WORDPRESS 101

HOW TO BUILD YOUR FIRST WEBSITE FROM SCRATCH

One step at a time. No coding experience required.

Building a website need not be overwhelming. WordPress is a content management system (CMS): software for creating and organizing pages, posts and media for a business, personal brand, blog or creative project.

You'll install WordPress with Local, choose a theme, customize your branding and build a homepage—privately on your own computer.

> **A practice website—not a public launch**
>
> This guide does not cover going live. Your work stays on your computer until you separately publish it online. You do not need to buy hosting to follow along.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

• A Windows or Mac computer.

• Local, the free app at **https://localwp.com/**. It creates and manages local WordPress sites and installs WordPress for you—no separate download or manual configuration.

• Kadence, the free theme at **https://www.kadencewp.com/**, for your layout, colors and type.

• Plugins as needed: Kadence Blocks for layout blocks, Kadence Starter Templates for predesigned layouts, and Rank Math for SEO. We'll add these later, not all at once.

1 INSTALL LOCAL

Visit **https://localwp.com/** to begin.

1. Choose Download and select your operating system version.
2. Install the app and follow your computer's prompts.
3. Open Local. Its site dashboard is your starting point.

CREATE YOUR SITE & GET ORIENTED

2 CREATE A LOCAL WORDPRESS SITE

1. In Local, choose Create a new site. Name it “Monica Hacks” for this example. Select Continue.
2. Review the suggested local domain and local path. These identify the site and its storage location on your computer—not a purchased public domain.
3. Choose the Preferred/default environment. Change software or server versions only if you have a technical reason.
4. Set your administrator username, a strong password and your account email. Store the login details securely.
5. Complete setup. Local installs WordPress; allow it to finish before opening your site.

3 OPEN THE WORDPRESS DASHBOARD

In Local, select your site, choose Start Site, then WP Admin. Log in with the administrator account you just created.

Start Site runs your local website.

Stop Site stops it when you finish.

Open Site previews it in a browser.

WP Admin opens the dashboard/login.

YOUR DASHBOARD AT A GLANCE

You don’t have to learn everything at once. Use this quick reference as you go.

Dashboard	Administration overview
Posts	Blog content
Media	Uploads and image details
Pages	Home, About and Contact
Comments	Visitor comments
Appearance	Themes, menus and design
Plugins	Additional functionality
Users	Accounts and access
Tools	Site management
Settings	General configuration

Keep Local running while you edit in WordPress. Use Stop Site when you finish.

ADD A THEME & STARTER DESIGN

4 INSTALL KADENCE & THE PLUGINS

A theme controls much of your site's appearance. A plugin adds functionality. Install tools as you need them.

1. Go to Appearance → Themes → Add New Theme. Search Kadence, choose Install, then Activate.
2. Go to Plugins → Add New Plugin. Search Kadence Starter Templates, select the appropriate plugin, then Install and Activate.
3. Use the same plugin route to install and activate Kadence Blocks for additional editor design and layout blocks.
4. Search Rank Math SEO under Add New Plugin. Install and Activate; run its setup wizard when you're ready.

Activating a theme changes appearance; it does not automatically create your pages or write your content.

> **What is SEO?**
>
> SEO means search engine optimization. A plugin cannot guarantee rankings: helpful content, descriptive titles and a clear structure still matter.

5 IMPORT A STARTER WEBSITE

1. Open the dashboard's starter template library. Choose a structure that fits your project.
2. Our Monica Hacks project used "SEO Skills." This is an example, not a promise that the template will be available in your library.
3. If offered, choose colors and fonts before importing. Colors, images and copy can change later.
4. Follow import prompts and let setup finish. Preview the result with Local → Open Site.

An import may add pages, a homepage layout, header and footer, images/media, navigation, theme settings and other design elements.

For Monica Hacks, use a small palette—pink, black, white and neutrals—and about two complementary fonts. Keep your choices consistent.

> **A template is a starting point—not a finished website**
>
> Before launch, replace all sample text, images, links and branding. Preview every imported page.

SET YOUR BRAND FOUNDATION

6 CUSTOMIZE GLOBAL COLORS & TYPE

Open Appearance → Customize. The left panel changes the preview; global settings can affect many pages at once.

1. Set global colors for primary, secondary/accent, headings, body, and light/dark backgrounds.
2. Check contrast: text and buttons must be readable against their backgrounds.
3. In typography, choose body and heading fonts. Adjust size, weight, line height and letter spacing.
4. Make headings stand out and paragraphs easy to read. Preview your hierarchy before saving.

7 ADD YOUR LOGO & FAVICON

1. Find site identity/header branding in the Customizer; location varies by Kadence version/ configuration.
2. Upload or select a logo from Media Library. Balance its size and surrounding space in the header.
3. Preview screen sizes. Useful versions: horizontal, compact/stacked and a simplified icon.
4. Set your site icon/favicon in site identity settings. Use a mark that reads at a small size.

A favicon is the small browser-tab icon; it need not contain your full logo or business name.

8 BUILD A SIMPLE HEADER

1. Open Customizer → Header for Kadence Header Builder. Desktop/mobile controls may differ.
2. Arrange what you need: logo, primary nav, search, buttons, social links or a mobile trigger.
3. Try logo left, navigation right. Coordinate global colors and leave breathing room.
4. Preview desktop and mobile. Keep the logo and navigation legible and uncluttered.

> **What does Publish do here?**
>
> In this local installation, the Customizer's Publish button saves theme changes locally. It does not put your website on the internet.

TURN THE TEMPLATE INTO YOUR STORY

9 WRITE A CLEAR HOMEPAGE HERO

The hero is your homepage introduction. Tell visitors who you are, what you offer, who it's for and what to do next.

1. Open Pages → All Pages → Home → Edit. You can also use Edit Page in the logged-in toolbar while viewing the homepage.
2. Replace the sample heading and paragraph with your own message. Keep the introduction focused and useful.
3. Replace the sample image with a representative photo; size and crop it to suit the layout. Preview the result.
4. Add a clear call to action (CTA). Link the button to the destination it promises and use readable, contrasting colors.

MONICA HACKS EXAMPLE

MONICA HACKS TIPS, TRICKS & TUTORIALS

Pair a portrait with introductory copy about practical technology, design, website and creative-tool tips.

CTA: EXPLORE ALL TUTORIALS

Other useful labels: Learn More, View Resources, Get Started or Contact Me. Choose the one that matches the destination.

10 GET COMFORTABLE WITH THE BLOCK EDITOR

Each Paragraph, Heading, Image, Button or layout block holds part of your page. Click a block to edit its content.

1. Use the selected-block toolbar for quick actions. Use the right settings panel for detailed styles: alignment, sizes, colors, backgrounds, spacing and borders.
2. Open List View from the editor toolbar to see the block hierarchy. Expand or collapse sections, select hard-to-reach nested blocks and reorder content.
3. Build sections with one focus each: introduction, tutorials, resources, popular topics, about and important links. Replace sample copy and links throughout.

ADD IMAGES, SECTIONS & A FOOTER

11 REPLACE & DESCRIBE YOUR IMAGES

1. Select an Image block → Replace → upload or choose from Media Library. A background image may live in the containing block's background settings; use List View to find it.
2. Use Media → Library to manage uploads, edit details and reuse images. Before uploading, name files descriptively: "monica-hacks-homepage.jpg," not "IMG_1234.jpg."
3. In Media Library, select an image → Alternative Text. Write a short, relevant description and save if prompted. Also check alt text in its actual page context—not just the filename.

Alt text supports screen readers and explains meaningful image content. Example: "Laptop displaying a website design on a desk." Don't keyword-stuff; a purely decorative image may appropriately have empty alt text on the page.

12 BUILD SECTIONS WITH KADENCE ROW LAYOUT

1. In the editor, select +, search Row Layout, then choose Kadence Row Layout and a column structure.
2. Try two columns for text and an image, or three for resources/tutorials. Add headings, text, images, buttons, icons or other blocks.
3. Style the row's background, alignment and spacing. Use responsive settings for column widths, padding, margins, image size and content spacing.
4. Preview each screen size. Desktop columns often stack on mobile; check their order and spacing after stacking.

13 CUSTOMIZE YOUR FOOTER

1. Open Customizer → Footer for the Footer Builder. Arrange rows, columns and widget areas for your site description, contact details, navigation and social links.
2. Use widget blocks such as paragraphs, headings, buttons, links and social icons. Add relevant Privacy Policy, Terms or other important pages.
3. Add copyright wording; our example is "© 2026 MonicaHacks." Adapt the wording and year for your own site.
4. Match your colors and typography, keep links readable and check the footer on mobile.

> **Legal links need real destinations**
>
> Adding Privacy Policy or Terms links is not a substitute for writing the policies that apply to your website. Preparing those pages is a future step.

CHECK YOUR MENUS & SAVE YOUR WORK

14 SET UP MOBILE NAVIGATION

1. Open Customizer → Header → mobile view. The hamburger opens the mobile/off-canvas panel.
2. Adjust the trigger's icon style, size, color, background, padding and spacing where available. Keep it recognizable and easy to tap.
3. Coordinate the panel background, link colors, spacing, typography and alignment. Check contrast; test opening, closing and every link.

15 STYLE DESKTOP NAVIGATION

Go to Customizer → Header → primary navigation. Depending on your version, styles may include Standard, Full Height, Underline and Full Height Underline.

1. Set normal, hover and active colors/backgrounds. Hover changes when a pointer is over an item; active identifies the current page.
2. Choose readable font, weight, spacing and padding. Avoid crowding the header with too many tiny links.

16 GROUP RELATED PAGES IN DROPDOWNS

Group related subpages beneath a main item—for example, tutorial categories under Tutorials. Use sensible groups rather than one huge undifferentiated menu.

Style the background, links, hover state, type, dividers, shadow, border and radius where available. Keep contrast and spacing clear, then test every link.

17 REVIEW AS A NEW VISITOR—THEN SAVE

1. Preview desktop, tablet and mobile. Is the site's purpose clear? Check headings, readable text, relevant images and consistent colors.
2. Check logo/header size, menu behavior, accurate buttons, image crops, stacked columns, type/button placement, section spacing and a useful footer.
3. Use Customizer → Publish for theme customization. Use Save/Update in the page editor for content. Save both when you change both.

> **Saved locally does not mean published publicly**
>
> All work in this Local installation stays on your computer. Publishing online is a separate process and is not covered in this guide. Stop Site in Local when you're finished working.

FINAL WEBSITE SETUP CHECKLIST

Check off your progress. This is a local-site milestone—not a public launch.

WORDPRESS INSTALLATION

- ☐ Download and install Local.
- ☐ Create a new local WordPress website.
- ☐ Set up your WordPress administrator username and password.
- ☐ Open the WordPress dashboard.
- ☐ Familiarize yourself with the main dashboard sections.

THEME AND PLUGINS

- ☐ Install and activate the Kadence theme.
- ☐ Install Kadence Starter Templates.
- ☐ Install Kadence Blocks.
- ☐ Install Rank Math or another SEO plugin.
- ☐ Import your chosen starter website.

WEBSITE BRANDING

- ☐ Choose your website's global color palette.
- ☐ Select your heading and body fonts.
- ☐ Upload your logo.
- ☐ Set up your favicon.
- ☐ Customize the desktop header.
- ☐ Customize the mobile header.
- ☐ Adjust your navigation menu.
- ☐ Style your dropdown menus.

HOMEPAGE DESIGN

- ☐ Update your homepage heading.
- ☐ Replace the starter template text.
- ☐ Replace sample images.
- ☐ Add descriptive alt text where appropriate.
- ☐ Create your homepage sections.
- ☐ Add buttons and call-to-action links.
- ☐ Customize your page layouts.
- ☐ Review your images and spacing.
- ☐ Preview your homepage on desktop and mobile.

FOOTER AND NAVIGATION

- ☐ Customize your footer layout.
- ☐ Add copyright information.
- ☐ Add important footer links.
- ☐ Check your desktop navigation.
- ☐ Check your mobile navigation.
- ☐ Test your dropdown menus.

YOU'VE BUILT A FOUNDATION!

Celebrate your local installation, theme, starter design, own branding and homepage. Keep experimenting at your own pace.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Future topics—not covered here: About, Contact and Services pages; organizing navigation; blog posts and categories; SEO titles and meta descriptions; privacy and terms pages; analytics and tracking; cookie/privacy tools; image and performance optimization; and publishing preparation. Static-hosting export applies only if you use a static publishing workflow.

Happy website building! — Monica Hacks