

Mobile SEO Checklist

Checklist · 70 items · 11 sections

A mobile-first checklist covering Google's mobile indexing requirements, Core Web Vitals on mobile devices, mobile UX signals, and post-AMP page experience. Distinct from on-page SEO. Focused on what Googlebot Smartphone sees and what mobile users do.

Open the editable, AI-powered version online:

<https://genechecklist.com/checklist/mobile-seo-checklist>

MOBILE-FIRST INDEXING BASICS

- Confirm Google uses the mobile version as the primary index (full rollout July 2023; GSC Settings shows 'Googlebot smartphone')

HIGH

- Serve identical primary content on mobile and desktop; do not hide articles, FAQs, or schema behind mobile tabs

HIGH

- Match heading structure (H1-H3) byte-for-byte between viewports (missing H1 on mobile is a common ranking loss)

HIGH

- Match meta robots tags across breakpoints; never ship noindex on mobile while desktop is indexable

HIGH

- Match rel='canonical' URLs on mobile and desktop

HIGH

Most common bug: m.example.com pointing to itself instead of the responsive URL.

- Ship the same structured data (JSON-LD) on the mobile render; verify with Rich Results Test in mobile mode

HIGH

- Match internal links and anchor text; do not strip footer link block at mobile breakpoints

HIGH

- Match image alt text and img sources between viewports; lazy-loaded images must render for Googlebot Smartphone

HIGH

- Match hreflang annotations on mobile (relevant for multi-locale sites)

- Audit Last-Modified and ETag headers; serve consistent caching signals to both Googlebot variants

RESPONSIVE DESIGN VS SEPARATE URLS

- Use responsive design (Google's stated preference since 2020); avoid m-dot subdomains
HIGH
- Do not use dynamic serving (same URL, different HTML by user agent); causes vary-header mismatches and indexing drift
HIGH
- If separate mobile URL exists: add rel='alternate' media='only screen and (max-width: 640px)' on desktop + canonical to desktop on mobile
- Send 'Vary: User-Agent' only when serving different HTML; omit for responsive builds
- Use a single sitemap.xml with canonical responsive URLs; do not submit a separate mobile sitemap
HIGH

CORE WEB VITALS (MOBILE THRESHOLDS)

- Hit LCP under 2.5 seconds at the 75th percentile on mobile (CrUX field data, not lab)
HIGH
- Hit INP under 200 milliseconds at the 75th percentile (replaced FID March 12, 2024)
HIGH
- Hit CLS under 0.1 at the 75th percentile
HIGH
- Treat the slow-3G / mid-tier Android profile in Lighthouse as baseline, not desktop throttling
HIGH
- Pull field data weekly from GSC Core Web Vitals report (Mobile tab) and CrUX BigQuery; lab tools alone mislead
HIGH
- Set up the web-vitals JS library to send real-user LCP, INP, CLS to GA4 as custom events

MOBILE PAGE SPEED

- Drive TTFB under 800 milliseconds on mobile; verify via PageSpeed Insights field data
HIGH
- Serve images as AVIF with WebP fallback; PNG/JPEG only as last resort
HIGH
- Implement srcset and sizes on every content image so Googlebot Smartphone fetches a sub-1x viewport asset
HIGH
- Lazy-load below-the-fold images with native loading='lazy'; never lazy-load the LCP image
HIGH

- Preload the mobile LCP image with link rel='preload' as='image' imagesrcset='...'
HIGH
- Set font-display: swap on every @font-face rule to prevent invisible text during font load
HIGH
- Self-host or preconnect to Google Fonts (link rel='preconnect' href='https://fonts.gstatic.com' crossorigin)
- Inline critical CSS for above-the-fold mobile viewport (under 14 KB to fit in one TCP round trip)
HIGH
- Defer non-critical JavaScript with defer/async; move third-party tags (analytics, chat) below first interaction
HIGH
- Code-split routes; verify main app bundle stays under 170 KB compressed for the mobile target
- Enable HTTP/2 or HTTP/3 at the edge; confirm via curl -I --http3 or Chrome DevTools protocol column
- Serve from a CDN with edge nodes in target markets
HIGH
- Compress with Brotli level 4+ for text assets; gzip as fallback
- Audit third-party scripts with Lighthouse 'Reduce the impact of third-party code'; budget mobile main-thread blocking under 250 ms
HIGH

MOBILE UX

- Set tap targets to 48x48 CSS pixels (Google), 44x44 points on iOS (Apple HIG)
HIGH
- Space adjacent tap targets at least 8 pixels apart to avoid mis-taps
- Set base font size to 16 pixels minimum on input/textarea (prevents iOS Safari auto-zoom on focus)
HIGH
- Eliminate horizontal scroll; test at 320 CSS pixels viewport width (smallest common mobile)
HIGH
- Ship the viewport meta tag exactly once: meta name='viewport' content='width=device-width, initial-scale=1'
HIGH
- Do not set user-scalable=no or maximum-scale=1; both fail WCAG and reduce mobile usability scores
HIGH
- Avoid intrusive interstitials on mobile (Google's mobile interstitial penalty since Jan 2017); cookie/age gates exempt only if compact

HIGH

- Place primary CTA above the fold on a 360x640 viewport

HIGH

- Use sticky headers under 60 pixels tall on mobile to preserve content area
- Avoid fixed footers that overlap input fields when the soft keyboard opens

MOBILE-SPECIFIC SCHEMA

- Ship identical JSON-LD on mobile for Article, FAQ, BreadcrumbList, Organization

HIGH

- Add domain-appropriate schema (MedicalCondition/MedicalGuideline for health; Recipe; Product; LocalBusiness)
- Add LocalBusiness schema only if a physical location exists; do not fake it for SEO
- Validate Product schema on any paid offering renders identically on mobile
- Use @id URIs that resolve over HTTPS and match canonical; mismatches break entity graphs on mobile-only crawls

MOBILE INDEXING DIAGNOSTICS

- Run URL Inspection in GSC with 'Test Live URL'; confirm rendered HTML and screenshot match expected mobile output

HIGH

- Check Page Indexing report weekly for 'Crawled, not indexed' or 'Discovered, not indexed' spikes on mobile-only pages

HIGH

- Run Lighthouse mobile audit in CI (preview deploys); fail the build below 90 Performance and 100 Accessibility
- Pull PageSpeed Insights API scores into a dashboard; track mobile tab separately from desktop
- Use Chrome DevTools Device Mode with 'Mobile' CPU throttling and 'Slow 4G' network; do not trust unthrottled desktop testing
- Mobile Usability report was deprecated Dec 1, 2023; substitute Lighthouse and URL Inspection screenshot

LOCAL MOBILE SEO

- Claim and verify the Google Business Profile if you have a physical location; mobile is the primary surface for local

HIGH

- Add tel: links on contact pages with proper formatting (e.g., +1-555-123-4567)
- Add mailto: and SMS (sms:) links where useful on mobile contact flows

- Embed Google Maps via responsive iframe with lazy-loading to avoid blocking LCP
- Keep NAP consistent across footer, contact page, and Google Business Profile (mobile crawlers cross-check)

HIGH

VOICE SEARCH (MOBILE-FIRST)

- Write conversational long-tail content for question-format queries (voice queries average 29 words on mobile)
- Use FAQ schema on Q&A blocks to win featured snippets (which power Google Assistant voice responses)
- Target 'near me' queries only if a physical location exists

AMP (MOSTLY DEPRECATED)

- Do not build AMP (Google dropped AMP requirement for Top Stories June 1, 2021)
- If legacy AMP pages exist: keep rel='amphtml' and canonical pointing to the responsive URL; do not delete without 301 redirects

MOBILE-SPECIFIC CRAWL

- Confirm robots.txt does not block Googlebot Smartphone; allow Googlebot and Googlebot-Mobile paths to CSS, JS, images

HIGH

- Serve the same XML sitemap to all user agents; do not gate by user agent

HIGH

- Verify Googlebot Smartphone hits in server logs (user agent contains 'Mobile' and 'Googlebot/2.1'); confirm 200 status on key URLs
- Reject any 503 or soft-404 responses to Googlebot Smartphone; check function timeouts under mobile crawl load

HIGH