Ten Point Checklist

Meta Tags

The first thing you need to do with your pages is make sure the exact keyword phrase you are trying to rank for is in your title, description and keywords for the page. In the example image below, you will see an example of this for the keyword phrase "dog training tips" (if you are not using WordPress, then most HTML editors will have a place for you to enter these details)

Keyword Density

It is obviously important to include the exact keyword phrase in the body of the article, and I usually aim for about 4-5 times in a 400-500 word article.

However it is also important to make sure you use the keyword phrase in the first 50 words, preferably in the first sentence, on the page in order to increase SERP rankings. It is also important to have your keyword phrase is in the last sentence of the page.

Keyword Formatting

You should plan to format the keyword phrase throughout the content. You can make the keyword phrase bold, also make it italics somewhere else, and underline it in another place.

Linking Your Keyword Phrase

Most people don't know about this, but it helps to create a link on your page somewhere that uses your keyword phrase as the anchor text, with the link pointing to your home page, or if on the home page, another page on the site.

You should also have another link on the page that uses your keyword phrase as the anchor text, but this time make it link to the very page you are working on, so it links back to itself (weird I know, but it seems to help.)

Image Alternative Text

When you have images on your pages (and do add at least one image), you can give them an "alternative text", and that text needs to be your keyword phrase for that page. However only do this for the first image on the page, do not do it for more than this, otherwise it may look like a form of keyword stuffing, which could be frowned upon by the search engines.

H1, H2, and H3 Tags

Another thing that helps to increase SERP rankings is at the very top of your page you should have a Heading 1 tag, otherwise referred to as an H1 tag. Make sure your keyword phrase is in that H1 tag.

You should also have some H2 and H3 tags elsewhere on the page, and make sure that your keyword phrase is in them as well.

Domain Name

This is not always possible or even desired if you want to brand the company name, but if you have the main keyword phrase in the domain name, it can bring strong ranking power with the search engines. Hyphens are ok to use if limited and don't create a too lengthy domain name.

URL's

Make sure that your page URL's have the keyword phrase in them, and especially if you are using WordPress, because the default setting does not do this. In WordPress you need to go into the "permalinks" setting and select "custom structure". For the custom structure you should have this:%category%/%postname%/

On this note, it is a good idea to organize your sites pages or posts, into categories. So if you have several topics, create categories for these topics and place your pages and posts into these categories.

Internal Linking

Another important thing to do if you can, is to have internal linking done well. You can do this by having a links menu on the sidebar of your sites, which includes all the other links to all the pages on your site, using the keyword phrase that those pages are targeting. This becomes more difficult with larger sites though.

This can also be accomplished by creating anchor text of other page keyword phrases and then linking to those other pages within the same website. Don't overdo this where you end up with too many links on each page, this can be viewed unnatural.

Quality Outbound Links

It is a good idea to have some links on your site that go to authority sites in your niche. Major search engines like to see this.

It makes sense when you think about it, because search engines want their customers to have a good user experience. So the last thing they want, is to send traffic to a page where the user has no other options but to hit the back button.

All I do is add half a dozen links to authority sites that are useful to the visitor, but don't make these links that obvious. This is not hard to do but most people don't realize that this can help your rankings. Make all of these links "nofollow" links so not to lose link juice.

Summary

So there you have a solid On Page SEO checklist that you can use on all of your pages to increase SERP rankings and require as little backlinking as possible.