow: /formmail/

Disallow: /problem/

Disallow: /webalizer/

Disallow: /wordpress/

Disallow: /contact/

Sitemap: <http://www.yourdomain.com/sitemap.xml>

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Sitemap.xml File

Sitemap.xml files are to give search engines about pages on their sites that are available for crawling. A sitemap.xml file in its most basic form lists URLs for a site as well as additional information about each URL (when it was last updated, how often it usually changes, and how important it is, relative to other URLs in the site).

The correct syntax for the Sitemap.xml file is:

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<urlset xmlns="http://www.google.com/schemas/sitemap/0.84">
<url>
<loc>http://www.yourdomain.com/index.html</loc>
<lastmod>2008-09-18T16:57:50-07:00</lastmod>
<changefreq>weekly</changefreq>
<priority>1</priority>
</url>
<url>
<loc>http://www.yourdomain.com/marketing/email.html</loc>
<lastmod>2008-09-18T16:59:09-07:00</lastmod>
<changefreq>weekly</changefreq>
<priority>0.7</priority>
</url>
<url>
<loc>http://www.yourdomain.com/marketing/survey.html</loc>
<lastmod>2008-09-18T00:35:07-07:00</lastmod>
<changefreq>weekly</changefreq>
<priority>0.7</priority>
</url>
<url>
<loc>http://www.yourdomain.com/search-engines/google.html</loc>
<lastmod>2008-09-18T00:35:07-07:00</lastmod>
<changefreq>weekly</changefreq>
<priority>0.5</priority>
</url>
```

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.htaccess File

The .htaccess file is a very useful file. It allows you to make sure the search engines only see your sites home and other pages as individuals. With out this file the search engines will see each of your pages as two separate pages (e.g. <http://www.yourdomain.com> and <http://yourdomain.com>). I will also do many other things such as redirecting the viewer to your custom error pages.

The correct syntax for the .htaccess file on an apache server is:

```
<IfModule mod_rewrite.c>
RewriteEngine On
RewriteBase /
RewriteCond %{HTTP_HOST} !^www\.YOURDOMAIN\COM [NC]
RewriteRule ^(.*)$ http://www.yourdomain.com/$1 [L,R=301]
</IfModule>
```

ErrorDocument 404 <http://www.yourdomain.com/problem/404.html>

ErrorDocument 403 <http://www.yourdomain.com/problem/403.html>

ErrorDocument 401 <http://www.yourdomain.com/problem/401.html>

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