



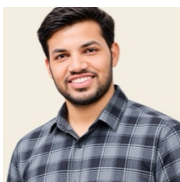
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Free Cheat sheet

Technical SEO Notes for Non-Developers

Technical SEO explained with one picture, a house, plus the free 5-minute check for each room.

The whole of technical SEO on one page, explained as a house: door, hallways, foundation, address and name tag. Each part ends with a free check you can run yourself today.



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How to use it

1. Read the house picture first. It's the map for everything else.
 2. Run the 5-minute checks in order. A locked door matters more than a slow hallway.
 3. Send anything you can't fix to your developer with the exact report name.
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Technical SEO as a house

Part of the house	Technical SEO	The question it answers
Front door	Crawling and indexing (robots.txt, noindex)	Can Google get in and keep the page?
Hallways	Internal links	Can Google reach every room from the front door?
Foundation	Mobile-friendly and fast	Does the house stand up on a phone?
Address	Sitemaps and canonical URLs	Is there one clear address for each page?
Name tag	Structured data	Does Google know what's inside?

The front door: can Google get in?

Two different locks. robots.txt tells crawlers which URLs not to fetch. noindex tells Google not to keep a page in results. Google says robots.txt is not a way to keep a page out of Google: a blocked URL can still appear (without a description) if other sites link to it. To keep a page out, use noindex or a password.

The classic mistake: a site built with 'Discourage search engines' or a noindex tag switched on, then launched without switching it off.

5-minute check: open Search Console > Indexing > Pages. Look at 'Why pages aren't indexed'. 'Excluded by noindex tag' or 'Blocked by robots.txt' on a page you want found is a real problem. Many other reasons, like 'Page with redirect' or an alternate page with a proper canonical, are normal, says Google.

The hallways: links between your pages

Google finds most pages by following links. A page no other page links to (an orphan) is hard to find, even if it's in your sitemap.

5-minute check: list your 5 most important pages. From your homepage, can you reach each one in 2 to 3 clicks using normal text links in the menu or body? If not, add a link from a related page. (The 2-3 clicks rule is practical advice, not a Google number.)

The foundation: mobile and speed

Google uses the mobile version of your site, crawled with its smartphone agent, for indexing and ranking. If your mobile site hides content the desktop shows, Google may not see it. Keep the same content, titles, meta descriptions, robots tags and structured data on both.

Speed is measured with Core Web Vitals: LCP 2.5 s or less, INP 200 ms or less, CLS 0.1 or less, at the 75th percentile of real visits. Google says Core Web Vitals are used by its ranking systems, but relevance comes first.

5-minute check: run your homepage in PageSpeed Insights on Mobile. Then open Search Console > Experience > Core Web Vitals for real-user data across the site.

The address: sitemaps and canonical URLs

A sitemap is a list of the pages you want found. Use full URLs (https://...), keep each file under 50,000 URLs or 50 MB, and submit it in Search Console > Sitemaps. Google ignores priority and changefreq, and only trusts lastmod if it's accurate.

Canonical means 'the one true address'. http and https, www and non-www, or tracking parameters can make one page look like several. Google's strongest signals are 301 redirects and rel="canonical"; a sitemap is a weak hint. Don't use robots.txt or noindex to pick a canonical.

5-minute check: type http://yoursite.com, http://www.yoursite.com and https://yoursite.com into the browser. All should end up on the same single version. Then use URL Inspection in Search Console on a key page and compare 'User-declared canonical' with 'Google-selected canonical'.

The name tag: structured data

Structured data is code (Google recommends JSON-LD) that says 'this is a business, these are the hours, this is the price'. It must match what's visible on the page. It can make you eligible for rich results, but Google doesn't guarantee them, and FAQ rich results were retired from Google Search in May 2026.

5-minute check: put your homepage into Google's Rich Results Test, then the Schema Markup Validator (validator.schema.org). Fix errors first, warnings later.

Featured pick

theStacc

For a quick look at the AI side of the front door, theStacc's free AI Visibility Checker (no signup) requests a page as AI crawlers like GPTBot, ClaudeBot and PerplexityBot, reads your robots.txt rules for each, and checks how much text is in the HTML before JavaScript runs.

Disclosure: I work at theStacc as a product growth marketer, so I am biased. Compare it against the free options on this page and pick what fits you.

Sources

- Google Search Central: SEO Starter Guide — <https://developers.google.com/search/docs/fundamentals/seo-starter-guide>
- Google Search Central: Introduction to robots.txt — <https://developers.google.com/search/docs/crawling-indexing/robots/intro>
- Google Search Central: Mobile-first indexing best practices — <https://developers.google.com/search/docs/crawling-indexing/mobile/mobile-sites-mobile-first-indexing>
- Google Search Central: How to specify a canonical URL — <https://developers.google.com/search/docs/crawling-indexing/consolidate-duplicate-urls>
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- Search Console Help: Page indexing report — <https://support.google.com/webmasters/answer/7440203>

- theStacc AI Visibility Checker — <https://thestacc.com/tools/ai-visibility-checker>

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