

# Image SEO: The Only Checklist You'll Ever Need



## 1. Perform image keyword research

Master the art of identifying high-volume search terms for your images by treating your images as standalone pieces of content with their own target search term(s). To find relevant keywords, use Kparser, a keyword suggestion tool that works specifically for Google Images.



## 2. Create stand out images that win more attention and clicks

Avoid using generic stock images. They will kill your site's EAT (Expertise, Authority, and Trust) rating. Create "stand out" images that win more attention and clicks by:

- Identifying what already ranks.
- Checking the search results for your target keyword(s).
- Noting down what's there.
- Doing the opposite.



## 3. Use the right image file type for your material

Choosing the right file type will keep your images looking clear and won't sacrifice load time which is critical for SEO. The main image file types are:

- **GIF** – Good for a short animation.
- **PNG** – Good for screenshots of apps and websites with gradients.
- **JPEG** – Good for photos of people, places, or things.



## 4. Format your image to optimum proportions before uploading

Resize the image to the exact width of the space you want to put it in. This will slash page bloat and improve page load time. Tools you can use to edit your images include:

- **Pixlr** – A free online tool that works great for minor formatting.
  - **Preview** – Standard on all Macs and has everything you need for basic image editing.
  - **ImageOptim** – A free tool for Mac that has “save for web” features.
  - **RIOT** – A free image optimizer for Windows.
  - **Photoshop** – Great program for its “save for web” option, which helps with keeping file sizes low without losing quality.
- 



## 5. Create custom filenames for your images

A custom descriptive filename will improve how search engines rank your images. When deciding on a filename, choose a name that does these three things:

- Describes the image.
  - Includes your target keyword (refer to step #1).
  - Is 1-5 words long.
- 



## 6. Compress the image file for faster load times

Before uploading your image, decrease the weight of your file. This will allow you to upload lighter images which results in a faster website and higher rankings.

---



## 7. Use image ALT text for better image SEO

The image ALT text is the alternative text that appears in place of an image when the image fails to load. This is used by screen reading tools to help people with limited eyesight. This also helps search engines better understand the content of your images.

---



## 8. Optimise captions for all images

Captions under images keep users on your page longer and create RankBrain-centric usability signals. To create great image captions, describe the details of the photo that are not obvious. These will include things like:

- The location.
- The time of day or year.
- Or, a specific event that is taking place.



## 9. Provide valuable information through your Image Title tag

For your Image Title tag, use a short, descriptive, catchy title that complements the ALT text.

---



## 10. Optimise the content around your image

Follow these four tips to optimise the page your image sits on:

- Update your Page Title to include the keyword you are targeting.
  - Amend the page's URL to include your target keyword (or a close variation).
  - Use short, keyword-rich URLs.
  - Surround your image with relevant text that supports the image content (focus on context).
- 



## 11. Include images in your regular XML sitemap

Adding your images to your sitemap will get your images indexed faster and ensure more of your material gets shown in image search results.

---



## 12. Use Scalable Vector Graphics (SVGs)

SVGs are vector graphics and are lighter, faster loading and scale WAY better than both JPEGs and PNGs. They scale to ANY size with ZERO loss of quality, they can be animated, and because they load instantly, they're great for SEO.

---



## 13. Optimise your image's EXIF data

When it comes to EXIF data, do these two things:

- Strip out ALL unnecessary EXIF data (so your image is lighter and loads faster).
  - Tag your up image with relevant EXIF data that's useful for SEO.
- 



## 14. Serve responsive images using the code srcset

With the srcset code, you can serve different sizes of images depending on the screen size used by your user. If you don't know how to code, WordPress takes care of the srcset code for you.



## 15. Lazy load your images to improve page load speed

Lazy loading will improve your page load time dramatically. Lazy loading requires some web development skills. If you're using WordPress, you can use the lazy loading plugin, LazyLoad.

---



## 16. Display social sharing buttons on images

While social media signals do not impact search rankings, when your content gets shared across social media, it will increase your potential for links and build an audience for your brand.

---



## 17. Use browser caching

Browser caching reduces server requests which speed up page load times. This will aid user experience and improve SEO.

---



## 18. Use a Content Delivery Network

A page using a CDN will load as much 2X faster than a page without one. But, when you use a CDN, set up a CNAME record so the cached version of your images continues to provide valuable links and traffic.

---



## 19. Display rich snippets with Open Graph and Twitter Cards

Open Graph tags and Twitter Cards optimise conversation rates and drive a tonne of traffic to your site. The Open Graph tags you need to maximise CTR are:

- og:image
  - og:title
  - og:description
- 



## 20. Standout with schema markup

Using the appropriate structured data will further maximise the effectiveness of your image SEO and ensure the right image badge appears. This will help users find relevant content quickly, encouraging better traffic to your site.

# BONUS TIPS:

## ✓ Properly source your images

If you must use stock images, beware of copyright. Not correctly attributing stock images to their source can lead to a potential copyright infringement lawsuit. Use the acronym TASL to appropriately attribute images to their source:

- Title: The title of the material.
- Author: The author that owns the material.
- Source: Where you accessed the material.
- License: The CC license being used.

## ✓ Avoid embedding important text in your images

Adding important texts to your images can negatively impact image SEO. Not every user can access embedded texts in images. Rather than embedding texts in the image, provide ALT text in the metadata fields and keep text in HTML.

Interested in getting started?  
Let SEO Sherpa help your website  
get found first in Google  
search results.

**BOOK A FREE CONSULTATION**

