

The Essential Guide to WordPress Maintenance

Learn how the Pros maintain
WordPress websites.

Anphira | *Web Design &
Development*

Why Maintain Your Site

WordPress is a complete content management system, much like an operating system on your computer. Would you want to leave a computer connected to the internet 24/7 without any operating system updates or security?

I wouldn't.

That's why you need to make sure that your WordPress website gets backed up, secured & updated regularly.

Your Maintenance Choices

You have two options when it comes to WordPress maintenance: do it yourself or hire someone to do it.

Do it Yourself

In this guide I'll be covering how to do WordPress maintenance for a typical website. For this guide, a typical site is a brochure or blog type of site that doesn't have advanced functionality such as eCommerce or a membership portal.

I'll guide you through doing your maintenance using tools that will simplify the process. If you use all of the tools I recommend, it will end up being around \$5-\$10 (USD) per month. But these tools will save you a lot of time and headaches.

Hire Someone to do it

Hiring someone to do your maintenance for you is a great way to take a task off your plate and gain some peace of mind.

[Click here for information on offloading your WordPress maintenance >](#)

Disclaimer:

The information contained here is for educational purposes. Anphira is not responsible if you completely break your website following this guide (its unlikely to happen, but there are some sites out there in complete disarray).

Step 0: Accessing Your Site

In order to maintain your website, you need to have all of the following. It's very important at this step to actually test all of your logins to ensure that they actually work.

- WordPress administrator level login
- Hosting login (when you login to your hosting you need to be able to access your database as well as files — contact your hosting provider for assistance on this)
- An emergency plan (yes, I'm that person who reviews the emergencies exits at a hotel)

Step 1: Connect Maintenance Tool & Backup

Before you can maintain your site regularly, you need to backup your website so you have a copy just in case something goes wrong.

First, go to [ManageWP](#) and sign up for an account (signup is free)

Second, connect your website to ManageWP

Third, activate the Backups - it will automatically start building your first backup in about a minute. Depending on the size of your website, your first backup could take a few minutes. The backup will automatically be stored on ManageWP's server so it won't tie up any of your disk space at your hosting company.

Step 2: Run Security Check & Whitelist IPs

Now that you have some initial setup down, it's time to run a security scan of your website and also whitelist the IP addresses for ManageWP.

First, activate the Security option and then run a security check

Second, if you are using a security plugin on your website, whitelist the [IP addresses](#) for ManageWP.

Step 3: Clean Comment Spam & Optimize Database

The next thing we'll do for your site is clean up the extra junk. This is going to mean cleaning out your comment spam and optimizing your database.

First, on your WordPress website, go to Comments. If you have comments that are spam but not in the spam, you need to move them to spam.

Second, on ManageWP dashboard you'll remove spam comments.

Third, on ManageWP dashboard you'll run database optimization.

Step 4: Remove Unused Plugins & Update Plugins

Now it's time to address your plugins.

First, go to the Plugins on ManageWP. Go to the Inactive list. Give the list a quick look, and then delete any plugin you aren't likely to use soon.

Second, go to the Updates list and update the plugins that need it.

Step 5: Remove Unused Themes & Update Themes

Now it's time to address your themes.

First, go to the Themes on ManageWP. Go to the Inactive list. Give the list a quick look, and then delete any theme you aren't likely to use soon.

Second, go to the Updates list and update the themes that need it (IMPORTANT note: if you did something like modify a theme directly, updating that theme will kill your modifications — consult a developer for assistance in this case)

Step 6: Update WordPress Core

Now we're going to update your WordPress core.

Go to the Dashboard on ManageWP, and update WordPress core if it shows an update available. IMPORTANT note: some hosting companies may not display updates through ManageWP and you may have to do an update directly through the hosting company's process. Contact your hosting company with questions on this.

Step 7: Setup a Security Plugin

If you don't already have a security plugin installed and setup, then it's time to set one up. If you already have installed & configured, you can skip this step.

First, go to Plugins on ManageWP and click on "Add plugin"

Second, search for "iThemes Security" and install.

Third, on your WordPress site, [setup iThemes Security by following my instructions](#).

Step 8: Setup Uptime Monitoring

Do you know if your website is up & running? Most people have no idea.

First, go to Uptime Monitor on ManageWP and activate it.

Second, configure the Uptime Monitor for keyword monitoring at 5 minutes with a 10 minute notification delay.

Step 9: Run a speed test

Do you have any idea how fast or slow your website is? Most people don't.

First, go to Performance on ManageWP and activate it.

Second, run a speed test.

Third, if your is slow, you may want to enlist the help of a developer to improve it.

WordPress Maintenance Checklist

Now that your site is initially setup, it's time to maintain it going forward.

Create a calendar reminder (for example, the first Saturday of each month) for a time of low website traffic to run your updates. Then each month do the following:

1. Run security scan (if not doing it automatically)
2. Comment spam clean out
3. Database optimization
4. Plugin updates
5. Theme updates
6. WordPress Core updates
7. Review your uptime, if you are having a bit of downtime, it's your hosting company or your website, or some combination of the two
8. Run your website through a tool like [Online Broken Link Checker](#) to check for broken website links
9. Site speed checks

What do all of those items mean?

If you're new to WordPress or to maintaining your site in general, then you probably have no idea what most of those items are.

Don't worry.

The email address that you subscribed with will be getting a followup email series which is going to go into detail about all of the items listed above. This will break things down into bite-sized chunks.

Get this checklist from a friend? [You can sign up for the email series by clicking here.](#)

Want to skip all the checklist and not worry about it?

[Click here to see our current maintenance plans >](#)

About Anphira Web Design & Development

Anphira specializes in WordPress development & maintenance for both businesses and agencies.

We develop over 50 new WordPress websites per year and maintain hundreds of active WordPress websites.

We seriously know WordPress. Drop us a line at info@anphira.com if you'd like to chat about WordPress maintenance or development.