



We have a Web site. Now What?

Part 1: On-Page Search Engine Optimization

Practical Advice to Improve Your Online Marketing Efforts

Craig Rentmeester

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Introduction

This book is intended to empower entrepreneurs. By using this book as a guide, entrepreneurs can expect to see greater numbers of targeted traffic to their site(s).

Why do organic search rankings matter?

1. For many people, search engines are the starting point for information on buying decisions.
2. There are billions of searches down every month and that number is growing. (Over nine billion searches in August, 2007 – a 28% increase from August 2006.)
3. It's tough to buy traffic. According to the [search marketing report by Ad Age published in 2007](#), the click through rate of search engine advertisements is 11.5 percent.

Are there also off-page SEO items that I should know about?

Yes, search rankings aren't just a result of good on-page optimization. Search rankings also take into account other factors that aren't directly in your control. My next e-book will cover off-page SEO items that influence search rankings.

Why are there so many links?

This book is written for someone without a strong technical background. As such, I've provided links to any jargon I used throughout the book. If you're curious about a term, follow the link for an explanation.

FYI: Links are in [green](#) text.

*If you plan to print this document, print it in landscape mode.



To help with the technical learning curve, I'm providing an example of the search term "sore throat" and displaying the underlying source code from the corresponding web page from MayoClinic.com.

By pointing out how the code appears on the high-ranking web site, I hope it will allow you to understand the advice more quickly.

Disclaimer: I am not affiliated with Mayo Clinic in any way, shape or form. Also, MayoClinic.com did have the number one search ranking on Google for the phrase "sore throat" when this book was written.



sore throat

Search

Advanced Search
Preferences

Web

Results 1 - 10 of about 4,530,000 for **sore throat** [definition]. (0.22 seconds)

Refine results for **sore throat**:

- [Treatment](#)
- [Tests/diagnosis](#)
- [For patients](#)
- [From medical authorities](#)
- [Symptoms](#)
- [Causes/risk factors](#)
- [For health professionals](#)
- [Alternative medicine](#)

[Sore throat - MayoClinic.com](#)

Sore throat — Comprehensive overview covers causes, treatment, self-care of this common affliction.

www.mayoclinic.com/health/sore-throat/DS00526 - 26k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

[Sore Throat: Easing the Pain of a Sore Throat -- familydoctor.org](#)

Information about **sore throat** by the American Academy of Family Physicians.

familydoctor.org/163.xml - 32k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

[Sore Throat – Causes, Symptoms, Diagnosis, and Treatment on ...](#)

Learn more about **sore throats**, including causes, at-home treatments, differences from strep **throat**, reasons to seek medical care, and what it means to have ...

www.medicinenet.com/sore_throat/article.htm - 47k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

[Sore Throat](#)

Different kinds of **sore throats**: viral, bacterial, and those caused by dryness -- and things you can do about them.

www.dreddy.com/sorethroat.html - 12k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

[MedlinePlus Medical Encyclopedia: Sore throat](#)

This means most **sore throats** will NOT respond to antibiotics. Many people have a mild **sore throat** at the beginning of every cold. ...

www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/003053.htm - 27k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

[Will Antibiotics Help Your Sore Throat?](#)

News on appropriate testing and treatment of **sore throats**.

www.labtestsonline.org/news/strep051202.html - 49k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

[Sore Throats](#)

Sore throat is a symptom of many medical disorders. Infections cause the majority of **sore throats** and are contagious.

otolaryngologyheadandnecksurgery.org/healthinfo/throat/sore_throat.cfm - 42k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

[Sore Throat Cures](#)

A **sore throat** is an infection that can be either viral or bacterial. It is most commonly caused by a contagious viral infection (such as the flu, ...

www.earthclinic.com/CURES/sore_throat.html - 156k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

[Pharyngitis - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#)

Pharyngitis (IPA: [ˈfɑrɪn dʒaɪtɪs]) is, in most cases, a painful inflammation of the pharynx, and is colloquially referred to as a **sore throat** ...

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pharyngitis - 57k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

[Sore Throat: Topic Overview](#)

Sore throats can be painful and annoying. Fortunately, most **sore throats** are caused by a minor illness and go away without medical treatment.

Sponsored Links

[Sore Throat Medication](#)

Fast, Powerful Relief. Theraflu®
Try Warming Syrup, Caplets & More
www.TheraFlu.com

[Flu Symptoms](#)

Assess Your Flu Symptoms And Track
The Flu In Your Area - Learn More.
FluFACTS.com



sore throat

Search

Advanced Search Preferences

Web

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Flu Symptoms

Assess Your Flu Symptoms And Track
 The Flu In Your Area - Learn More.
FluFACTS.com



<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/sore-throat/DS00526>

Content

The only surefire way to great search rankings is to create great, original content. Search engines do not need, nor do they reward, duplicate content.

Be focused. Try to have a page dedicated to each keyword or phrase that you're trying to rank well for. Use your keywords frequently in the body tags of your pages.

While you should include your keywords frequently in the body tags, do not spam a page by placing text in the same color as the background or hiding keywords in places that people can't see. This is a way to get banned from a search engine or be placed in the supplemental index.

Search engines do not properly index [Flash](#), so avoid having a flash-based homepage, or having flash-based product pages.

Avoid using [frames](#) because they don't allow content to be indexed properly in most cases.

Load times are important both for search engines and for visitors. So, avoid using excessive [JavaScript](#).

The phrase "sore throat" appears eight times on the Mayo Clinic page, including the H1 tag. [View the cached page.](#)

Page Titles

Page titles are extremely important for both search engine optimization and for [click through rate](#).

Page titles should contain no more than 5 words that are keyword-centric and directly relate to what is on the corresponding page.

Using more than five words in a page title dilutes the strength of each word.

Place important keywords early in the page title. The first word receives the highest reward.

```
<title>Sore throat - MayoClinic.com</title>
```

URLs

Search Engines take into account the names of directories and files in each [URL](#) where there is content.

Thus, keywords should appear in the directory names and file names.

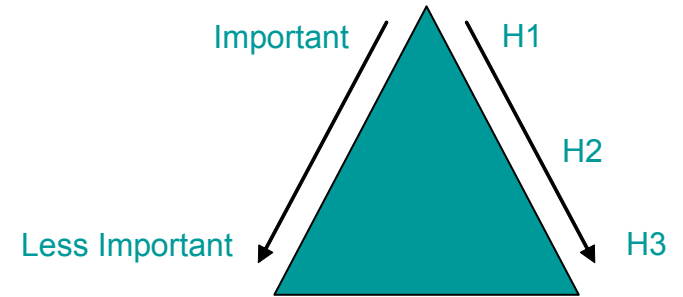
Static URLs rank better than dynamic URLs.

If you're going to use multiple words when naming a file or directory use a hyphen, not an underscore, between the two words. Google tends to ignore underscores, but views hyphens as dividing two distinct words.

Header Tags

Header tags should be used to let both the reader and the search engine know what is important.

There should only be one of each tag per page, with your most important keyword appearing in the H1 tag and descending from there in terms of importance.



```
<h1>Sore throat</h1>
```

```
<h2>Introduction</h2>
```

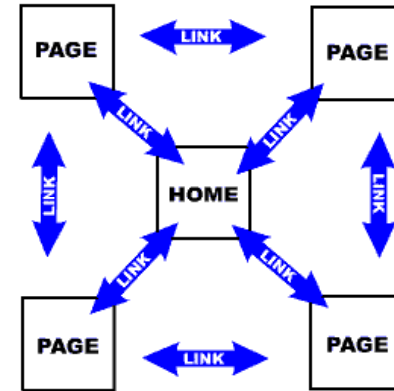
```
<h4>ARTICLE SECTIONS</h4>
```

Link Structure

How your pages link to one another is important.

Important pages on your site should link to one another. If you have your site broken into distinct sections, the main pages of each section should link to one another.

The image on the right shows proper link structure between pages.



This image, courtesy of [Search Bliss](#), shows proper link structure.

Internal Links

Having internal links to pages to and from one another is important. Even more important is the anchor text used to describe that link.

The **anchor text** of each link should contain keywords that relate to what is on the following page.

For example, having a link for a digital camera say “Click Here” does less for SEO than a link that says “digital camera”, even if each one links to the same page.

```
<a href="http://www.mayo.edu/">Education and Research</a>
```

```
<a href="http://www.mayoclinic.org/patientinfo/appointments.html">Appointments</a>
```

Images

Search engines cannot “see” what is inside an image. Therefore, most search engines have a hard time properly indexing images.

To have images help with search rankings, use keywords in the filenames and **alternative text** in the html to describe the image.

It is also good to use captions near images. Search engines pickup on the proximity of the text and it helps them index the image.

```

```

```
 <a Sore throat</a>
```

Keywords Meta Tag

The keyword meta tag does not have to be present in order to rank well in major search engines.

However, some search engines still utilize this tag for indexing content.

If you plan to use the keywords meta tag, it should contain no more than 7 keywords that are separated by commas. Just as with page titles, the more keywords used in the keywords tag, the less value is given to each word.

The keywords meta tag should contain words that directly relate to what is on that particular page.

```
<meta name="keywords" content="sore throat,throat,strep throat,pharyngitis,scarlett fever" />
```

Description Meta Tag

While a description tag doesn't help with search engine optimization, it can help the search result get clicked on by potential visitors.

Each page should have a unique description that sells that particular page's content. People don't like surprises, so keep the description relevant to what is on the corresponding page.

```
<meta name="description" content="Sore throat — Comprehensive overview covers causes, treatment, self-care of this common affliction." />
```

Sitemaps

Sitemaps are typically XML files that diagram how a Web site's content is structured.

Creating a sitemap and submitting it to search engines is a good way to point out how your site is structured and where pages are located. Sitemaps ensure that all of your pages are found and indexed.

Where to submit your sitemap?

- Google Webmaster Tools - <http://www.google.com/webmasters/>
 - Yahoo! Sitemap Submission - <https://siteexplorer.search.yahoo.com/submit>
 - Ask.com - place the url of your sitemap into the link below and it will ping Ask.com.
[http://submissions.ask.com/ping?sitemap=http%3A//www.the URL of your sitemap here.xml](http://submissions.ask.com/ping?sitemap=http%3A//www.the%20URL%20of%20your%20sitemap%20here.xml)
 - MSN/Live Search does not have a direct way to submit sitemaps at this time.
- * If you're interested, e-mail me for more information on how to get a sitemap submitted to Live Search.

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/site-map/smindex>

PDFs

Similar to how search engines struggle to “see” an image, they struggle to understand what is contained in a PDF.

To Optimize a PDF, open the PDF and go to File>Document Properties. Then, complete the title tag. You may also complete the Author tag, subject line, and keywords tag. However, these are much less important than the title tag.

While the PDF is open, go to Advanced>Accessibility>Add Tags to Document. Then, add meta tags just like you would to a html page.

* To add a page title and add meta tags, you need to use Acrobat Professional.

You should also include your keywords in the PDFs file name.

Sometimes search engines will generate a description of a PDF based on the first few sentences, so good topic sentences can pay dividends.



Whoops, Mayo Clinic didn't have any PDFs on this page.

Resources

Below are free resources that I recommend using before and after your optimization project.

Tools

[Web site Grader](#) – Submit your URLs and it will tell you how well your site is optimized.

[Submit Express' Meta Tag Analyzer](#) – This tool will tell you how well your meta tags relate to each page's content, pointing out SEO flaws in your meta tags.

[Submit Express' Keyword Suggestion Tool](#) – This free tool utilizes data from [Wordtracker](#) and [KeywordDiscovery](#) to suggest keywords related to the words you provide.

[XML-Sitemaps](#) – Sitemap generator. *This tool may not work properly on Web sites with over 100 pages.

[SEO Chat's Dynamic URL Converter](#) – This tool converts dynamic URLs into static URLs, but it only works with Apache servers.

Recommended Blogs on Search Engine Optimization

[Search Engine Watch](#)

[SEO Moz](#)

[HubSpot](#)

Bonus

Thanks for reading. I hope you learned a thing or two.

Whether or not you liked this e-book, I'd appreciate it if you critiqued my work. Please take the short, eight question [survey](#).

About Me

- I am a graduate of the University of Minnesota.
- I currently live in Minneapolis, MN.
- I've helped multiple organizations with their online marketing strategy.
- I keep an active [blog](#) about marketing, PR, advertising and new media.
- I am currently working as a marketing and communications coordinator in Maple Grove, MN.
- I will be taking on freelance marketing projects in 2008.

If you have questions, are interested in hiring me as a consultant, or would like to say hello, you can e-mail at CraigRentmeester@gmail.com

Thanks,
Craig Rentmeester