

The WordPress update checklist (one page)

A one-page routine for applying WordPress updates safely: what to do before, during and after, and what to do if something breaks.

Keep this next to your desk. It is the routine we follow for every WordPress update, in a form you can tick off.

Before you start

- ☐ A recent backup exists and you know how to restore it.
- ☐ You have picked a quiet time for the update.
- ☐ You have noted how the home page, a key page and your main form look now.

The updates, in this order

- ☐ Test on a staging copy first, if you have one.
- ☐ Update WordPress core.
- ☐ Update the theme, then check the pages.
- ☐ Update plugins in small groups, and check the site after each group.
- ☐ Test your key pages and your contact or booking form.
- ☐ On a store, place a test order from the cart to the confirmation.
- ☐ Release to the live site.
- ☐ Look again after release.

If something breaks

- ☐ Write down exactly what is wrong and where.
- ☐ Undo the last change or the last group of updates.
- ☐ Restore the backup if undoing is not enough.
- ☐ Find the cause before trying again. Often it is a plugin that has not kept pace with WordPress, or two plugins that clash.
- ☐ Write down what happened, so the next update is safer.



Do not update blindly

A plugin that its maker has not updated for a long time, or a heavily customised theme, can break when touched. Decide what to do about those first.

Want it handled for you? See [WordPress maintenance](#).

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