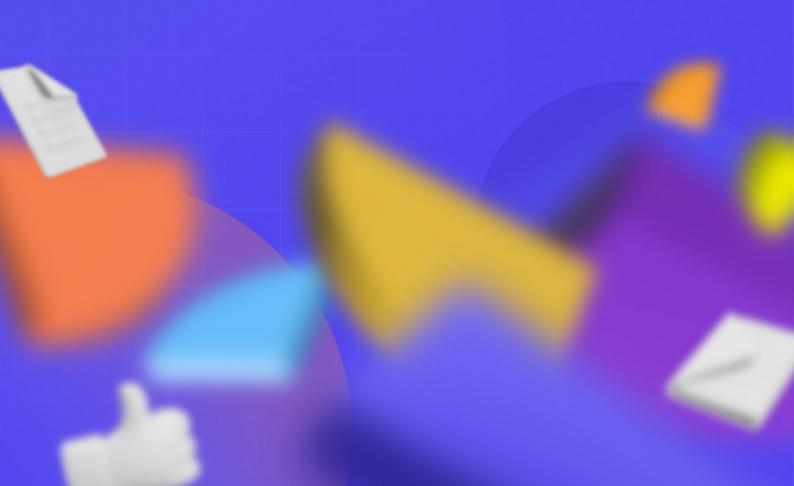




How to Jumpstart Your WordPress Website

2022 EDITION



"WordPress is used by 65.2% of all the websites whose content management system we know. This is 43.1% of all websites".

W3Techs

Yes, folks, WordPress is the biggest CMS out there meaning the biggest platform for creating websites.

But, let's take a step back and see how it all started...

When WordPress was launched, back in 2003, its founders had no idea where their journey would take them. WordPress is an open-source community project, where thousands of developers have made contributions and shaped it into a successful website development tool. And when we say WordPress, we refer to wordpress.org, not wordpress.com. Matt Mullenweg, the co-founder of WordPress, launched a company called Automattic which provides free and paid WordPress hosting plans on wordpress.com. In this ebook, when we say WordPress, we'll always refer to wordpress.org.

The WordPress ecosystem grew larger over the years. Lots of developers have added to the ecosystem themes, plugins, and page builders. We'll explain these concepts later on in this ebook.

2021 and 2022 are milestone years for WordPress because the way web design happens on the platform has changed a lot. The new experience, called Gutenberg, allows everyone to edit every aspect of a website using a block-based interface. In short, this new experience is more user-friendly and beginner-friendly than the previous one. The learning curve is now shorter than ever and everyone can build a site as he envisions it.

So, let's get to it, shall we? Let's find out how to create a WordPress website in 2022, according to the most recent developments.

WordPress Web Design:

PREREQUISITES

Before starting with the web design part, you need to make sure that you have:

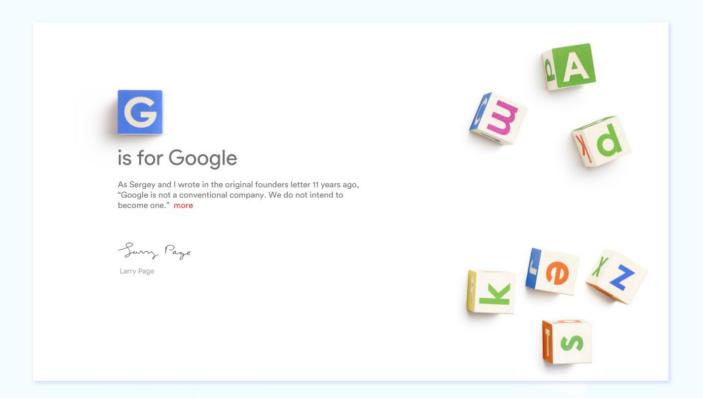
- bought a domain name
- chosen a hosting provider
- chosen a WordPress theme
- chosen a website builder (optional)

Let's take them one at a time

What's the thing with domain names?

If you didn't know this yet, the domain name is the one showing up in your website's URL. It can reflect the name of your company, of a product, or service.

For example, abc.xyz is the domain name for Google's parent company, Alphabet Inc. The product itself has its own domain name, the one we all know: google.com. As you can see your business name isn't always the name of your product.



Now, the thing is that you need to take your time when choosing your domain name. What you need to take into consideration when doing your research:

- Is the name memorable and easy to pronounce?
- Do you want to launch internationally? If so, **does the name mean anything** in the market you're interested in? Check for translations, you might have some surprises.

- Is the name already used by another company? Look for social media profiles, Youtube videos, Google images, to see what is the name associated with.
- Make a list of relevant keywords for your business/product. Think of how the users should feel after using the product. Let's say you sell cosmetics based on natural ingredients. Your list might contain words such as "skin", "care", "safe", "natural", "beautiful", "fresh" etc. Use a tool such BrandRoot to generate domain name ideas. I usually make a list of suffixes that I can play with. Let's take "ify" for example. Do Spotify and Shopify sound familiar? All you need to do type a sequence of letters, and the BrandRoot will build ideas starting from them.



- Choose a top-level domain (TLD) for your site. The letters at the end of a website address are known as TLD. They can show the geographical area the website addresses to (eg. google.co.uk addresses UK users), or its purpose (eg: .org is used by organizations and foundations such as https://www.gatesfoundation.org/). The most popular TLD is .com. But you'll also find .net, .co, io, .dev, .digital, etc.
- **Buy your domain**. Now, the moment you are checking for domain availability, the domain registrar will also show you the available TLDs.



What's the thing with website hosting?

In a nutshell, website hosting refers to a secure place where all the files of your website live. There are several types of hosting ou there, that match various needs. Each of them have their own pros and cons. Let's check them out.

Shared Hosting

Shared hosting is perhaps the most popular among all types of hosting. True to its name, multiple people share the same server resources to keep the costs minimal when it comes to shared hosting.

However, this advantage is overshadowed by the fact that shared hosting performs poorly because everyone on the server uses the same resources. If one user experiences a surge in traffic, all other websites suffer! And in extension, if the server gets infected by a virus or malware, everyone sharing the server suffers.

Dedicated Hosting

In contrast to shared hosting, dedicated hosting offers a single server dedicated to your website! Large enterprises and websites with higher traffic influx prefer dedicated hosting due to superior resource allocation, privacy, and control.

Dedicated resource allocation, however, comes at a significantly higher cost. It also requires you to maintain the servers yourself, which can be a hassle because you either have to hire a resource for server management and back-end tasks or spend a significant fraction of time fixing them yourself.

VPS Hosting

VPS stands for Virtual Private Server, a hybrid solution between dedicated and shared hosting.

In this type of hosting, you get dedicated resources, including RAM and CPU, while only the hard drives are shared. With VPS hosting, you also get full root access and have the liberty to install your preferred OS, and thus, there is greater customization and security. With VPS hosting, the heavy traffic influx on one website does not adversely affect the performance of another.

Overall, VPS hosting is a hybrid solution for those users who want the best of both shared and dedicated hosting solutions.

Cloud Hosting

Cloud hosting is similar to VPS hosting, with the only difference in how virtual servers are created from a network of cloud servers!

With cloud hosting, you get greater flexibility and availability because you can always dedicate more resources to a virtual server when the need arises. This means that you can scale your servers when you feel your website is about to experience an influx of users without changing your servers completely.

Managed Hosting

Managed WordPress Hosting is probably the best type of web hosting for most people, mainly because it's a highly enhanced version of shared hosting.

Managed hosting comes with excellent features and a highly secure hosting environment, among other benefits. It usually comes with automated backups, monitoring, server uptime, installing updates, server setup, malware scanning and removal, security sweeps, and many other lucrative features. However, the best part of managed hosting plans is 24/7 premium technical support for immediate resolution of queries and issues.

Managed WordPress hosting is great for small to medium-sized businesses and high-traffic blogs and companies looking for specialized enterprise WordPress hosting.

However, that's not the only reason why you should go for Managed WordPress hosting.

Why You Should Go For Managed WordPress Hosting

In our present fast-paced world, time is money. Managing all aspects of your business is already a pretty hectic process, and so the hassle of managing your business website is just additional work you shouldn't be doing.

Managed hosting, however, removes the hassle of handling website backends and lets you focus on other critical aspects of your business. Most importantly, it drastically improves your website's performance because Managed hosting platforms like Cloudways are built to nullify the technicalities of cloud hosting, deliver excellent performance and security, and provide expert support to help you through critical phases.

Let's take a deeper look into the benefits of Managed WordPress hosting:

Superior Performance

All managed hosting plans are tailored to suit the requirements of WordPress and WooCommerce content management system (CMS) and thus makes use of all the modern hosting stack to yield promising results. It also eliminates the need to configure the fastest caching plugin manually. Providers like Cloudways deploy the latest PHP, NGINX, and HTTP/2 versions, which drastically improve the performance of websites.

Premium DNS

Premium DNS ensures a speedy DNS lookup time compared to free DNS provided by the domain registrars. It also protects websites from nasty DDoS attacks.

Cloud Technology

Cloud technology for any website gives it unparalleled flexibility. With the help of Cloud-based technology, server failure or heavy influx of traffic on the server will not affect the availability and resources as the resources can be deployed to different global servers. It also decreases network latency and TTFB, which ensures faster page load times.

Advanced Security

Managed WordPress hosting is layered with robust security measures. All websites are backed by a web application firewall that has been optimized for WordPress applications and thus proves to be better protected against hacking attempts and malware. The data is also encrypted prior to storage to enhance the security protocols.

Scalability

You can easily scale your server with managed WordPress hosting if there's a need or for any special circumstance! You don't get this luxury with shared or VPS hosting.

Automatic Updates: Installing updates manually can be pretty laborious and a time-consuming task. However, all major and minor updates are automatically installed with managed WP hosting plans.

Automatic Backups

Managed WordPress hosting comes with free automatic backups, ensuring that the data is safe and secure. Automatic backups save one from the hassle of configuring backup plugins, cPanel, FTP, or phpMyAdmin.

Expert Support

With Managed hosting, you get expert support to back you up 24/7.

Premium Uptime Monitoring: Your website is under constant surveillance, and you're notified immediately if there's a problem with your website.

Recommending Cloudways as your hosting partner

If you're looking for a high-performance yet an affordable hosting solution that also boasts all the features listed above, then <u>Cloudways</u> will be right up your alley. Let's see which are the features that can help you start your WordPress journey:

WordPress Optimized Hosting

Cloudways is highly optimized to work with WordPress. Since a large majority of people deploy their websites on WordPress, Cloudways is designed to work flawlessly with the CMS and, in fact, with slightly more optimizations, you can achieve a load time of under 100ms. That's as fast as a WordPress website can load.

Incredible Performance

Performance is one of the biggest reasons Cloudways is popular among hundreds to thousands of users. Page speed and overall website loading speed are crucial factors when it comes to ranking higher in search engines. Cloudways ensures some of the fastest page load time thanks to the cutting-edge technology powering their server.

Excellent uptime

Cloudways has partnered with some of the top names in the hosting industry which means that you can expect virtually 100% uptime. This means you can expect to serve your customers or visitors throughout the year without facing hiccups that you normally do in other hosting providers who are not as reliable. Cloudways has auto-healing features which ensure that your site does not crash and resolves plenty of issues on its own.

Choice of Providers

You can choose between the top 5 cloud providers: DigitalOcean, Vultr, Linode, Amazon Web Servers, and Google Compute Engine to host your website.

Scalability

With Cloudways, scaling your server resources is as easy as dragging a slider to adjust your settings, and you're ready for any event or occasion that demands more **RAM**, **Storage**, or **Performance**, etc. This is a useful features for online stores because they can easily scale their servers up during the holiday season and scale down when they no longer need the resources.

Security

Cloudways is as secure as hosting providers can get. While most hosting providers do have security features in place, they're not as robust and can cause trouble later. However, with Cloudways, you get extra security features that ensure you're always in the safest environment possible.

With dedicated firewalls, SSL certificates, IP whitelisting, database security, and tons of other security protocols in place, you never have to worry about your data being compromised!

Pricing

Cloudways works on the **pay-as-you-go pricing model**, which is vastly different from any other hosting provider you choose because you have immense control over what you pay. While with the choice of providers you can choose which cloud provider to host with depending on your needs and budget, with their pay-as-you-go pricing model, you only pay for the resources you consume in a month. This means that if you use a server for 13 days in a month and decide to delete that server, you'll only pay for those 13 days, and not a penny more.

Also, the cheapest Cloudways plan starts at \$10 per month, which is highly affordable considering what other hosting providers charge for cloud hosting services!

24/7 Expert Support

If you run into any problem, you can always contact Cloudways support via chat, ticketing system, or even phone calls to solve the issue. Cloudways support is incredible and highly rated, and you can even purchase their premium support addons in case you have a critical business that requires a personal Slack channel and the availability of their top expert engineers.

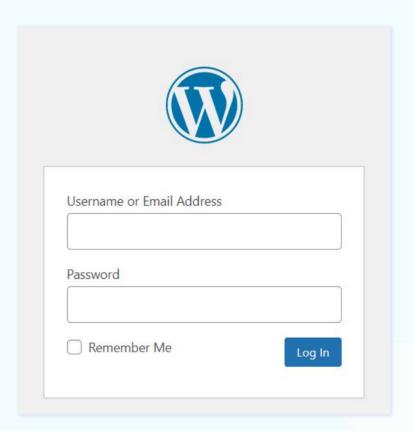
Additionally, the FAQs and knowledge base articles on the support page also answer every query for the ease of the users, so you're always ready to tackle any issue you may face.

Overall, Cloudways ticks all the right boxes when it comes to WordPress hosting. So if you're still on the fence about which hosting provider you should go for, you can always try Cloudways for 3-days for FREE! If you're satisfied with the performance and everything else, you can then choose one of the plans that suit you best!

After having acquires your hosting plan, and you've set up your login details, the only missing piece will be installing WordPress itself. Most of the hosting providers out there allow you to install WordPress from their dashboard/wizard. It's all pretty intuitive.

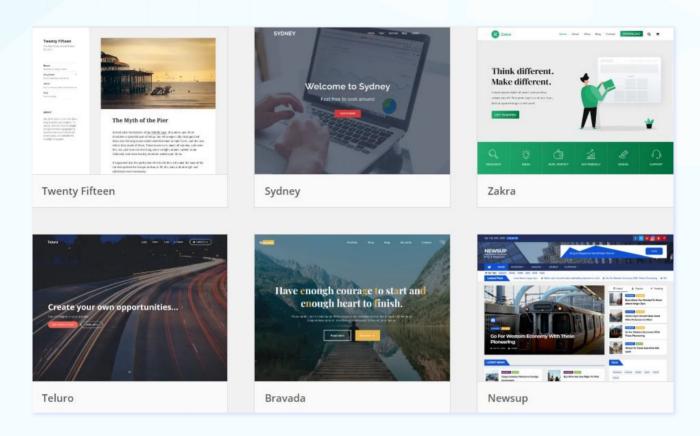
How will you log in to your site? Easy peasy. Just type in the browser your website address and add to it "/wp-admin", as seen below.





Understanding WordPress themes and templates

WordPress themes are tools that define the look and layout of a website. You can find them on <u>wordpress.org</u> or Envato.



Source: wordpress.org

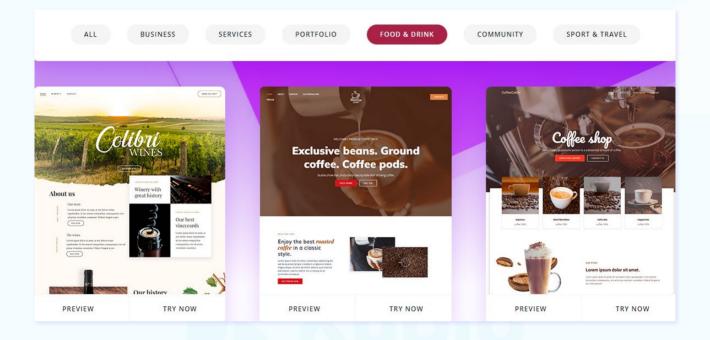
WordPress themes usually have a predesigned homepage, blog, and a sample page. Most of them are free, but with basic features. Many of them won't allow you to alter colors or fonts, for example, unless you upgrade. Depending on the website you want to build, you will need either a free or a paid plan.

The pricing for WordPress themes varies. You might pay around \$30-70/year, and renew yearly, or go with a lifetime plan that can cost you around \$200. Most of the time paid plans also come with unlimited access to theme support, besides extra useful features.

WordPress theme developers have designed themes that match various niches. For example, an online newspaper or an eCommerce site have different needs, and you'll find themes catered to both.

Now, the moment you activate a WordPress theme, you will notice a bunch of templates, demo sites, or starter sites. The name varies, but they all mean the same thing. A theme will affect the overall website design, while templates affect the layout of a single page. These templates are usually catered to a variety of niches, eg: health, lifestyle, real estate, finance, etc.

For example, here are some templates and their categories from the Colibri theme.



So, templates aren't installed from the marketplace, but they come together with a theme.

Now, after choosing a template to work with, you can change the existing images and content with your own ones. The process is easy and intuitive. I'll show you how this is done in a couple of minutes.

What are page builders?

Page builders are WordPress plugins that allow you to create websites with no code. They enhance themes' options.

Wait, but what do you mean by "WordPress plugins"? Well, some website functionalities are not quite native to WordPress or have limited control options, such as contacts forms, tables, SEO tools, and more. This is why you will need to install some third-party plugins that will give you the extra options you need or simply enhance some current WordPress features.

Page builders are such a plugin that can allow you to add drag and drop functionalities to a WordPress theme, and tons of extra styling options. Everything with no code involved.

Such builders are Kubio, Colibri, Elementor, and many more. <u>Kubio</u> is a block-based page builder, while Elementor and Colibri work on top on the previous WordPress experience.

Kubio helps you create web pages by dragging and dropping content blocks and sections. You have full control over design: from colors, typography, borders, overlays, to transformations and effects. Everything is responsive by default. The whole web design experience is intuitive and beginner-friendly.

Now, not every page builder can level up any theme, you will need to check the plugin's specifications.

The thing is that if you want to create something unique, and get really creative with your website, a page builder will help you get where you want.

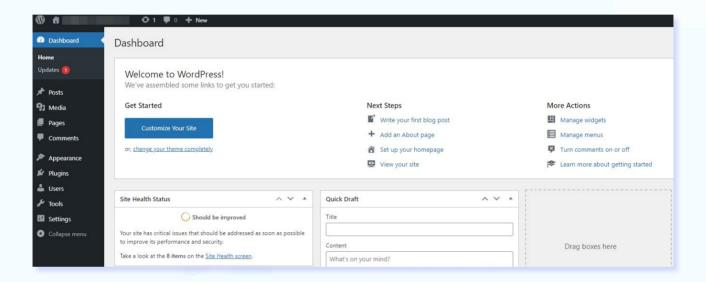
How to Install and Delete a

WORDPRESS THEME

When deciding on a WordPress theme there are a few things you should look at:

- Does the theme match the vision you have for your website's design?
- Does the theme allow customizations?
- Can you alter the theme's colors and fonts?
- Has the theme been updated in the last 6 months?
- Is support available?
- Are there positive reviews for the theme?

We assume you've done your research, and you now want to install...Althea. No matter the choice, the process is the same. After logging in to WordPress from a link similar to this one: https://mywebsite.com/wp-admin, you'll be seeing the WordPress dashboard:



We'll be explaining the interface in more detail, in the next chapter.

STEP 1

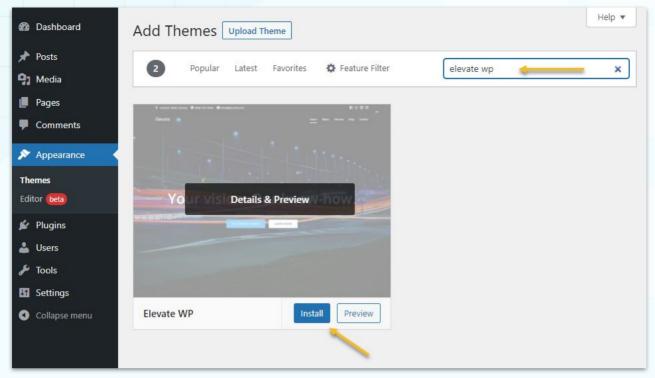
From the WordPress Dashboard head over to Appearance ->Themes -> Add New.

STEP 2

Go to the search bar on the right-hand side and type the name of the theme you want. For the sake of the example, we're going to look for "Althea".

STEP 3

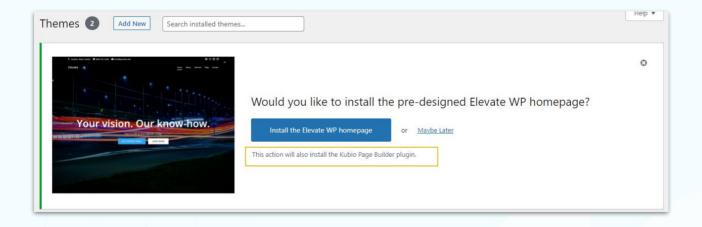
Once you have found your theme, go and hover over it. You'll now see the "Install" button. Click on it, then also click on "Activate".



And, you're done. Now, you can't activate more than one theme. The moment you activate a second theme, the other one will get deactivated.

Now, most WordPress themes will require one important plugin to be installed in order for you to have control over the theme's features. In the Elevate WP case, you are recommended to install the Kubio page builder, in order to make the most out of the theme.

Just let yourself be guided through the installation.

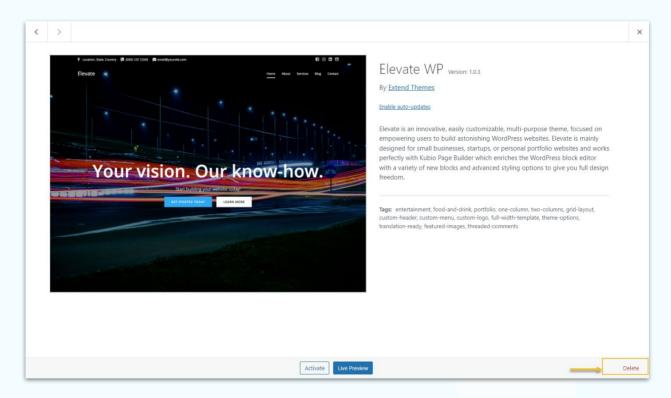


Elevate WP, for example, will recommend you to install Kubio page builder. When you install plugins via similar recommendations, you should know that this is not the conventional WordPress plugin installation.

Now, how do you delete a theme?

This process is even easier than the theme installation.

From the WordPress Dashboard go to Appearance -> Themes. First, you'll need to activate a different theme. Next, select the theme you want to delete. You'll notice a new window with the theme. In the lower-right corner, there's the "Delete" option. Click on it. Next, you'll be asked to confirm that you want to delete the theme. Hit "Ok" and you're done.



How to Install and Delete a

WORDPRESS PLUGIN

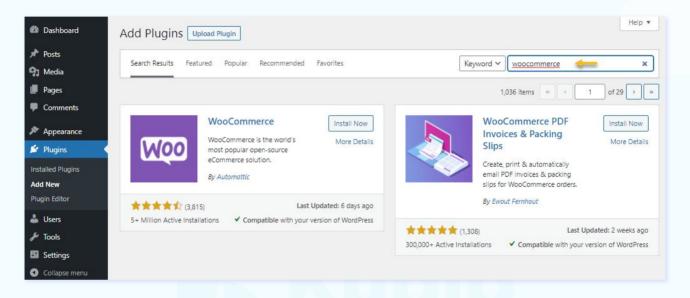
I'm going to install WooCommerce for the sake of example. WooCommerce is a plugin that allows you to create online stores.

STEP 1

From the WordPress Dashboard head over to Plugins -> Add New.

STEP 2

Go to the search bar on the right-hand side and type "WooCommerce".



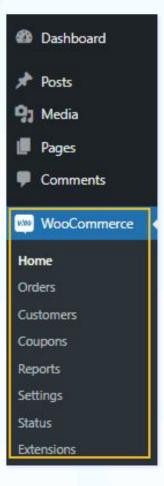
STEP 3

Go to the plugin and click on "Install Now", then on "Activate".

STEP 4

Set up the plugin. Most of the time, you'll notice the plugin added to the WordPress menu on the left-hand side. Make sure you navigate the plugin's menu in order to take advantage of all its features.

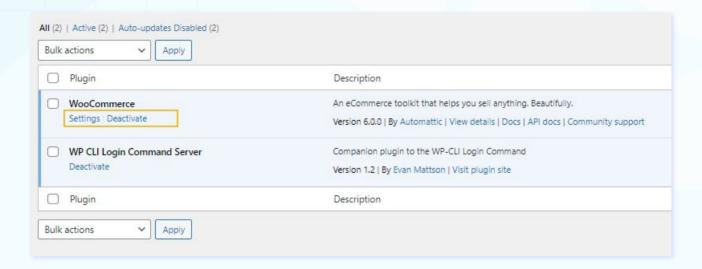
In the WooCommerce case, because the plugin has lots of features, the moment you activate it you'll be led through an onboarding wizard. Just follow the hints and you'll be done with the setup in no time. Not every plugin has such onboarding wizards. It all depends on the complexity of the plugin.



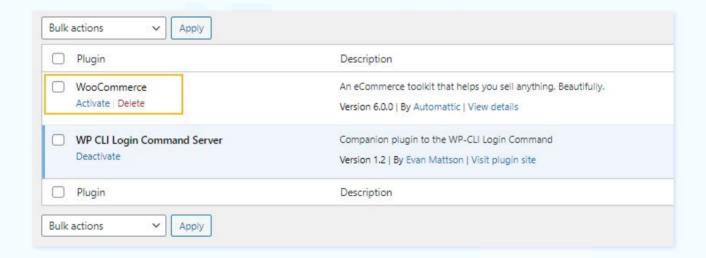
This is it. You've installed your first plugin.

But how can you uninstall a plugin?

Go to WordPress Dashboard -> Plugins -> Installed Plugins.



Go to a plugin, then click on "Deactivate". Next, click on "Delete".



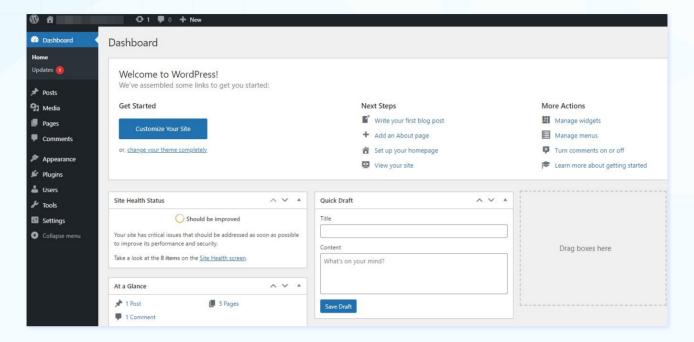
As you can see both the installation and deletion are similar in the case of WordPress plugins and themes.

Now, let's move forward to understanding the rest of the WordPress Dashboard.

A Short Dive into the WORDPRESS DASHBOARD

As mentioned before, you can log in to WordPress from a link similar to this one: https://mywebsite.com/wp-admin.

Here's what you'll end up seeing after logging in:

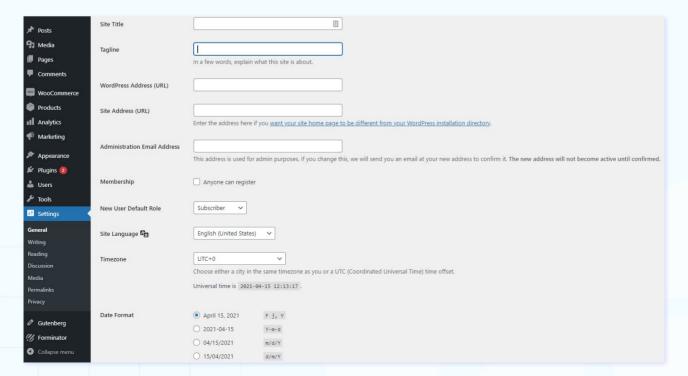


Let's take a look at the menu items on the left. I will not approach them in the same order as in the menu but don't worry, I've got everything covered.

WordPress Settings

Inside the WordPress settings menu, there are 7 more menu items. I'll describe them briefly.

• **General**. Here you can set up the site title, tagline, website URL. Next, you can define the time zone, time & date format, and language of your website.



Writing. Here you can set your default posts category. If you know that most of your blog posts will belong to a certain category, you can assign it instead of "Uncategorized". But first, you will need to define your categories, inside Posts -> Categories. We'll talk about this later.

Here you can also set up how to publish posts via mail, but this is not a common practice when publishing posts. This feature is mostly used to publish content when someone can't access his website. Journalists and activists working in troubled areas with little internet connectivity can also rely on this feature.

- **Reading**. Here you can "tell" WordPress which page serves as the homepage, and which one is your "blog". This is an important step. The default is usually the blog. Here you can also choose how many blog posts can show up on a page or if you want your website indexed by Google.
- **Discussion**. Here you can set up your blog comments: who gets accepted to comment, how comments are being moderated, and more.
- **Media**. Here you can establish the maximum dimensions in pixels to use when adding an image to the Media Library.
- **Permalinks**. The permalink is the full URL you see for a web page. "Perma" comes from permanent, meaning that's the permanent link. It includes your domain name (www.mywebsite.com) plus the slug, meaning that piece of the URL that comes after the domain name, which helps identify unique pages on your site. The main domain was set inside the General Settings. Here you can structure your permalinks and tags to them. For example, you can decide the format for your blog posts to include the date of the post and the post name.

If your site is an online store, and you're using WooCommerce, here you can customize the structure of your permalinks for product pages, product category pages, etc.

• **Privacy**. Here you have some guidelines on privacy issues, and you can also tell WordPress which page is your privacy page. All pages (including the Privacy page) can be created inside "Pages". We'll talk about this a bit later.

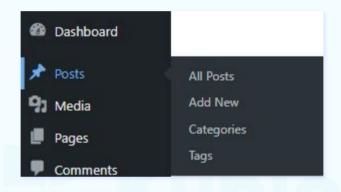
The best way to approach the "Settings" panel is to enter all these items and fill in the missing info, just to make sure you don't skip anything important. Things are pretty straightforward, so don't get cold feet. All the setup can be done in less than 30 minutes.

WordPress Pages and Posts

What you need to know is that your content will go inside "Pages" or "Posts". Here you'll spend 95% of your time.

The "pages" are static. You can have a "homepage", "services" page, "contact us" page, you get the point. Under posts you can have your latest blog articles, maybe your portfolio. These are dynamic pages because they automatically place your newest content at the top.

When you select "Posts" from the dashboard, you will be able to create a post, visualize all posts, and manage tags and categories. We'll get into the details a bit later.



When you select "Pages", you'll be able to create a new page, edit or delete older ones.

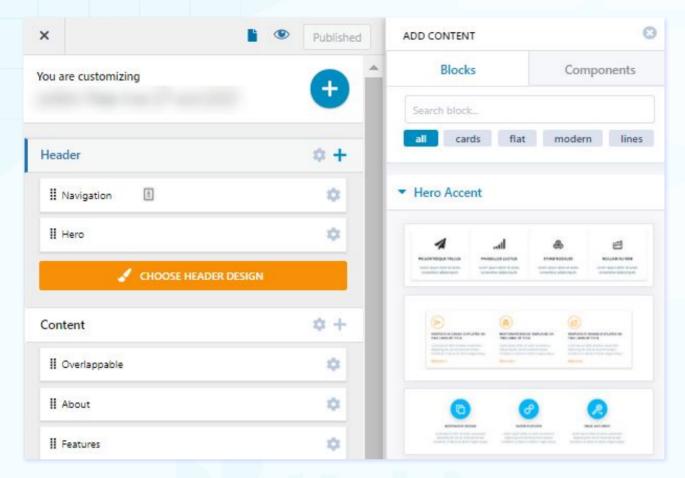
WordPress Appearance

This menu item is very important. At this level you can:

• **Search for, install, and activate a theme.** The process was explained in detail in the "WordPress Website Design: Prerequisites" chapter.

I usually do my research before choosing a theme. I care about the reviews, if it's been updated lately, I analyze the features and the pricing. I usually do this by heading to https://wordpress.org/themes/. Here I can see the reviews, and I can also head over to the website and get into the details of the themes' features. Then I come back and install my desired theme.

• Access the WordPress Customizer. The Customizer allows you to make web page changes, from colors, backgrounds, menus, and more. The interface is intuitive and flexible. Usually, when you install any theme or page builder, they will level up the Customizer's functions. For example, here's how the Customizer looks like when you use the Colibri page builder.



When you select a section from the page, you'll see some extra editing options in the menu on the left. For example, here are the styling options for a button.



- **Customize widgets.** Widgets are blocks of content that you can add to your site's sidebars, footers, and other areas. We'll talk more about this in the blogging section.
- **Define your WordPress website's menus**. We'll be covering this in a dedicated chapter.
- Add a background image to your site.
- Edit the code of your theme inside "**Theme Editor**" (recommended only if you are a developer).

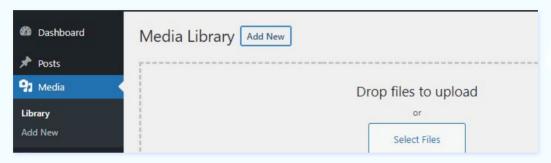
• WordPress Plugins

From here you can manage all your plugins, from installation and set up, to updating and deleting them. I have explained how to install plugins in the "WordPress Website Design: Prerequisites" chapter.

WordPress Media

All your media goes to WordPress Dashboard -> Media library, from images and video to audio and documents. You can drag and drop them or upload them.

You can also add media from your post/page level.



WordPress Comments

Now, I told you that in the Settings menu you can set up how to deal with comments, how they get approved, how moderation happens. Here, you can see and manage all your comments. You'll probably even receive tons of spam comments, that we suggest you monitor and move to spam or trash.



WordPress Users

At this level, you will decide who has access to your website. You can give access to contributors, guest authors, editors, and more, depending on your needs. More info on the types of users, <u>here</u>.

WordPress Tools

Under "Tools" you'll have the option to import and export data to and from other content management systems (eg. Blogger).

There's also a "Site health" section, which shows you critical information about your WordPress configuration and items that require your attention, with some advice.

Because we need to respect privacy policies, here you can export or erase personal data for your users.

Now that everything is set up, we can start working on your first WordPress web page!

Introducing the WORDPRESS DEFAULT EDITOR

The moment you create a page (from **Pages-> Add New**), or post (from **Posts -> Add New**), you will be taken to the WordPress Default Editor.

You can also access the Editor from a previously created page or post, from **Pages -> All Pages**, or **Posts -> All Posts**. Hover over the name of a page or post, then select "Edit" from underneath it. That's it. You'll now be taken to the interface that allows you to edit a page or post.



Now, let's take a look at the Default's Editor interface.



We've marked 6 important sections of the editor. Let's take them one by one:

- 1. Here's the **blank canvas** where the content goes in.
- 2. **Page setup** happens here: URLs setup, featured images, parent page.
- 3. The "+" signs show you that there's where you can **add blocks** from. When you click on the "+" sign a block inserter will open with the default Gutenberg blocks.
- 4. Whenever you want to **edit or style a block**, you need to select the "Block" option from the editing panel on the right.
- 5. The three vertical dots on the right allow you to change the way you view the page you're working on, switch to the text editor (where you can code your own page), and more.
- 6. Here's where you can preview your page, save it for later, or schedule it for publishing.

Important!

To wrap things a little bit, there are 3 main methods for **designing pages** in WordPress:

- Via the WordPress Customizer the options here vary from theme to theme, or page builder. Each theme and page builder will modify a bit the Customizer in order to provide some extra design features.
- Via **non-block-based page builders** that will level up the Customizer (such as <u>Colibri</u>, Divi, Elementor).
- Via the Default WordPress Editor the features here are very limited, and you will need some extra Gutenberg blocks plugins (such as Kadence) or block-based page builders (such as Kubio) that will enrich the Editor with new capabilities and styling options.

How to Work with GUTENBERG BLOCKS

The new WordPress experience relies now on the so-called Gutenberg blocks for web design within the Default Editor.

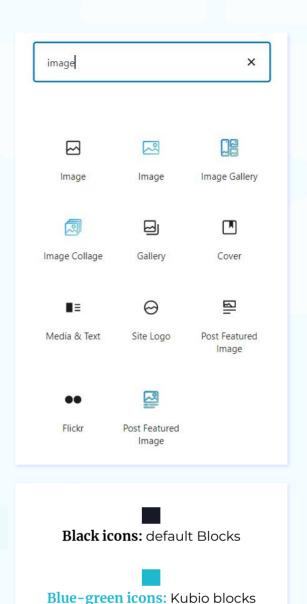
In WordPress, there are several default blocks that perform several functions, such as paragraph, image, list, and more. These can be added to any post or page. Few styling options are available in the editing panel.

Now, the WordPress community is also creating Gutenberg blocks. You can install them like you install any other plugin. The blocks will be listed alongside the default ones.

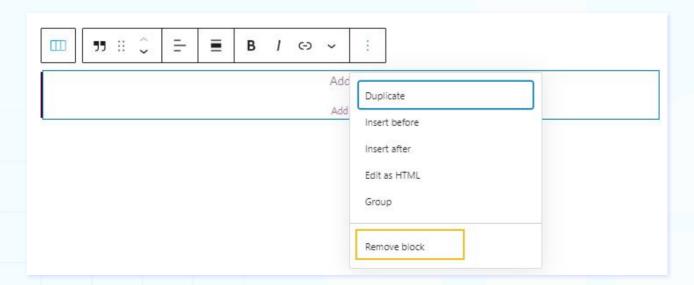
For example, when you install the Kubio website builder, you'll notice that besides the default blocks with black icons, there are some Kubio blocks in a blue-green shade.

Now, Kubio is a different type of website builder. It does not enhance the WordPress Customizer, like Colibri, for example, but it enhances the WordPress Default Editor. This makes it stronger than other builders because it relies on the WordPress core.

Now, no matter the block you use, the process is the same for adding, deleting, or making edits to it.



Use the "+" sign for adding a block, default, or third-party. Select the block to open up the tiny toolbar above, then you can remove the block from the options revealed by selecting the three vertical dots.



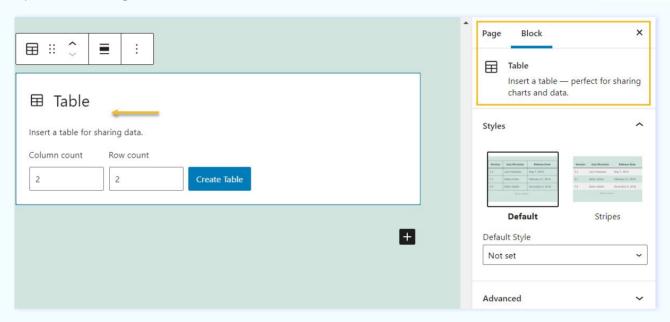
This basic toolbar also allows you to:

- Align the block's content,
- Move the block up and down by using the up and down arrows,
- Drag the block to a different place by clicking and holding the 6 dots,
- Duplicate the block,
- Insert a new block before or after the current block,

and other tiny edits, depending on the block.

Exercise 1: Adding a table block to a web page

In the example below, a table block was added. When the block gets selected on the left, the "Block" option from the right gets highlighted. Now you add some very basic styling from the panel on the right.



You can't make changes here to the background of the table, or its typography, for example (unless you want to code this yourself).

How to Create a PAGE IN WORDPRESS

Are we there yet? Yes, we are! It's time to create our first WordPress page.

You have two options here:

- You create something from scratch
- You make changes to the predesigned pages from your chosen template.

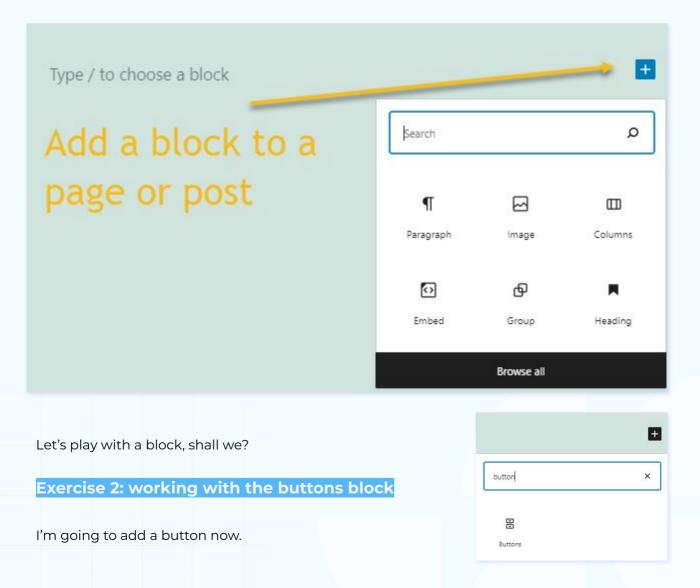
Important: make sure you save your changes often, from the "Save" button in the upper-right.



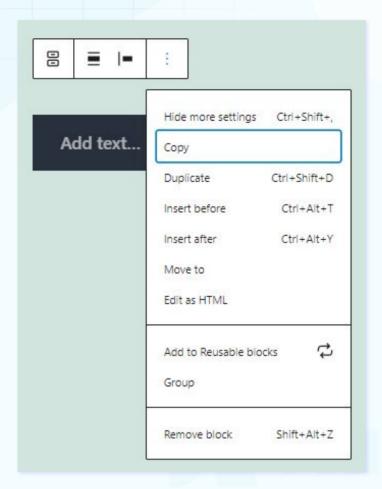
How to create a WordPress page from scratch

From the WordPress Dashboard, go to Pages -> Add New. You'll now see a blank canvas in front of you, ready for adding content to it.

Now, identify the "+" signs on your screen. Whenever you click on such a sign a block inserter will show up.



The moment I add the button block, I can add text to it.

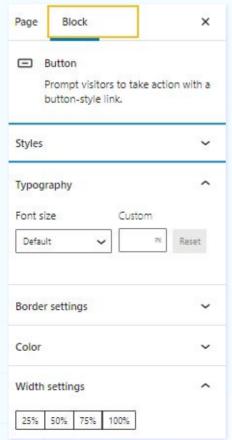


There's a basic panel that shows up while hovering over the button.
This panel allows us to:

• Adjust the position of the button

Here you have two options. When you select the 6 dots, you will have the option to drag and drop the block where you want. When you select the up and down arrows, you will move the block up and down.

- Add a hyperlink to the button
- Copy the button
- Remove the button
- Add the button to reusable blocks
- Edit the block as HTML

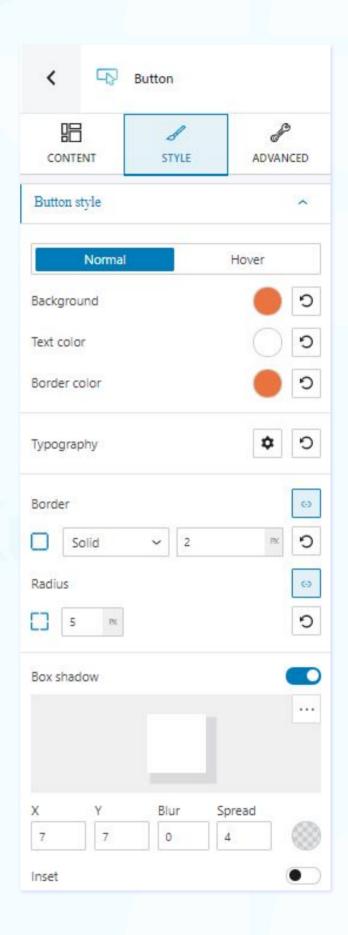


While the block is selected, you will notice the editing panel on the right with its styling options. In the buttons block case you can make changes to color, typography, width, and border. But just basic stuff.

What you should know is that the block customizations inside the Default Editor are pretty thin.
They are not enough for website creation. The Gutenberg Editor is still a work in progress. This is why older WordPress users still rely on the Customizer.

This is why you can use third-party blocks or page builders, such as Kubio, to level up the Editor.

For example, if you add the Kubio button block to your website, here's how the advanced editing panel looks like:

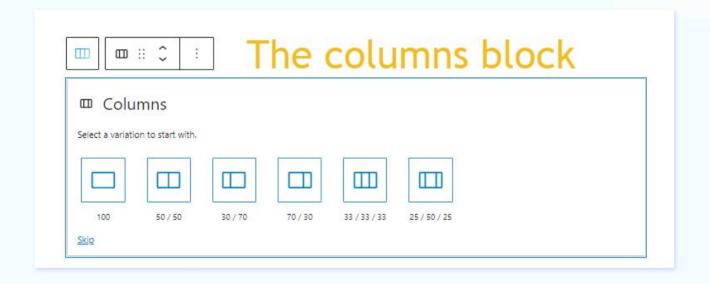


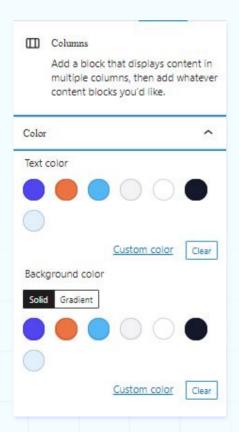
The options are endless. You have full control over colors, typography, borders, shadows, size, alignment, spacing, and much more. You can customize everything considering the normal, hover, and active states of thebutton.

All you have to do next is repeat the process: add blocks, add text and visuals to them, then edit them according to your vision.

Adding new sections to a web page

If you want to structure content across multiple columns on your web page, you will need to use the columns block.





The default Gutenberg column block lets you choose between 6 types of column arrangements.

From the editing panel on the right, you can only change the text and background color of the columns.

After selecting the type of column structure, you can add blocks to each column, from the same "+" sign.

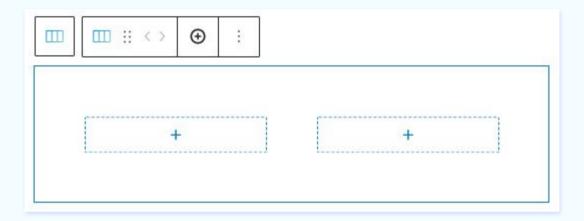


That's it.

As you can see, the editing options are really scarce. This is why we prefer to use a free block-based website builder like Kubio. Kubio gives us endless design options. You bring in the creativity, while Kubio gives you the tools and freedom you need to create a truly unique website.

Exercise 3: Adding two columns with blocks inside

Now, Kubio also has a column block. Let's play with it a little bit.



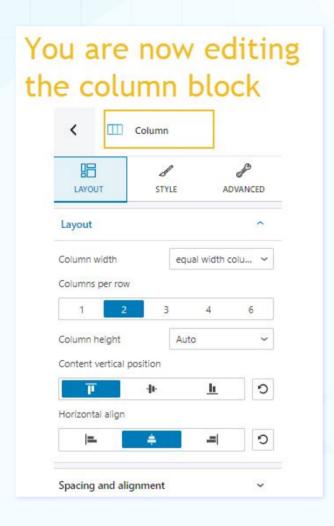
Let's add a heading to the left and a search block to the right.

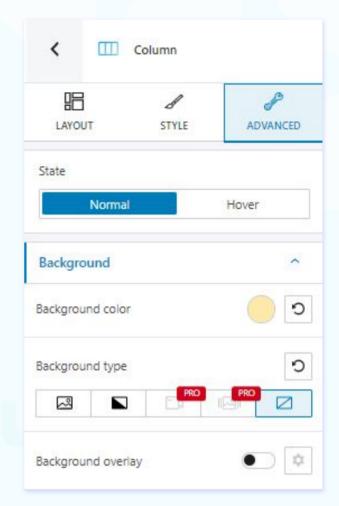


You now have a column containing a heading, and a column containing a search bar. You can now make edits to the column, heading, and search bar, just be careful with what you select.



The moment you make a selection, on the panel on the right you'll see the name of the block you selected.





The Kubio editing panel has three main layers.

- Layout or content here you will make changes to the content of the block,
- Style here you can make styling changes,
- **Advanced** here you can make changes to the background, typography, spacing, shadows, dividers, and more.

If we want to change the background of our column block, we would go to Advanced -> Background.

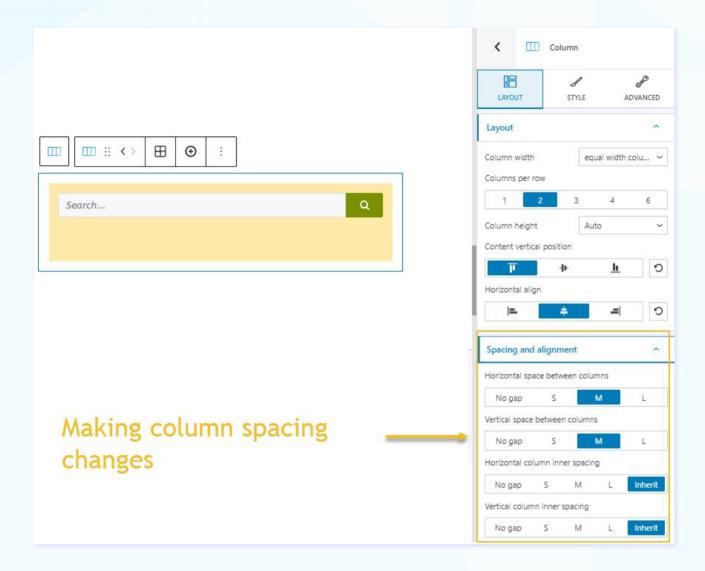
We can choose a background color, image, or gradient. I'm going to go with the background color for both columns.

Let's find you an awesome recipe:

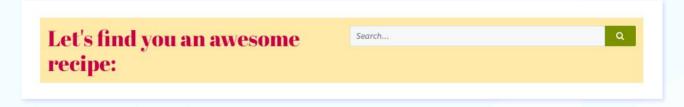


Now, we've got a problem, there's some spacing between my columns. This means I need to make some spacing changes somewhere...

And here it is: Layout -> Spacing and alignment. The horizontal spacing between columns has a medium (M) size.



Let's set the spacing at "no gap" for both columns.



We aren't quite there yet. The heading seems too close to the top and bottom edges of the column. We can fix this from spacing edits as well.

We can do this two ways.

• **Select the heading block**, then go to Advanced -> Spacing and set a top and bottom padding of...let's say 50 px, and for left and right, 20px.



Select the column block, then go to Layout ->
 Spacing, and go with a vertical inner spacing setting of "L" (large).

 You can always go back to a previous state of

your web page when using the undo-redo

options from the upper-left.



Now, the search bar needs to be vertically centered. We can do this from Column -> Layout -> Spacing and Alignment -> Content vertical position. Let's choose the middle, instead of the top.



Next, I would like to make some changes to the search bar:

- Changing the input background color from Style -> Input Style.
- Changing the border from Advanced -> Border and Shadows.

And this is the result:

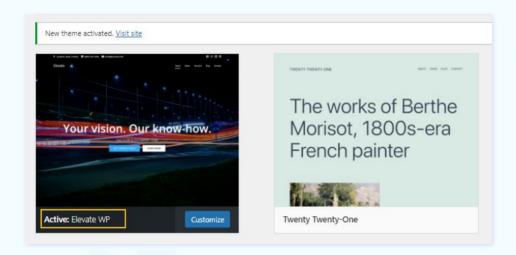


All you have to do now is add your next section with blocks.

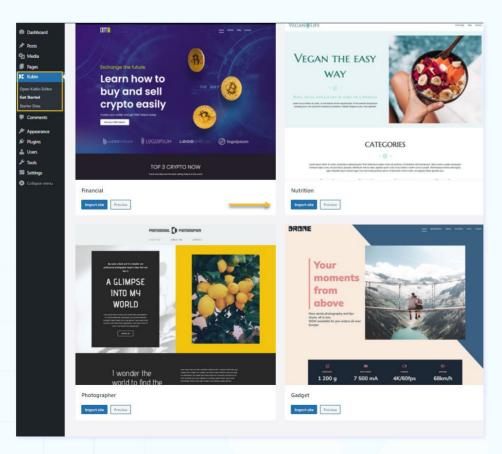
How to edit a page from a template/starter site/demo site

As we mentioned before, the Gutenberg editing options are pretty basic. You can create only very simple designs.

This is why, for the current example I'm going to use Elevate WP, a free theme, together with the free version of Kubio page builder, to get a sense of the possibilities at stake.

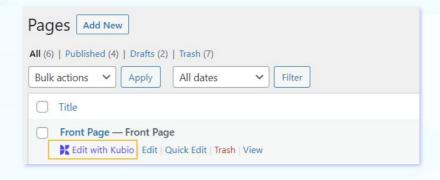


When you install Kubio, you will notice a new menu item in the WordPress Dashboard, "Kubio". Head over to it and click on the submenu item "Starter sites". I'm choosing the vegan-themed site for import.



The template has the following pre-designed pages: front page, blog page, and a sample page.

Let's edit the front page. Head over to Pages and hover over "Front Page". You'll now notice the option "Edit with Kubio".



You'll now see the Default Editor enhanced with Kubio features. The page has several sections with dummy text and some visuals. Let's make some changes.

How to change the global fonts and colors

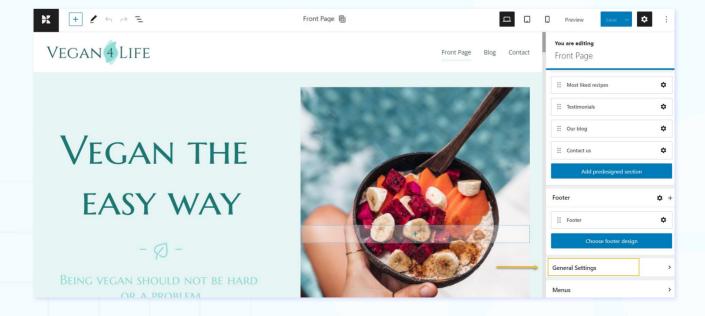
Global fonts and colors affect the overall look of your website. The idea is that you need to be consistent across all the web pages. All headers should stick to the same font family, and font size. The text should have the same color. You wouldn't like your site to look like a peacock.

From time to time you can make some exceptions, if you want to do something different on a landing page, let's say. You will be able to make these changes at the individual block level, no matter if you are using the default Gutenberg blocks or other third-party blocks.

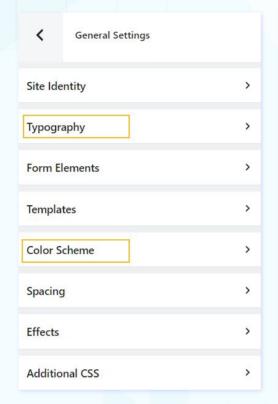
Now, let's say you're not into blue, and the Marcellus font, the defaults from our chosen template.

Exercise 4: Making changes to global colors and fonts

The panel on the right allows you to make the needed changes. Scroll down until you reach "General Settings".

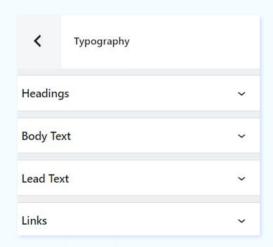


Let's go to "Color scheme" first. You can pick a different color scheme, or add your own colors to the palette.

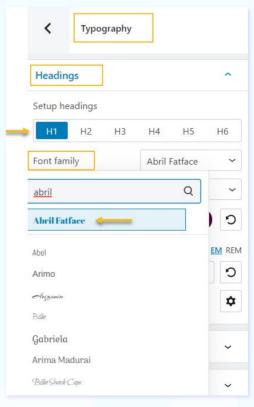




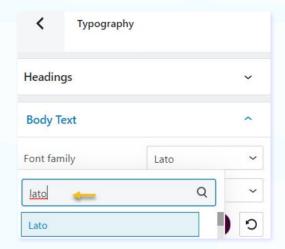
I chose XPR-2. Now, let's go to "Typography".



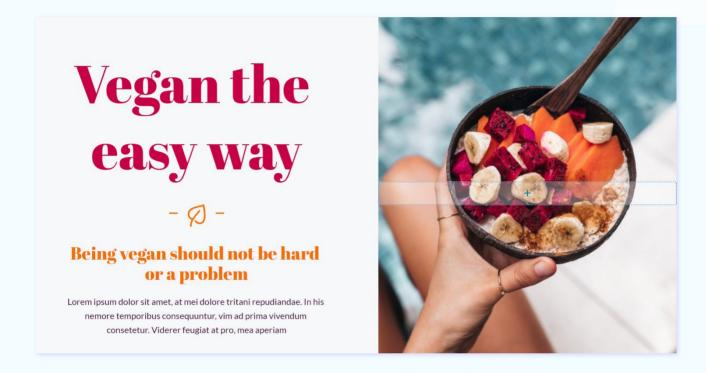
I'm going to change the font family for "Headings" -> H1, then "Headings" -> H2 (aka the two highest headings on the site) to "Abril Fatface".



Next, I'm changing the body text to "Lato". Advice: don't pair fonts as you like. There's real science behind font pairing. <u>Here</u> are some useful tips on this topic



Here's the result.



You can make changes to text color and font (family, size, weight) at the block level (heading, paragraph, button, etc).

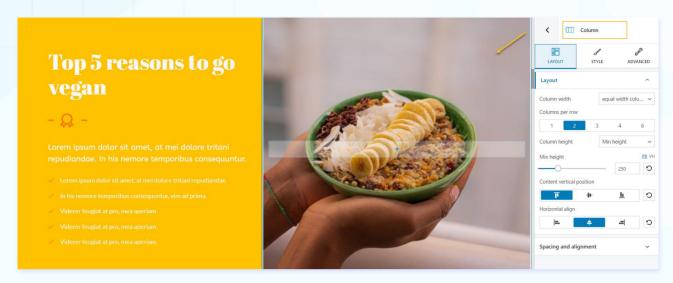
How to make image changes

Images can be used as standalone blocks. You can also use images as a background for other blocks, a column for example, or a whole section.

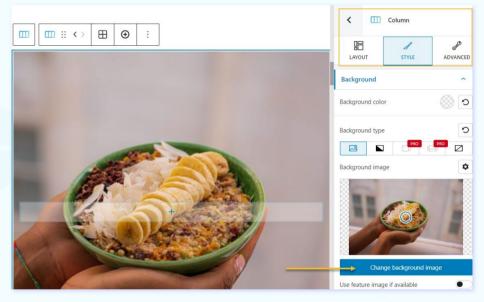
If you click on any element on the web page, you will see on the right the type of block it belongs to: paragraph, button, icon, etc.

Exercise 5: Working with background images

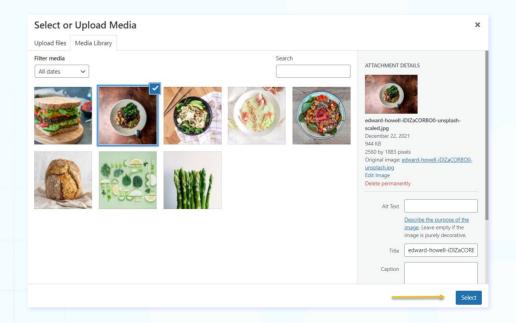
Let's select the image below.



It seems the current image belongs to a column block, not to an image block. This means that this image is actually a background image. If we head over to "Style" we can change it.



Let's change the image. When you click on "Change background image" you'll be taken to a window where you can upload a locally stored image, or pick something from the Media Library (previously uploaded images). Let's go to the Library and choose an image.



Now, that we changed a background image, let's add the image block. Go to the upper-left corner and drag the Kubio image block to a place on the canvas.



You can now upload an image, choose one from the Media Library, or paste the URL of an image.

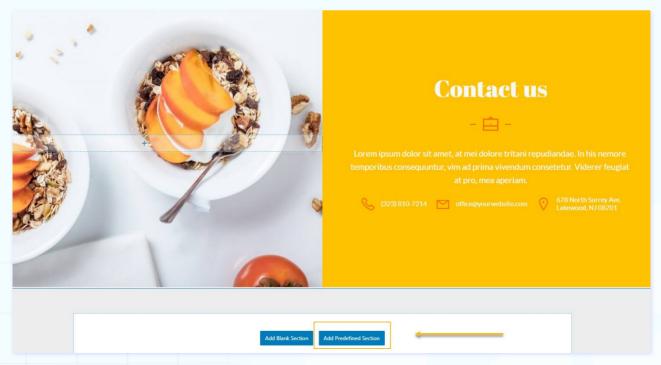
Working with Kubio's predefined content sections

If you're using the Kubio page builder you can also use ready-made content sections such as testimonials, features, team, etc.

This means that you don't have your own sections from scratch if you're not feeling too inspired. Just go with something predesigned, then add your own personal touch to it. This way you can design a page really fast, as long as you have your visuals and texts done.

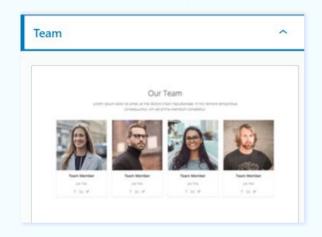
Exercise 6: Working with predefined sections

In order to add such a section, go to the bottom of a page while editing with Kubio, and select "Add Predefined Section".

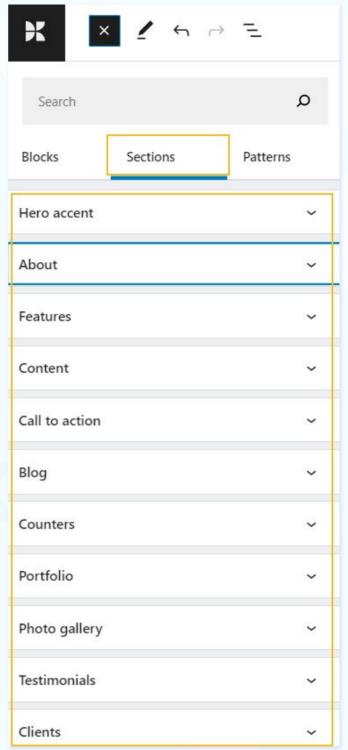


You'll see the block inserter opening up on the left. Choose a section from here.

All you need to do is replace the dummy text and images and your own content. The selected content section will adapt to the current color scheme. Web design can't get any easier than this.

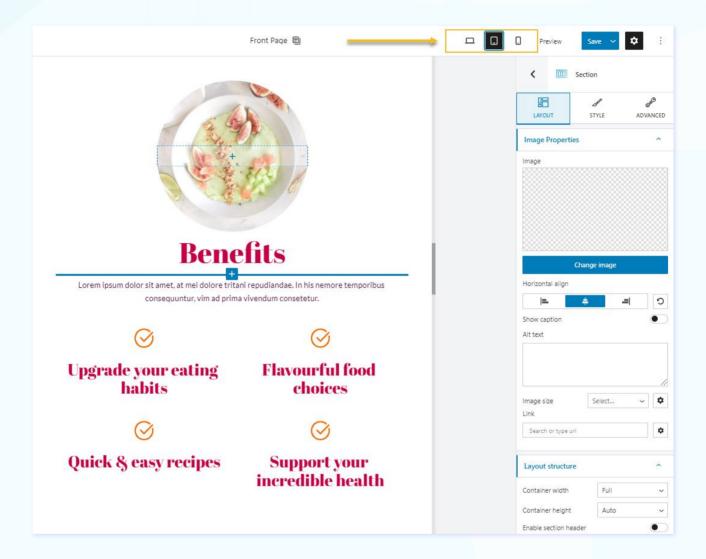


All you need to do is replace the dummy text and images and your own content. The selected content section will adapt to the current color scheme. Web design can't get any easier than this.



Mobile responsiveness

WordPress blocks are responsive by default. What Kubio brings extra is the possibility to make extra stylings per device. If you go to the upper-right you'll be able to preview your design on tablet and mobile as well.



When you select one of the devices, you can make content changes that will be valid for that device only. For example, you can cut some content, so that people won't need to scroll too much on a mobile device. One tip would be to also decrease the font size.

Other useful info when using Kubio

- You can edit any text on the page just by clicking on it and starting to type.
- You can create header, footer and sidebar templates that you can use across multiple pages. No need to recreate designs from scratch.

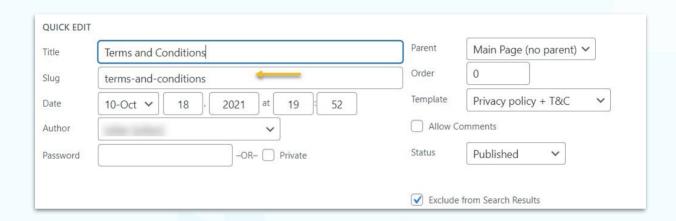
Final WordPress page settings.

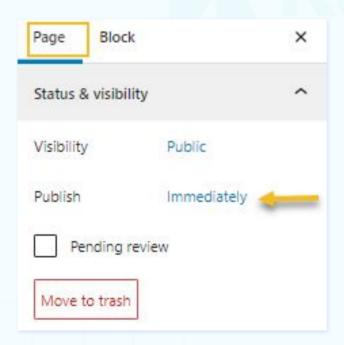
When you're done with your page, let's deal with the final details.

From the WordPress Dashboard go to "Pages". Hover over your saved and unpublished page.

From the menu showing up underneath the page's title, select "Quick Edit".

You will notice the URL of the page. You can can change it here.





Important: when your page goes live, if you change its URL, the former URL will still exist and will lead to a non-existent page. This is not good. You will need to redirect the previous link to the latest link using a WordPress redirect plugin.

Now, if you select "Edit" instead of "Quick edit" you will actually enter the page. You can now schedule the page for publishing or publish it right away.

And you're done!

It's now time to move on to WordPress posts.

How to Create a WORDPRESS POST

Let me tell you how we create posts here at Kubio.

We're using Google Docs for the writing part. We save all images in a folder with relevant names. This will help us a bit later. Some might export the whole file as HTML. The folder with the exported HTML file will also have a folder containing all of the images in the file, but named "image1", "image2".

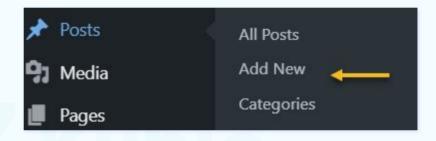
Next, here are the steps for creating the WordPress post:

STEP 1

Upload all the images to the WordPress Media Library. Things just go a lot faster like this, instead of just uploading each image one by one. Because it's tricky, the moment you want to paste your whole article content in your post, images get pasted as well in the Default Editor. But, because they are pasted from Google Docs, they will not be hosted on your site, but on a Google server, and we do not want that.

STEP 2

Go to Posts -> Add new



STEP 3

Give your post a title then paste your article content where it says: "start writing or type".



When you paste your content you'll notice that paragraphs, headings, lists, images and so on will end up in their very own blocks, and can be stylized later as such.

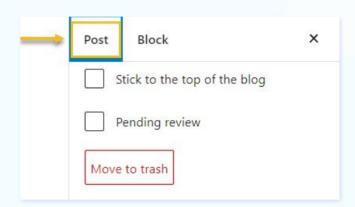
STEP 4

Replace your images

Now, your images are pasted into blocks. They are not hosted in WordPress, because they were pasted from a Google doc. We'll need to replace them one by one. Go to the Media Library and look for your previously uploaded images. You can search for them by name (if you gave them relevant names). You can later use the name as the ALT text for your image.

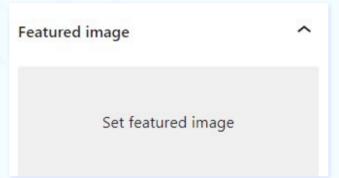


Next, we must make the final setup before going live with the article. The next steps will happen via the options on the right-hand side. Make sure to select "Post".



STEP 5

Assign a featured image to your article, meaning a representative image that will be shown in your blog listing. You can upload one, or choose one from the Media Library.



STEP 7

Assign a category and tags to your post. This can be done later as well.

Categories are meant to classify blog articles in a broader way. Tags let you do some micro-classifications, they describe specific details of your posts. Together they bring SEO benefits to your site, but also help users better navigate your site and content. Next, head over to categories and choose from the existing categories, or create new ones. More on the topic, in our article **WordPress Tags vs Categories: the**

Categories Uncategorized Add New Category Tags Add New Tag Separate with commas or the Enter key.

Unboxing

STEP 8

Write an excerpt. Even if this is an optional feature, I do urge you to do this. This should be a summary of your article, interesting enough so that blog readers will click on the topic and read on. If "Excerpt" is empty, WordPress automatically creates an excerpt using the first 55 words of the post.

Now, most of the time, when you are on a blog, you'll see a list of blog articles with their images, and some text below. That text is the excerpt.







STEP 9

Save and preview your blog article.

If your blog article is not yet ready, you can always save it for later, just hit "Save as draft" and come back to it whenever you want. Before going live with the article I suggest you look at its preview, from the "Preview" option in the upper-right corner. This is how you can identify some errors in your content.

Save draft Preview Publish

STEP 10

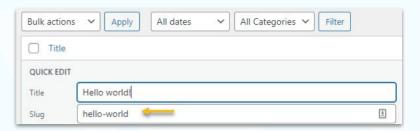
Verify and / or change the URL of the post. Go back to the Dashboard to Posts -> All Posts.

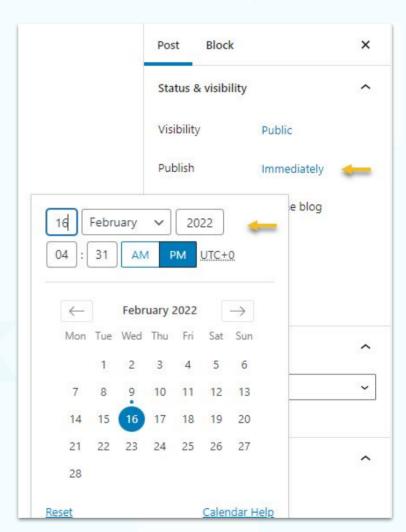
Hover over your desired post and select "Quick Edit". Inside the slug option you can change the URL. Try to use no more than five words. Use hyphens for word separation.

STEP 11

Go back to the article from the "Edit" options and publish it.

If you want to go live right away just stick to "Publish immediately", else select a future date from the calendar available.





Aaaand, you're done!

The next thing is optional: adding a sidebar to a blog.

Sidebars are column sections on a website, placed on the left or right-hand side of the web page, that contain links to other pages, and other useful information. Their main purpose is to help users navigate the website or blog.

Here's what can you include in a blog sidebar:

- Search
- Latest posts
- Recent comments
- Banners
- Custom HTML
- Blog categories
- Social media profiles

and more.

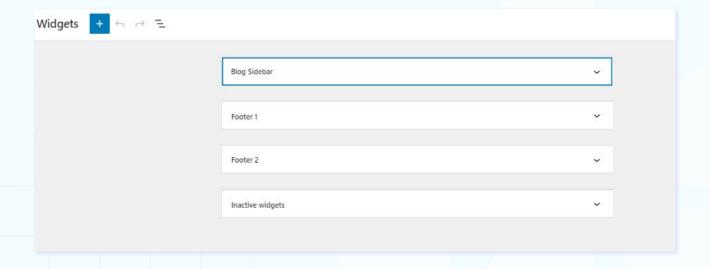
Now, there are many blogs that do not use sidebars, people argue about their cons and pros. In the end, you should decide whether a sidebar will bring added value to your reader or not. In my opinion, the minimum widget that you should have is the search bar. It allows for readers to easily find the topic they care about.

Now, sidebars are made of widgets that have specific functions. They can show your most recent posts, comments, post archive, and even custom images. Such widgets can also be added to header or footer areas as well. These widget areas are defined via your chosen theme. Let's see how we can create a blog sidebar using WordPress widgets.

STEP 1

Head over to Appearance->Widgets. You'll see a list of available widget areas.

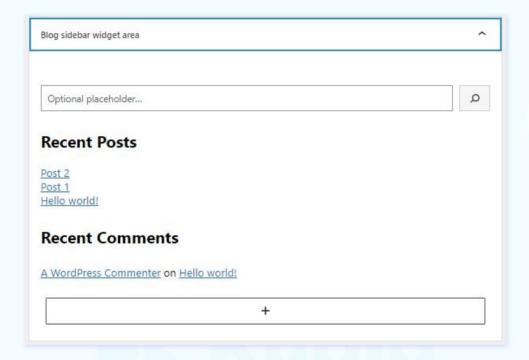
For example, the Twenty Seventeen theme has 3 widget areas: Blog Sidebar, Footer1, and Footer 2.



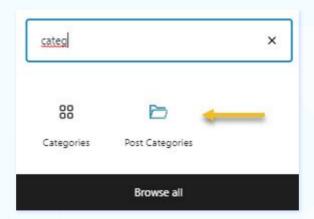
STEP 2

When you select the Blog Sidebar widget area you can **add widget blocks** to it with various functions from the "+" sign.

The Althea blog sidebar contains by default the "Recent Posts" widget and the "Recent Comments" one.



Let's add some categories as well. When clicking on the "+" sign you'll open up the block inserter. You can either choose the default Gutenberg called "Categories", or the Kubio block (if you're using the Kubio builder), called "Post Categories".



STEP 3

And you're done. The moment you hit "Update" your sidebar/widget area will go live.

Once you have your pages, and posts ready you can add them to your website's menu.

How to Create Website MENUS IN WORDPRESS

What can you include in WordPress menus?

- Pages you can add here any page you want from your WordPress website.
- Posts you can add blog articles here.
- Custom links you can link to external pages, to your Youtube channel or other social
 media profiles, etc. If you have a one-page WordPress website and want to reduce
 user scroll, you can also create an anchor-based menu. This means that the moment
 you select a menu item, you'd be directed to that specific page section.
- **Blog categories** you can organize your blog posts around various topics called categories. These categories can be added to your menu.
- **Product categories** if you run an online store, it's advisable to add them to your menu as well.

WordPress allows you to create horizontal menus, vertical menus, sticky and hamburger menus, but not all of them are native to WordPress. Some of these options vary depending on the theme and plugins that you're using.

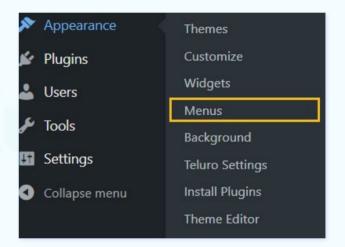
Now, let's create a menu.

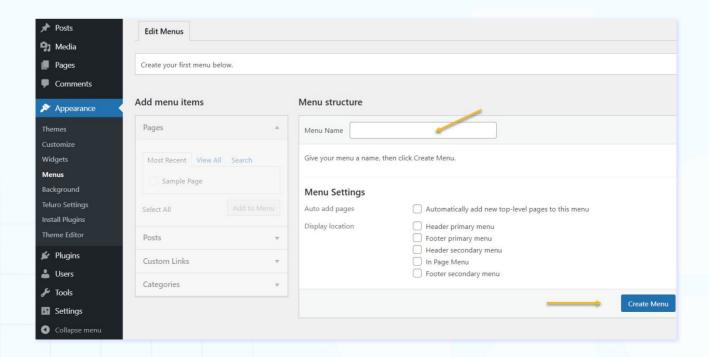
STEP 1

Go to the WordPress Dashboard -> Appearance, then select "Menus".

STEP 2

Go to "Menu structure" and name your menu. Then establish what kind of menu you want to create: is it a primary menu, a secondary one? The options available depend on the chosen theme.



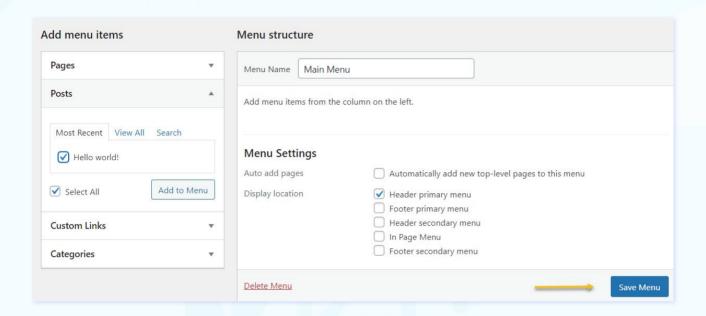


STEP 3

Select "create a new menu".

STEP 4

Add your menu items. It's here where you select your desired pages, posts, products, etc. From the panel on the left, tick your desired item, then hit "Add to Menu".

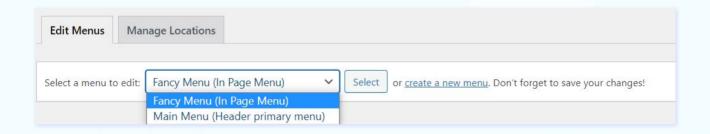


STEP 5

Save your menu, from the button on the right.

You can always go back and change your menus.

Below the "Edit Menus" options you can select from a dropdown the menu you wish to edit, or even delete.



Now, right before this chapter, we've learned how to create a page in WordPress. Now, we've added our pages to a menu.

Recommended WORDPRESS PLUGINS

How are you holding on?

Blink once if you've come up all the way here :)!

I've got good news: this is our last chapter before the wrap-up!

Now, let's get going.

As mentioned in previous chapters, plugins are used to add new functionalities to a WordPress website. Let's look a bit at some of the most popular plugins out there and their use cases.



SEO WordPress plugins

These plugins allow you to make minimal website changes that can help it rank organically in search results. With them, you can set your main keyword, the meta description, slug, SEO title, the alt attributes of your images. Recommendations can be offered on inbound links and more.

<u>Yoast SEO</u>, <u>All in One SEO</u>, and <u>RankMath</u> are the most popular WordPress SEO plugins out there.



Forms WordPress plugins

Forms are not supported out-of-the-box by WordPress. This is why plugins come in handy. Forms are used to capture valuable user data (with their consent, of course). Whether someone buys something on your site or just downloads a resource, a form is needed. Here are the most popular forms plugins in the WordPress ecosystem:

- Contact Form 7
- Contact Form by WPForms
- Ninja Forms



Email marketing WordPress plugins

If you want to develop marketing campaigns to stay in touch with your subscribers, leads, and clients, you will need to use a WordPress plugin. Such plugins can also incorporate forms.

Now, most of the popular email providers out there have developed their own WordPress plugins, such as Sendinblue, ConvertKit, etc. In other cases, other plugin developers have developed such integrations (eg: for Mailchimp).

On the other hand, for the most popular email providers out there, integrations can be provided via Zapier (eg: they have an integration with Mailchimp).

So, there are 2 questions here:

- 1. Which email provider do you use?
- 2. How can it communicate with WordPress? Is there a plugin available, or is there a Zapier integration available? If the answer here is "no", you might want to consider another vendor.



Security WordPress plugins

Keeping your website safe from malicious activities is no longer optional. So, in order to keep your site in check, you can use some of these successful WordPress plugins:

<u>Jetpack</u> - cleans up malware and protects from unauthorized logins. Jetpack also provides auto real-time backups and easy restores, malware scanning, spam protection, brute force protection, and downtime/uptime monitoring.

Wordfence - puts a firewall on your site to keep away malicious traffic.



E-commerce WordPress plugins

If you want to create an online store on top of WordPress, this can be done using the WooCommerce plugin. It's totally free and it helps you easily start an online shop. If you want extra functionalities, you can always install <u>Woocommerce extensions</u>.

Now, the WordPress.org plugin repository contains 50.000+ plugins that do tons of stuff: from protecting your site from spam, designing amazing photo and video galleries, to connecting Google Analytics to WordPress. For anything that might cross your mind, there's a plugin available, I kid you not!

WRAP UP

Let's see what we've learned from this ebook:

- 1. What's the thing with domain names?
- 2. What's website hosting all about?
- 3. What's the thing with WordPress themes and WordPress templates?
- 4. How to install WordPress plugins
- 5. How to create WordPress pages and posts
- 6. How to create a website menu
- 7. Which are the recommended WordPress plugins out there?

That's a lot to digest, I know. But you can take baby steps. The good news is that WordPress is an intuitive interface that lets you build a website in a matter of days, without any coding knowledge. This being said, happy WordPress website building, folks!

About the authors





We've been developing successful WordPress products for more than 5 years.

Our themes and plugins have been downloaded 1,000,000+ times, and are being used by 200,000+ websites.

Cloudways is a powerful hosting solution for WordPress websites.

Its reliable and secure features allows you to scale a website the way you want.

