

JOYFULLY
growing



HOW TO START A BLOG *in 5 easy steps*

A QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

SO YOU WANT TO START A BLOG

but you're not quite sure where to start...

You're in the right place, my friend!

Not very long ago, I was sitting right where you are. (Ok, maybe not *right* where you are. I was in a tiny little apartment in North Dakota dreaming of the day when I'd be able to quit my day job and move a little closer to home. But I digress...) Like you, I wanted to start a blog but had no idea where to begin...

I've been there. You've got this great idea, and you want to launch it out into the world. But, the idea of getting a website up and running seems a little daunting.

Now that I've been blogging for a little while, I've realized that **all the tech stuff isn't quite as scary as I thought it was** back in that little apartment of ours.

So I've broken down the basics of starting a blog into 5 easy steps. Use this guide to turn your idea into a real-life website in minutes! I'll be here walking you through the process and **sharing the exact tools that I used** to get my blog up and running. It's easier than you might think!

Let's turn that dream of being a blogger into a reality!

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01 CHOOSE A SELF-HOSTED PLATFORM

A platform is the software or service that you will use to publish your content on the internet (*aka blog posts*). There are a few different options to choose from, including ones that are free. While normally I'm all about the free resources, when it comes to choosing a blogging platform, the free options can come with very limited flexibility.

Instead, I strongly recommend getting setup with a self-hosted platform, *especially* if you're planning to make money from your site. I personally chose to go with Wordpress.org for my site. (Note: the Wordpress.com option is NOT the same thing - don't get them confused!). You'll learn how to **setup your self-hosted platform** in step #3.

PICK A NAME 02

Once you've decided on a blogging platform, the next step is to come up with a name for your blog. Don't get hung up on choosing the perfect name. Try to choose something that fits the topics you will be writing about that is also easy to remember and easy to spell! (Spelling out your site name will get old fast!)

If you need help coming up with some ideas, try using a **domain name generator** to help get the wheels turning.

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SETUP HOSTING

Ok, now that you've got the perfect name and decided on a self-hosted blogging platform - it's time to get setup with a host for your blog. A host is the company that provides the space on its servers to store your blog content and connect it to the internet. Like with blogging platforms, there are free hosting options out there, but they come with HUGE downsides.

Instead, I recommend getting started using **Bluehost** as your hosting company. They are extremely affordable (*only \$3.49/month!*) and have great customer service - which is VERY important when choosing a hosting company. If your host has problems, your site has problems. I launched my blog with **Bluehost** and have had a great experience with them! I highly recommend them to anyone starting a new blog.

This **step-by-step tutorial** walks you through the complete setup process (*with screenshots!*) so you can start blogging TODAY!

TIP: *When I was first setting up my blog, I purchased a few different blogging courses and eBooks to help get me started. Some of them were amazing, while others were a waste (in my opinion). If you're looking for some great resources, I've linked to all of the blogging courses and eBooks that I personally recommend inside my **Blogging Tools & Resources page**.*

I can't recommend investing in your blog from the beginning enough!

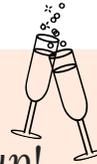


INSTALL WORDPRESS ⁰⁴

Since you've now purchased your **Bluehost hosting package**, it's time to install Wordpress and activate your domain name. Towards the end of the setup process in Bluehost, after you've created your password, you will have the option to login. Once logged in, Bluehost will install Wordpress for you. (See the **Bluehost tutorial** for screenshots of this step.)

Once Wordpress is installed, you'll want to create a "new user" and add your username, email, etc. and change the user role to Administrator (you do not want to keep the username as 'Admin'). Be sure to save the auto-generated password here, too! You'll need this to login to your Wordpress dashboard (<http://yourURLhere.com/wp-login.php>).

CONGRATS!!



Your blog is officially setup!

Now its time for the fun part - let's make it pretty!

05

SELECT A THEME

There are literally thousands of themes out there, and Wordpress comes with a ton of free options. Take some time to browse the different options and decide what you want your overall site to look like. As you research, you'll most likely come across **Genesis Framework**. With Genesis, theme designers are able to offer their custom 'child themes'.

My blog uses Genesis Framework with a child theme by **Restored 316 Designs**. Restored 316 offers beautiful, well coded themes and Lauren's support team is amazing! *I highly recommend!*

SO THERE YOU HAVE IT
you're officially a blogger!

Ok, now that your site is up and running (*or at least now you know what you need to do in order to make that happen*), here's the thing - you have to take action.

The biggest **secret** to being a successful blogger is that you have to *do the work*. While there's still so much to learn about blogging, don't get paralyzed by information overload. (*I know, easier said than done!*) Keep your head down, create content you love, and put it out into the world.

Published is better than perfect.

I'm still learning new tips & tricks about this industry every day, and I can't wait to share everything I'm learning with you - my newest *fellow blogger!*

I hope this quick reference guide was helpful and that you're feeling ready to start creating! I realize these steps are just scratching the surface when it comes to getting your blog off the ground.

Alright, friend, you've got this!

I'm over here cheering you on to live out your biggest blogging dreams! If I can do it, so can YOU!



Ashley