

The Shopify SEO Checklist

34 steps to rank your store, in the order that matters. Work top to bottom, or hand it to your developer.

From our audit of 20 top US Shopify brands: **65%** left their most important page blank.

Tick each box as you go. The four layers build on each other, so start at the top. Anything you can't finish today is a note for next month's review.

Layer 1 — Technical foundations

Fix these first. Google has to crawl, index, and load your store before anything else counts.

- ☐ **1. Connect a custom domain + confirm HTTPS.** Use your own domain, set it primary, check the SSL certificate is active.
- ☐ **2. Set up Google Search Console + submit your sitemap.** Submit `yourbrand.com/sitemap.xml`; review the Performance report monthly.
- ☐ **3. Install Google Analytics 4.** Connect via the Google & YouTube channel or your measurement ID.
- ☐ **4. Confirm your store is indexed.** Run `site:yourbrand.com`; remove the storefront password and any `noindex` tags.
- ☐ **5. Check your robots.txt.** Confirm nothing important is blocked, especially after adding apps.
- ☐ **6. Check the collections → products canonical.** Make sure product canonicals point to the clean `/products/` URL.
- ☐ **7. Improve Core Web Vitals.** Target $LCP \leq 2.5s$, $INP \leq 200ms$, $CLS \leq 0.1$ on mobile (PageSpeed Insights).
- ☐ **8. Audit your app bloat.** Uninstall unused apps and clear their leftover theme code.
- ☐ **9. Enable lazy loading on collection images.** Confirm image tags use `loading="lazy"`.
- ☐ **10. Review the Index Coverage report.** Check monthly for pages that should rank but aren't indexed.

Layer 2 — On-page optimization

Tell Google what each page is about, so the right page ranks for the right search.

- ☐ 11. **Write title tags under 60 characters.** Keyword near the front; unique per page.
- ☐ 12. **Write meta descriptions under 160 characters.** Give a reason to click; unique for every important page.
- ☐ 13. **Clean up your URL handles.** Short, hyphenated, keyword-clear; keep the 301 redirect if you change one.
- ☐ 14. **Use a proper heading hierarchy.** One H1 per page; H2s and H3s in order.
- ☐ 15. **Add descriptive alt text + image file names.** Name files before upload; describe the image in plain language.
- ☐ 16. **Optimize your collection pages.** Unique 100–300 word descriptions on your real category pages. The biggest opportunity.
- ☐ 17. **Optimize your product pages.** Unique 300+ word descriptions; specs in bullets; answer common questions.

Layer 3 — Content and site structure

Build and connect the pages that rank for searches your product pages can't reach alone.

- ☐ 18. **Map keywords to the right page type.** Transactional → product, commercial → collection, informational → blog.
- ☐ 19. **Build a strong internal linking structure.** Descriptive anchors; link blog posts to money pages.
- ☐ 20. **Handle out-of-stock and discontinued products.** Keep sold-out live; 301 discontinued items to alternatives or their collection.
- ☐ 21. **Collect customer reviews + add review schema.** Reviews as readable text; star markup for rich results.
- ☐ 22. **Create SEO-driven blog content.** Target "how to" and "best" queries; cluster and link to collections.
- ☐ 23. **Add breadcrumb navigation.** Pair it with breadcrumb schema.
- ☐ 24. **Add structured data for every page type.** Organization, Product, CollectionPage, Article; validate with the Rich Results Test.

Layer 4 — AI search (GEO/AEO), authority & maintenance

Become the store AI tools recommend, and earn the authority that holds rankings in place.

- ☐ 25. **Structure content so AI can quote it.** Answer first, self-contained sentences, key facts in plain text.
- ☐ 26. **Add FAQ sections + FAQPage schema.** Real shopper questions with clear, standalone answers.
- ☐ 27. **Control how AI crawlers access your store.** Allow GPTBot, ClaudeBot, PerplexityBot, Google-Extended; check your llms.txt.
- ☐ 28. **Test whether AI recommends you.** Run category prompts in ChatGPT and Perplexity; re-check monthly.
- ☐ 29. **Use comparison tables over dense prose.** Easier for shoppers to scan and AI to quote.
- ☐ 30. **Analyze competitors' backlinks.** Find the sources linking to stores above you.
- ☐ 31. **Earn links with assets worth linking to.** Original data, reference guides, free tools.
- ☐ 32. **Reclaim brand mentions + pursue digital PR.** Turn unlinked mentions into links.
- ☐ 33. **Set up a monthly SEO routine.** Search Console, Core Web Vitals, new pages, AI prompts.
- ☐ 34. **Watch how AI Overviews affect your traffic.** Track queries where impressions hold but clicks fall.

The one most stores skip: writing collection descriptions. In our audit of 20 top US Shopify brands, 65% had a completely blank collection page and 95% came in under 50 words — including household names. It's the most internally-linked, most category-relevant page on your store. Start there.

The Shopify SEO Checklist — by AppBrew · Based on original research, The Page Nobody Wrote (live crawl, September 2026).
Read the full guide and get the interactive version at appbrew.com.