

WordPress Tutorial for Beginners with Step by Step PDF by Stratosphere Digital



This WordPress tutorial for beginners (find the PDF at the bottom of this post) will quickly introduce you to every core WordPress concept you need to know in order to set up and run your first WordPress blog or website.

Why Use WordPress?

WordPress is a content management system (CMS) which makes creating and managing content a breeze. You don't need to know how to write html or css in order to set up, run and manage a WordPress website (although it doesn't hurt). [WordPress powers about 25% of the world's websites](#) making it the most popular CMS. WordPress:

- Is well supported.
- Is open source and FREE!
- Is easy to install.
- Has thousands of free and paid themes to choose from.
- Has thousands of free and paid plugins that let you expand on core WordPress functionality in near limitless ways.

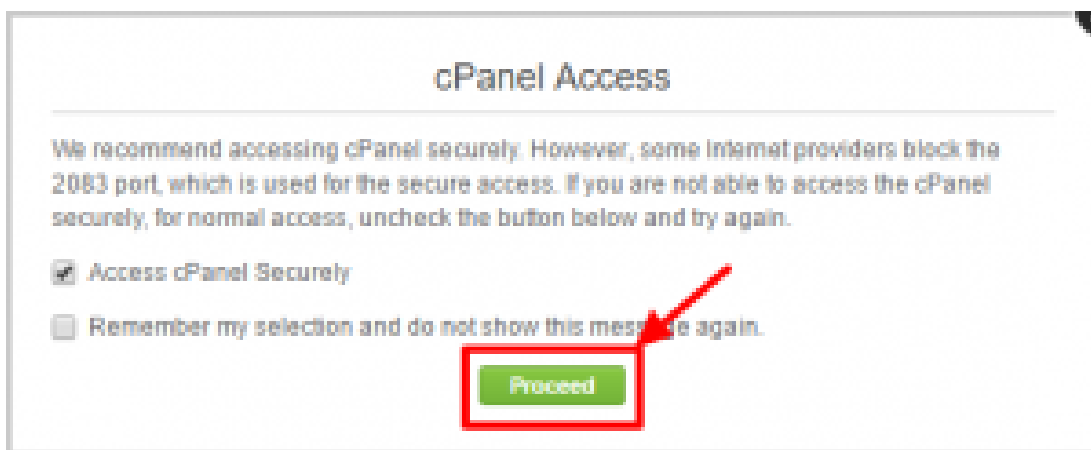
- Is search engine friendly.
- Is a great blogging platform.
- Is highly extensible. If you can't find a plugin or theme for your needs you can create your own or hire a developer to create a plugin or theme for you.

Installing WordPress

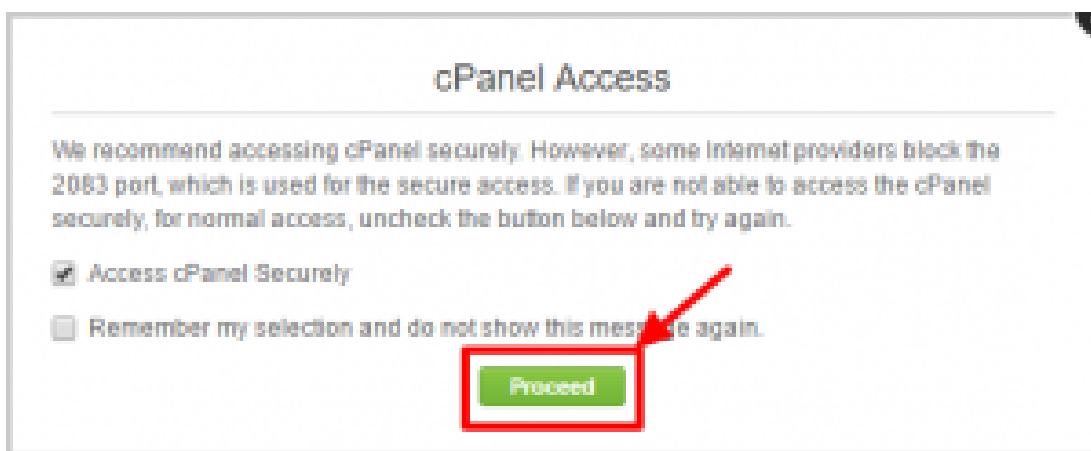
There are different ways to install WordPress. This post will assume you are hosting with [SiteGround](#) and using their easy-installer. I personally use [SiteGround](#) to host all of my own sites as it is the fastest and most reliable hosting I have been able to find. That being said, most hosts now offer an easy-installer for WordPress and these instructions will be very similar across hosts.

To install WordPress using SiteGround hosting:

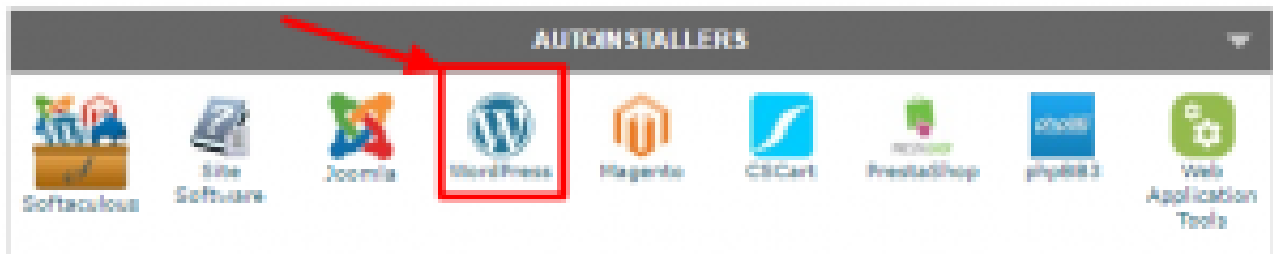
- Login to your SiteGround account
- Click "go to cPanel"



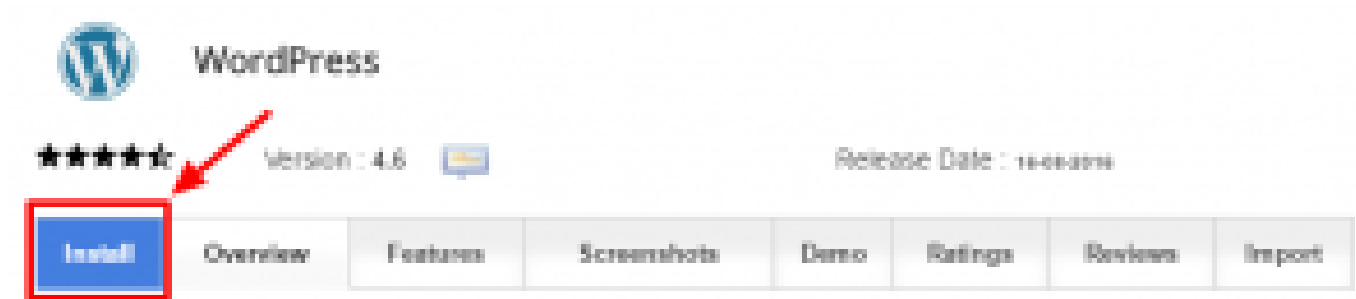
- click "proceed"



- Click the WordPress icon in the autoinstallers section



- Click the “install” tab



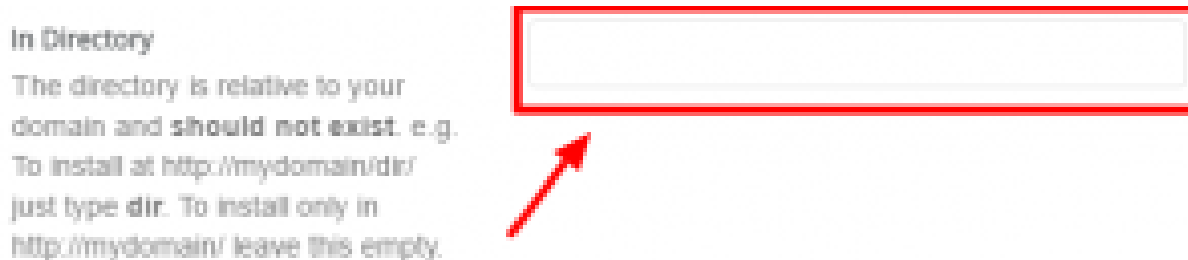
- Choose your protocol. If you don't know what this is for, leave it as is.



- Choose the domain name you'd like to do the installation under.



- Leave the directory blank unless you'd like to install wordpress in a subdirectory (like http://mysite.com/wordpress)



- Leave the table prefix as is unless you are an advanced user and understand what this is.
- Fill in your site name and site description.

Site Settings

Site Name

Site Description

Enable Multisite (WPMU)

- Leave the multisite checkbox unchecked unless you plan to power multiple WordPress websites from a single install.

Enable Multisite (WPMU)

- Choose an admin username, password and email address. Make sure you remember these as you will need them to log in to your WordPress website.

Admin Account

Admin Username

Admin Password Hide

Strong (58/100)

Admin Email

- Select the language your site will use.

Choose Language

Select Language

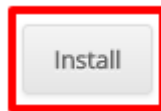
- If you'd like to limit login attempts for security purposes and/or enable passwordless login, check the applicable checkboxes.

Select Plugins

Limit Login Attempts (Loginizer)

Clf Secure Passwordless Login

- Skip the advanced options unless you are an advanced user.
- Click “install”.



That's all there is to installing WordPress using SiteGround's easy-installer.

You can find detailed instructions for installing WordPress using alternate methods here:

https://codex.wordpress.org/Installing_WordPress. This is recommended for advanced users only.

The Admin Area

Once you've installed WordPress you will want to navigate to the admin area (also referred to as the back-end).

The admin area is where you will manage your new website, add posts and pages, choose a theme, add plugins, create navigation menus, place widgets and so on. This area is for you and any users you choose to give access to. To navigate to the admin area, visit <http://yourdomainname.com/wp-admin> (replace yourdomainname with your actual domain name) and login with the credentials you created when installing WordPress. If you are viewing the front-end (what everyone visiting your website sees) of your website and you are logged in, you can easily navigate to the back-end by clicking your website's name in the “admin bar” which is the bar at the top of every page with a black background and several menu items.

Choosing a Theme

Choosing a theme is one of the first things you'll want to do when setting up your WordPress site. Themes set the overall design for your site. Each theme offers different options and page templates, so it is important that you carefully review a theme before settling on it.

Themes are separate from you content, so if you do decide to change a theme, your content will remain in place.

- If you aren't logged in, log in. Now, navigate to the admin area. Remember, you can log in by visiting <http://yourdomainname.com/wp-admin> (where yourdomainname is the name of your domain).
- Next, find the “appearance” menu item in the long menu found on the left side of the admin area. Then choose the sub menu “themes”.
- Click “Add New” at the top.
- Choose and install a theme from the list of themes.

Setting Up a Theme

Each theme will be a bit different to set up as the setup process is largely left up to the developer. You will have to refer to the theme's documentation for how to set it up. Look for the readme file (or similar) in the theme's folder.

There are some theme options that will remain the same across every theme. These options can be found in the admin area by clicking appearance->customize.

The most confusing option I've found is the "static front page", specifically when it comes to setting up your blog. To set up your blog you will first need to create a blank page. You can give the page a name like "blog". Now go to the customizer (appearance->customize), select "static front page" and set the dropdown under "posts page" to the blank page you just created.

The process will be similar for your homepage. You will create a page and give it a title like "home" (you can give it whatever title you want though) then go to the WordPress customizer and select your homepage as your front page.

It's important to include a link to your blog and homepage somewhere in your menu. More on that later.

These options are for the most part self-explanatory. You will find a place to upload your logo, give your site a title and much more. Play around with them and have fun!

Creating Pages

Pages are similar to blog posts, however they won't show on your blog. Pages are meant for pages like "About Us", "Contact Us", "Our Team" and so on.

To create a page:

- Click "pages" in the admin area.
- Click "add new" at the top.
- Add your title and content.
- Choose a template which is a dropdown found under page attributes.
- Publish your page or save it as a draft.

Page templates will take your content and title and present them as different layouts. Common templates include a full width page and left and right hand sidebar pages. Page template selections vary by theme. You can design your page using the built in WYSIWYG editor or if you are familiar with HTML and CSS you can click the "text" tab at the top left of the page editor and enter your HTML and CSS there.

You will probably find the WYSIWYG editor to be a bit lacking for page designs. There are some themes like [Divi](#) which have a page builder included. Keep in mind that these are not really professional methods for building and designing websites and they are geared toward DIYers. If you are serious about creating a website for your business, consider hiring a professional ([like myself](#)) to design and build your website. There's nothing worse for you business than a home-made website.

Writing a Blog Post

Writing a blog post is simple.

- Make sure you are in the admin area, then in the left hand menu, click “posts”.
- Click “Add New”
- Add your title, content, categories and tags.
- Click “publish” or “save draft” if you would like to save a draft that you will publish later.

Blog Post Categories

While it’s not necessary to use categories, they can help organize your site’s content, especial if you have hundreds of blog posts. When creating or editing a post you will see a meta box (one of the white boxes to the side or below the editor) with the word “Categories” at the top. Here you can add new categories and select the categories you’d like to add your blog posts to.

Think carefully about the categories you’d like to use and keep them simple. For example, if I were running a website on WordPress, I’d probably use categories like Themes, Plugins, Reviews and Tutorials. These categories are easy to understand and would keep the site easy to navigate.

You may be wondering now how an end user can find these categories. You will need to either add these categories to a navigation menu or widget. More on that later.

There are of course several other nuances when it comes to publishing and managing blog posts. Most of them are self-explanatory, but if you ever get stuck, Google is your friend.

The Media Library

WordPress includes a media library for managing all of you pictures, videos and file uploads.

The media library can be found in the admin area in the left menu. Click “media” to navigate to the media library. Any media you upload can be used in your posts and pages.

It’s important to understand that once you’ve uploaded a file (image, video, etc.) that it is now on your server (your website) and doesn’t have to be uploaded again.

Adding Media to a Post or a Page

When creating or editing a post or page click “add media” which is a button found just above the content area. You can include existing media already uploaded to your website or upload new media. Try not to upload the same file more than once as it will take up extra space and add clutter. If you’ve already uploaded the file, select it from your media library!

Setting Up Menus

People need a way to navigate through the content on your website. This is where menus come in.

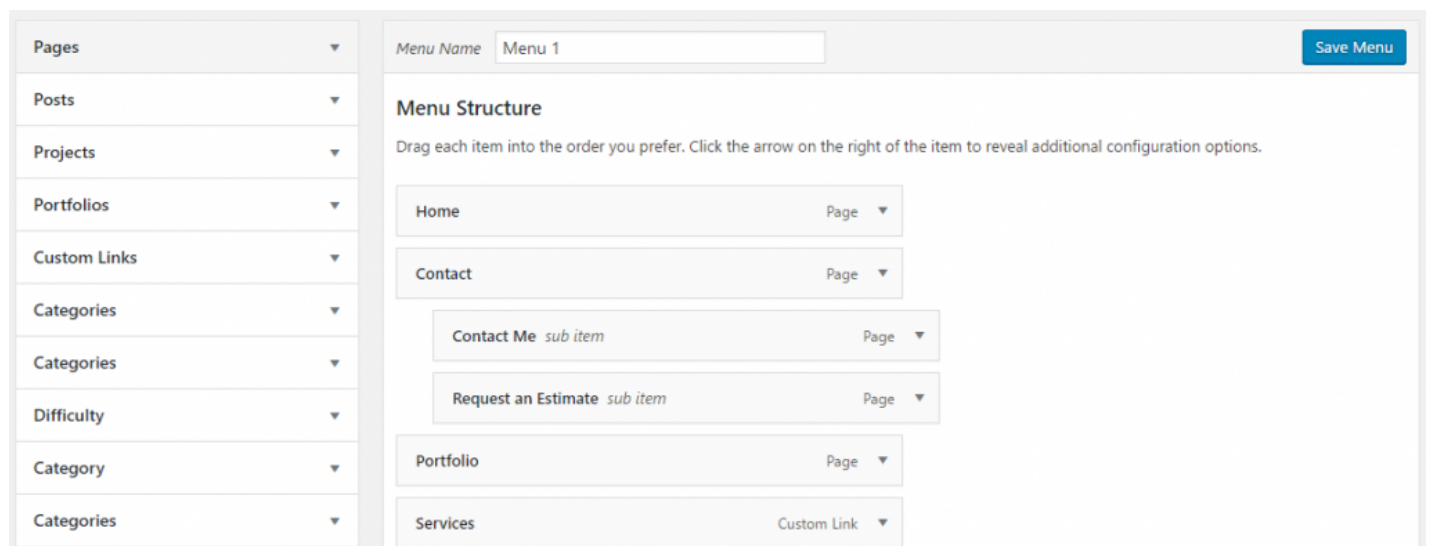
Each theme has different menu locations. Every theme should have at least one menu location. Some themes will have several menu locations such as the main menu, top menu and footer menu. Menu locations are theme dependant, so make sure to choose a theme that supports the menu locations you need. You can however hire a developer to modify an existing theme to support any menu location.

- In the admin area select “appearance” from the left menu.
- Select the sub-menu “menus”.
- Click “create a new menu”.
- Give the menu a name.
- Click “create menu”.
- On the left hand side you will see a list of pages. Select the pages to add then click “add to menu”.
- You can now drag and drop the pages in the order you like.
- You can also create sub-menus by dragging any menu item underneath it’s parent and positioning it slightly to the right.
- Click “save menu”.

Now you have a menu created, but you haven’t placed it anywhere yet. If you haven’t placed the menu somewhere, it won’t show!

- There is a tab near the top of the page called “manage locations”. Click it.
- Select the menu you just created from the dropdown for your desired theme location and then click “save changes”.
- Your menu will now appear in the front-end.

When you navigate to appearance->menus you’ll see to the left you can choose categories, custom links and sometimes more things you can add to menus depending upon the theme and/or plugins you have installed.



The screenshot displays the WordPress 'Menus' management interface. On the left, a sidebar lists various content types that can be added to a menu: Pages, Posts, Projects, Portfolios, Custom Links, Categories, Categories, Difficulty, Category, and Categories. The main content area shows a 'Menu Name' field containing 'Menu 1' and a blue 'Save Menu' button. Below this is the 'Menu Structure' section, which includes instructions: 'Drag each item into the order you prefer. Click the arrow on the right of the item to reveal additional configuration options.' The menu items are arranged as follows: 'Home' (Page), 'Contact' (Page), 'Contact Me' (sub item, Page), 'Request an Estimate' (sub item, Page), 'Portfolio' (Page), and 'Services' (Custom Link).

Widgets

Widgets can do all sorts of different things from showing your latest blog posts to showing recent comments. The most common place for widgets is in the sidebar.

To place and choose widgets:

- In the admin area click the “appearance” menu, then click the sub-menu “widgets”.
- Now on the right hand side of your screen you will see the available widget areas. Every theme will have different widget areas.
- Expand the widget area you would like to add a widget to by clicking the little arrow.
- Drag a widget from the list of widgets into that area.
- Expand the widget you just added by clicking it's arrow.
- Select and enter your desired options.
- Click “save”.

Plugins

Plugins are used to expand upon the core functionality of WordPress. If you ever find yourself needing to do something with your website that WordPress doesn't do by default, you'll want to try to find a plugin.

Some common plugins are used for:

- Contact forms (Contact Form 7)
- Website backups (Updraft Plus)
- Security (Wordfence)
- Portfolios
- eCommerce (WooCommerce)
- Quizzes (WP Pro Quiz)
- Membership Restriction (Paid Memberships Pro)
- Invoicing (Sprout Invoices)

To install a plugin:

- In the admin area select “plugins” from the left menu.
- At the top click “add new”.
- Search for the desired type of plugin you are looking for.
- Click “install” for the plugin you would like to install.
- After the plugins is installed, click “activate plugin”.

The plugin will now be installed and ready to use. Every plugin will be different. You will have to refer to the plugin's documentation on how to use the plugin. Try to only install plugins that have good ratings and are tested with your version of WordPress. While rare, a plugin can break your site. Installing only trusted plugins will reduce this risk.

It's also a good idea to only install plugins that you absolutely need. Installing too many plugins can slow down your site.

Users

WordPress has a fairly powerful user management system built in. There are many different user roles to select. These roles give your website's users access to different features in your website's back-end.

The most powerful role is the "admin" role. The administrator can do anything. There are no restrictions and thus you should be very careful who you assign this role to. Someone with this role could delete your entire site, so make sure you only give administrator access to people you trust or your web developer if they request access. To manage your users you will need to click "users" in the left menu in the admin area. Here you can manually add, edit and delete users. You can change their contact info, passwords, names etc. You won't generally want to change other user's info, but you may have to from time to time. The most common operations you will be using here will be adding new users and changing their permissions. To add a new user:

- Click "add new".
- Fill out the required info and save.

To change user permissions:

- In the user area, click the user's name you would like to edit.
- Where it says "role", select the appropriate role.
- Scroll down and click "update user".

Here's a brief description of each role taken from WordPress.org:

- **Administrator** – nothing is off limits* (*see note below*)
- **Editor** – has access to all posts, pages, comments, categories, tags, and links.
- **Author** – can write, upload photos to, edit, and publish their own posts.
- **Contributor** – has no publishing or uploading capability, but can write and edit their own posts until they are published
- **Follower** (public sites) / **Viewer** (private sites only) – can read and comment on posts and pages

For a more thorough list of user roles and capabilities visit <https://en.support.wordpress.com/user-roles/>

Shortcodes

A shortcode is a simple way of including dynamic (changing) content into any post or page. Many plugins will include shortcodes and often it's only a matter of finding it and copying and pasting the shortcode where you'd like. This is how many contact forms work.

Shortcodes begin and end with square brackets like []. Each shortcode will have a name as well like "contact-form". So the "contact-form" shortcode would look like [contact-form]. There is an opening and closing square

bracket with the shortcode name inside. You can include shortcodes in any page or post simply by pasting it in or typing it in. Spelling errors will cause the shortcode to not work. If the shortcode does not exist it will not do anything either.

Here's a more detailed article on shortcodes: <http://www.smashingmagazine.com/2012/05/wordpress-shortcodes-complete-guide>

Should You Build Your Own WordPress Website or Hire a Professional

This all depends upon your business, goals, expectations and of course your budget.

If your goals are to set up a blog you can share with friends and family, then by all means make your own website.

If you are a busy business owner looking to grow your business, please hire a professional. Your business will thank you.

Why Hire a Pro?

A lot more goes into building a website than you are probably aware of. Everyone knows a website has to look good if it's going to be taken seriously and perceived as being credible. This is likely something you won't be able to achieve on your own. It takes thousands of hours to get good at designing websites and good website design is only the first step in succeeding online.

You may be thinking that you can grab a theme or template and that's going to be good enough. Yes, there are some amazing looking themes, but you won't find one that perfectly suits your business, branding and messaging. You should never squeeze your business identity into a prepackaged theme. You should be designing your website around your business and your customers. Do you really want to compromise your business and messaging to save a few dollars?

Some professional developers and designers will start with a theme, but customize it to suit your business and it's messaging. This gives you the best of both worlds. It saves time (and thus dollars), but no compromises are made with your business and messaging.

Consider as well the amount of business you expect to come from your website. For small businesses this is usually tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands per year. Medium and large sized businesses can see millions through their website every year.

So, aside from a nice design, what else is there to think about when creating your website? A lot of things!

- User Experience.
- Navigation Structure.
- Search Engine Optimization. Can people find your website and it's content through search engines?
- Site speed. If your site is slow it will be penalized by search engines and abandoned by users. A good web developer can help you improve your website's speed.

- Maintenance. Themes and plugins and the WordPress core need regular updates. Ignoring this can lead to security holes, broken sites and hacked websites.
- Website backups!!!
- Driving traffic to your website through paid advertizing.
- Conversion rate optimization (CRO). This is the process of optimizing your website for conversions like leads and sales.
- Content marketing.

You can see there's a lot to think about when it comes to your business and it's website!

Conclusion

While I've covered the most important aspects of WordPress, there's a lot more to discover and learn. This post is only meant as a quick starting guide. The best thing to do from here on out is to get your feet wet.