Image Optimisation Checklist

By following this image optimisation checklist your website will be better optimised from an SEO perspective, have better page speed performance and avoid cumulative layout shifts (CLS), which impact search rankings and user experience.

Note that responsive website will automatically create different size versions of uploaded images to ensure they display correctly on various devices and screen sizes.

1. Image File Format & Size

- **Use modern formats:**

  - Use **WebP** or **AVIF** for product and decorative images, if possible.

  - Use **SVG** for logos, icons and simple graphics.

- **Compress images:**

  - Use *lossless* compression for product photos to preserve detail.

  - Use *lossy* compression for banners etc. where lower resolution is acceptable.

- **Use correct dimensions:**

  - Resize images to be the smallest size that retains good resolution. This may require some trial and error but typical sizes that balance performance and resolution are 640 x 426 px and 1280 x 852 px for landscape images.

  - Avoid uploading very large images and relying on CSS/HTML to shrink them i.e. don't use image height and width attributes in the <img> tag to reduce the image size.

  - **Do** use image height and width attributes in the <img> tag that are the same as the actual image size. Browsers will then allocate the right amount of space before the image becomes visible. This avoids Cumulative Layout Shifts.

- **Use relevant "alt" text attributes**

  - *Every* image should have descriptive text that can be used by search engines if images are unavailable. This is an SEO ranking factor. Alt text is also used by screen reader software to describe images for visually impaired people.

2. Image Loading

- **Enable lazy loading** on below-the-fold images

- **Preload above-the-fold images** to reduce load delay

- **Exclude above-the-fold images from lazy loading** to avoid visual delay.

3. Content Delivery Network (CDN) & Caching

- **Use a CDN:**

  - Serve images through a CDN so the server closest to the user delivers images. This ensures faster loading times nationally and globally.

- **Set cache policies:**

  - Set long cache lifetimes for static images that don't change frequently. For example, logos can typically have a 1-year cache lifetime.

4. Optimise Decorative Images & Backgrounds

- **Avoid unnecessary decorative background images.**

- **Use CSS gradients or SVGs** where possible instead of large JPG/PNG files.