

The background of the cover is a light blue gradient with a pattern of vertical lines of binary code (0s and 1s) in a slightly darker blue. The text is centered and has a white-to-blue gradient with a drop shadow.

101 Tips

For Improving Your Blog

Ben Barden

Welcome!

Thank you for downloading this ebook. It is the result of a lot of hard work, several different blogs, posts good and bad, thousands of comments, and a lot of trial and error.

I've seen lots of blogs pushing the same tips, over and over. Lots of people are saying the same thing - so they must be right. Right?

Well, not exactly. Not everyone will benefit from the same tips. Different things work for different blogs.

"101 tips for improving your blog" is not a typical set of tips and tricks that every other blog tells you to do. Split into ten sections with ten tips in each (plus one bonus tip at the end), every tip was written to give you a clear and honest insight into what blogging is really about.

I've tried to keep jargon to a minimum, as there's no use in reading an ebook that assumes you already know the jargon of the topic you're learning about.

I've also tried to keep the tips relevant to any blogging platform, as not everyone is using WordPress.

If you're looking for more tips, there's an active blog for you to read. Quick Blog Tips is a collection of tips and tricks for bloggers of any skill level.

I hope you find this ebook useful. Please share it with your friends and family.

Ben Barden

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Quick Blog Tips: <http://www.quickblogtips.com/>



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Advertising and Promotion

Tip 1: Join CMF Ads

As the lead developer at [CMF Ads](#), you could argue that I'm biased. But I wouldn't recommend it if I didn't believe in it.

CMF Ads is a low cost, high value ad network. Add your blog, add the widget, use the forums, accept ads and earn a few dollars, or pay just \$0.20 for 50 clicks to your blog. There are options to suit everyone, and it's a great way to get some new readers to your blog.

It may be my ad network, but I do use it on my main blogs – and it's helped to bring several new readers to them.

Tip 2: Get a decent ad image

It's a complete waste of time placing ads unless you have a decent, memorable ad image. Your ad should give people a compelling reason to click on it. Here are some images you probably shouldn't use:

- a tiny screenshot of your blog
- someone else's image
- a photo of yourself (unless it's a personal blog and you're well-known)

- an image that is completely crammed full of text
- an irrelevant image (e.g. a “hot girl” photo for a tech blog)

Do try and include a small amount of text – your pitch – to get more people clicking your ad.

Frankly, a crappy ad image will produce crappy results. Look at what you can do to improve your ads before blaming other people (such as the sites you advertise on, or the networks you advertise with) for things that only you can sort out.

Tip 3: Find your advertising value

A good thing about ad networks is that you can often buy ads quite cheaply, whereas a private ad on a blog will typically set you back at least \$10 per month.

However, if you want to earn money from ad networks, you may find that you earn quite slowly due to the need to set a low price.

Think you can set a high price and rake it in? Think again.

Most small blogs should aim for a low cost ad. If you have a larger blog, that's fine - but measure your ad price against blogs in your niche that are similarly sized.

Don't expect \$250 per month when your blog is no bigger than the guy who charges \$25 just down the road (in online terms, obviously). And don't look at an expensive ad on another site and expect that everyone will be willing to pay for it.

Tip 4: Position your ads carefully

I've seen a lot of blogs with a 256 credit Entrecard widget at the bottom, with a \$0.05 CMF Ads widget above that, and a FREE Project Wonderful ad at the top.

Why would anyone buy the more expensive ads if the cheapest one is at the top?

In short, you should ensure that the positioning of ads matches the price you charge for them. Don't forget to review the placement of your ads when adding or removing widgets or ad slots.

Tip 5: Shop around

Don't settle on the first ad price you come across. Check different networks as well as private ad rates. You may get a better deal if you spend a little longer looking, instead of buying the most obvious ad (which may turn out to be the most expensive).

Tip 6: Beware of empty ad slots

It's fine to have one empty ad slot, or maybe two, to show you have slots open for advertisers.

But when you see a whole row of them - especially across many different ad widgets - it suggests the blog may not be worth advertising on.

Reduce the number of empty slots or you may not get any ads at all. It is very unusual for a blog to put up 30 ads and get them all filled very quickly unless it is a popular blog with reasonable rates. And even then, many advertisers will be put off by a blog that has too many ads on it.

Tip 7: Don't promote an unpolished blog

Nobody expects a brand new blogger to make a groundbreaking blog from the very beginning.

But while a blog can be very lonely if you have no readers, and you may have an urge to tell everyone about what you're up to, resist the temptation until you have something to share.

It's one thing if you use a pre-made template, write a few solid posts, and then share your blog with your close friends.

But it's best to avoid telling people about your awesome new blog if there are no posts and you're still in the middle of moving things around.

Tip 8: Don't spam

By far the most annoying thing about promotion is when people think they can just post their link anywhere and everywhere.

There are various ways to promote your blog - it's best to try them one at a time, and use them sparingly.

Don't just drop your link all over the web - you'll just be seen as a spammer.

Tip 9: Link to previous posts

This ebook is a bit different to a blog post. It has a large volume of content, and I don't want to clog it up with loads of links. Also, it's not very useful to include links for an ebook you might print and read offline.

Blogs are very different though. Once you've published 40 or 50 posts on your blog, don't forget to link to previous posts if it's appropriate to do so.

Linking to your posts is a great way to cross-promote your content within your blog and get people clicking from one post to another.

Tip 10: Watch out for bargains

Contests, giveaways, special offers - these are great opportunities for you to promote your blog on the cheap. Winning a contest is all about luck, and it's usually quick and easy to put your name down, so why not?

Blogging Personalities

Tip 11: Be yourself

Why be anyone else? People will be able to relate to you much more easily. And it's so much easier than trying to lie!

Tip 12: Tell people who you are

Don't feel that you have to reveal your date of birth and marital status - but do open up to people a little. Some questions to get you started:

Why do you blog?

What kind of person are you?

Who would you like to meet?

Give people a way to connect with you, by opening up and telling them who you are.

Tip 13: Collaborate with like-minded bloggers

Whether you're writing a guest post, starting a project, working on a group blog or simply bouncing a few ideas around, a team can achieve so much more than you can on your own.

Have you met other bloggers who have similar views or goals? Could you get together and work towards a common goal?

Tip 14: Have a voice

If you are a drone who writes generic, boring posts with no personality, don't be surprised if people aren't compelled to interact with you.

Go beyond the basics of blogging - don't just follow other people's advice. Show people who you are.

Tip 15: Accept that we can't all get along

It just doesn't matter if people disagree with you. Someone always will.

Don't try to make friends with everyone - just do the best you can, and if it's not good enough for some people, shrug and move on.

Tip 16: Engage your community

Give people a reason to care about what you have to say. I choose not to reply to every comment individually, but I do follow up on some comments in future posts. I exchange emails and post in forums too.

Tip 17: Accept interviews

Email interviews can be a good way to connect with other bloggers. I've been interviewed a few times by people who have shown a genuine interest in my blog.

Accepting interviews shows you're approachable, and also gives some insights into your character that you might not think to mention when writing your posts.

Tip 18: Share your mistakes

Are we all expected to be on top form and in high spirits every day of the week?

We're not perfect - sometimes it's good to remind our readers that we're human and we do make mistakes.

Tip 19: Take some risks

Does your blog sit happily within your comfort zone, with easy predictable posts that don't really say anything out of the ordinary?

Take a new stance - try a new angle - or perhaps a new writing style. Invite commenters to be interviewed on your site if they disagree with you. It helps to keep things interesting.

Tip 20: Influence others

Are you doing things that other people don't think of? Could you start a movement or lead by example?

Whether it's intentional or not, influencers are people who are always thinking of new things to try out, and who sometimes just want to experiment to see how things go. Find a successful path, and others will follow.

Comments

Tip 21: Don't put links in the comment body

Only put your link in the URL field. Don't leave a link to your blog in the body of your comment. Don't make it look like a signature or try and hide it under a full stop (this one is a *really* spammy thing to do). Use the URL field for your link, and leave it at that.

Tip 22: Don't hunt for "dofollow" blogs

If you want other people to click your blog URL when they read your comment, it really doesn't matter if the blog is "dofollow".

I think you're better off commenting on blogs that interest you, not blogs that simply offer a "dofollow" link.

Tip 23: A comment is like a blog mini-ad

Your comment is like a mini-advertisement for your blog. Write a great comment, and people will be much more likely to check out your blog. Write something that doesn't really add anything to the discussion, and other readers will ignore you - especially if your comment is one in a long line of 100.

Tip 24: Don't try to be the first commenter

What is this obsession with writing the first comment? And with saying "First!" when you do so? Stop it! Just write something useful. We know you can (probably) count, it isn't something you need to prove.

Tip 25: It's hard to get noticed on a big blog.

Sure, more people read the big blogs, but more people comment, too. Your comment is far more likely to be read and responded to on a small blog. It may take longer to make connections this way, but I think the connections will be far more valuable.

Tip 26: NEVER allow spam comments

I see so many comments on other blogs that are clearly spam, it makes me wonder if people let them through to make their blog look busy.

Chances are, if someone by the name of "Reseller Hosting" is telling you that your latest post is "the best yet" and to "keep on" writing great posts... well, it might be worth Googling the body of the comment to see if it's shown up on 100 other blogs.

If it's spam – trash it. Check out spamcomment.com for examples of weird and wonderful spam comments, with a bit of humour thrown in for good measure.

Tip 27: Long comments may be better as a new post.

If you find yourself writing a few paragraphs in the comment box, whether it's on your blog or someone else's, consider if your comment might be of interest to others – and therefore, if it could become a totally new post.

But if you split the discussion into a new post, how easy is it to follow the resulting comments? That's really your call.

I think it's best to start with a discussion in the blog comments. Then, if it escalates into a much larger debate, try writing a blog post to sum up your thoughts.

I don't agree with disabling comments to force people to write posts instead of commenting though.

Tip 28: Make commenting quick and easy

Don't force people to jump through hoops. Well, not too many, anyway. Spam is an ongoing problem, but if I have to register an account or your word verification image is a nightmare to read, I probably won't bother to leave you a comment.

Tip 29: Don't view criticism as trolling

While a persistently negative commenter can spoil things for everyone else, criticism is often posted with good intentions.

If you ask me to review your blog, or you just ask for feedback, I will tell you if I don't like it. I'll also tell you why. Don't take offence at that - take the comments on board, and accept that criticism can be useful. 100% praise is probably less helpful – how can you improve?

Tip 30: Don't try to force comments

A forced comment is worse than no comment at all. Don't tell a blogger that you "just stopped by" every time you do so. It'll flood their comments. Save your breath for when there's something you actually want to comment on. Your words will be more valuable. And don't even get me started on "Nice post!"...

Content

Tip 31: Try not to choose a narrow niche

A narrow niche is not much fun to write for. How many times can you write about a really tiny topic before it gets boring?

Try to choose a broader topic - not so broad that you're overwhelmed by the sheer volume of potential topics, but broad enough that you can write more than a dozen posts on it.

Tip 32: Be consistent with your focus

Don't choose one topic then write about something totally different. If your topic is boring or there aren't enough posts for you to write, either start a new blog or change the existing one.

If I started publishing my thoughts about the latest videogames at Top Ten Blog Tips, wouldn't you get a bit confused? I would!

Tip 33: Make sure you want to write!

What's the point in blogging if you hate doing it? How likely is it that your blog will last longer than a few months?

Write about things that actually interest you. Whether it's a topic that sits squarely in your niche, or it's only loosely related, make sure you're writing posts that you want to write.

Tip 34: Have an opinion

Why bother reporting what's in the latest WordPress release if you can't be bothered to include your views on the latest changes?

Tip 35: Avoid link spam posts

Mister Linky, Linky Tools, Music Monday, and so on – you know, the posts where there's barely anything to read except for a massive list of 100+ links.

Guess what? The person to start the list is getting loads of free links – people won't bother reading beyond the first few.

So should you start your own? Absolutely not. Search engines may view your blog as a link farm, and may remove you from their search results completely.

Don't underestimate the value of appearing in search results. Don't screw up your rank by copying and pasting a spammy list of links onto your blog.

Tip 36: Don't trick people into clicking paid links

If I come to your blog and every post contains a sneaky link to a site, e.g. "I went to the dentist today, by the way have you heard of this Las Vegas hotel?", then I'm not coming back.

OK, so it's usually a bit more relevant than that, but it's far too common to see a fairly uninteresting post that twists and turns and just happens to hit a rather obscure point - which means the paid link can be included at that point.

You want to make money? Fine - just don't claim to be blogging "for the love of it" if all you write are paid reviews. And don't complain if you have hardly any readers or commenters. You'd do a lot better to run the paid reviews on one blog, and have a second blog that's totally free of any such links.

Tip 37: "Check this out" is no substitute for original content

If you're going to link to someone else's content, at least write something about it.

"Hey I just found this news story... check it out" - it's incredible how many of these people try to claim that they're not copying content when it's so obvious that they are.

Too many sites are posting the same content as it is - if you have the same content as every other site, why would anyone visit your site over the next one?

Tip 38: Writing daily can lead to burnout

I've heard a lot of so-called "blogging experts" suggesting that it's good to write one GREAT post a week, amongst your other posts.

Why not just write the posts that you know will turn out great, and ditch the rest? Or spend a little longer making all your posts worth reading.

I've also seen a lot of bloggers claim that you have to write daily to stand a chance of standing out.

My view is that if you force yourself to write daily when you don't have the time or interest to do so, you'll kill your blog. Forced writing means that your content will suffer. You'll burn out. You might quit blogging. And you'll overwhelm your readers.

It is good to get a decent amount of content on your site over the first 6 months, but even then, why post daily if you're not writing decent posts?

Tip 39: Site-specific posts are OK in small doses.

Specifically, a post that talks about how your site is progressing, your stats, a weekly round-up, that kind of post can be acceptable.

But I would avoid writing posts that are totally off-topic unless you have a personal blog, where anything goes. On any other blog, it's not really relevant.

Top 40: Strong titles are vital

A vital title? I like that!

If your post title does not give people a compelling reason to read the post, why would they click it?

Search engines, blogging networks and feed readers usually show the post title far more prominently than the content of the post - you may not even have the option to view the content until you click through.

With so many potential posts to read, readers will gravitate towards the best titles. Bland titles, such as “What I did today” or “Random thoughts” just don't stand out.

Design

Tip 41: Get a custom design

It can be expensive, but it is worth it.

A custom design stands out and allows you to move out of the circle of bloggers who use a template that anyone else can use, too. That's not to say their blogs aren't worth reading, but I've always found a custom design to be much more appealing.

Also, I think a blog with a custom design is much less likely to be abandoned at the first sign of trouble. Using a default template may be free and easy, but it also means it's a lot easier to walk away.

Maybe that's what you want when you're finding your feet. In which case, to echo an earlier point: don't share your blog until it's polished. In other words – sort out your design and get some posts online before you start telling people about your new blog.

Tip 42: Clear your clutter

Too many blogs have every widget under the sun. It's messy, it slows down your blog, and a lot of them don't really add value for your readers.

Ditch the sidebar junk and make your blog cleaner. Empty space isn't a bad thing!

Tip 43: Keep your sidebar tidy

Chances are, you'll probably have a few widgets that you can't do without. (This doesn't mean it's always OK to add "just one more" if you already have 20.) Those that you do have should be organised in a way that makes them look fairly neat.

They don't have to be tightly packed nor do you have to lump them all in one large area, but they should look coordinated - and like you didn't just throw them on the page without any thought. If everything has its place, you may be able to justify slightly more widgets than if everything is in a mess.

Tip 44: Test your site in different browsers

Firefox, Internet Explorer, Opera, Chrome, Safari - five major browsers that it's worth testing your site in. Try viewing your site on a mobile phone if you can. And don't forget to view your site on older browsers, too - so not just the latest version of each browser.

There are tools to help you with this if you search around (try searching for IETester or BrowserShots). It's better to find the issues before your visitors do.

Tip 45: Use a clean profile for testing

Your browser profile is probably full of history - cookies and the like. This means you may not notice if a popup ad creeps onto your blog unexpectedly. Or, you might have a few tabs open and think it's from another site. Plus, some of these popups are stealthy - once they've shown, they will remember not to pop up on your next visit (unless you don't come back for a few days or weeks).

Don't just test for design issues in other browsers - also test what your site looks like for a first-time visitor who has none of your cookies loaded into their browser, and who isn't logged in.

Tip 46: Improve your load time

This isn't just to do with clutter looking a bit messy. Does your blog have dozens of images and scripts loading on every page? Keep an eye on how long they take to load, and consider removing things that load incredibly slowly all the time.

[Pingdom Tools](#) is an excellent place to test how fast (or how slow) your site loads.

Tip 47: Don't put too much on your homepage

Show too much and it'll overwhelm your readers. Consider limiting the number of posts on your home page - you don't have to show everything at once. And you shouldn't try to if you have more than a handful of posts.

Tip 48: Get a second opinion

You may love the way your blog looks, but others may disagree. This doesn't mean you should change your design completely if one person complains, but if the majority of your readers find it hard on the eyes, you may want to have a rethink.

Tip 49: Optimise your images

Instead of uploading a full-size image and resizing it in the post editor, use an image editor to save the image at a respectable size before uploading it.

Anything larger than 100KB is probably too big - and even that's pushing it. 50KB or less is better, but that may be difficult to achieve for some high-quality images.

Also, don't use BMP on the web - stick to PNG, JPG and GIF. That's also my order of preference - depending on your requirements, PNG and JPG are generally best.

Tip 50: Important info should not be animated

In general, animation should be avoided or at least used *very* sparingly. If I can't keep up with your scrolling banners and have to wait for them to come round again so I can finish reading, that's not a good thing.

Guest Posts

Tip 51: Show alternative views or styles

Guest posts can be an excellent opportunity to show another viewpoint or style.

Don't just choose anyone to write for your blog - look for people who write a little differently from you, but without being totally irrelevant to your readers. This can be a great way to add some variety to your blog.

Tip 52: Don't use guest posts as your “day off”

I've had people who send guest posts to me for publishing, some who promise to write if I'm interested and they send me their post within a week, and those who promise to write but never do so. Always have your own content ready if a guest post falls through.

Don't worry too much about whether the guest writer comes up with the goods or not - after all, it's your blog, and you should always have new posts waiting in the wings.

Tip 53: Don't flood your blog with guest posts

Unless it's a group blog, many people read the blogs that they do because they like reading from a certain writer. If I wanted to read someone else's posts all day long, I'd go to *their* blog. Use guest posts sparingly.

Tip 54: Guest posts can launch other posts

There are various ways to come up with new content for your blog, and guest posts might yield some good ideas for you. This isn't just beneficial for you, it also helps the author of the guest post and may bring them additional readers - so they might just write for you again.

Tip 55: Aim high when writing guest posts

Want to write a post for an A-list blog? Well, why not try sending the post over? Don't worry if they don't accept the post - you can always ask somebody else.

Tip 56: Don't copy your guest posts

I like to have a list of guest posts available for people to read, but I always link to the original posts, rather than duplicating the content on my own site. It helps to keep the comments in one place.

Tip 57: Proof-read before you submit

Don't expect the publisher to edit out your mistakes. Do it yourself. You won't be able to edit the post once it's up, unlike the posts on your own blog.

Tip 58: Write a solid introduction

This goes for whether you're writing your own guest post for another blog, or you're publishing someone else's post written for your own blog. You don't want to go in cold. Ensure that people realise that it's a guest post!

Tip 59: Thank the right person

When commenting, be careful who you thank. It's a bit silly if someone writes a guest post for my blog and someone comes over to say "Great post Ben!" Even if it says "Posted by Ben" at the top, it does quite clearly state that it's a guest post in the first paragraph. This is a very common problem on ProBlogger.

Tip 60: Promote the post

Whether you wrote it for another blog or someone else wrote it for your blog, promoting a guest post is a bit different to promoting your own post on your own blog. The

author of the post or the owner of the blog may promote the post for you. Don't forget to promote it too.

Networking

Tip 61: Make new readers feel welcome

Sometimes I get the feeling that certain bloggers would rather stick to their current social circle than consider inviting anyone new in.

If you want to make connections and get your blog noticed by more people, I think you have to be willing to meet new people.

Tip 62: Spamming is not networking

Don't just think you can plaster your link all over every forum and social networking site and that you'll suddenly become an overnight superstar. If you come across as a spammer, most people won't give you the time of day.

Tip 63: Patience is a virtue

Did you just publish your latest post? Great! Did anyone read it? Well, how long has it been? 1 hour? Don't worry just yet.

Many people will need a few days to find and digest your post - don't expect everyone to be all over it within 5 minutes.

Tip 64: Find ways to cross-promote

Join a blogging forum, talk about blogging. Join a music forum, talk about music. What if you have a music blog? You can join both forums!

Tip 65: Don't undervalue passive interest

Passive interest might mean joining a forum and adding a link to your signature, or including a link in your email signature. If people want to check out your blog, they can do so. No need to push it on them.

Tip 66: Beware of time wasters

If a site promises to bring you loads of traffic but you have to work like mad to get anything at all, you may want to think about whether that site is a worthwhile use of your time. It's probably not.

Tip 67: You can network offline, too

Why not bring up your blog in conversation, if it's relevant to do so? I have friends and family who read my blog, whether I like it or not!

Tip 68: Loyal readers can come from unexpected locations

You may be so busy trying to get people to visit your blog that you missed some of the best ways to network. Try different sites - draw your own conclusions - and don't write off a potential networking opportunity before you've tried it out.

Tip 69: Read other blogs

It's a great way to see what others are saying, and you can get into some good discussions, too. Add a comment if you have something to say.

Tip 70: Don't overdo it

If you're networking more than you're blogging, you may need to adjust the balance. It's all too easy to get sucked into Twitter, Facebook, forums and the like, but there's a time and a place to say "that's enough for now" so you can go and do something else. Don't sit on social sites all day long.

Overcoming blogger's block

Tip 71: Look at your categories

If any of them are low on posts, try writing a post for that category. This may help you to think of a new post, along with ideas for additional posts.

Tip 72: Ask your readers for feedback

Is there anything they'd like to know? Or do they have any ideas for new posts that you could write? You may find some ideas here, too.

Tip 73: Write a follow-up post

Which posts went down well? Could you write a follow-up? Try it. Don't overdo it - "cashing in" can get boring quite quickly.

Tip 74: Take a break

If you're totally out of ideas, don't force yourself to write posts - chances are, they won't be very good. Take some time away from your blog and you'll come back with a fresh outlook.

Tip 75: Look at your focus

How focused is your blog? Is it about anything and everything? Is it too specific? See if there is anything you could do to improve your focus, or realign your priorities. Make sure you choose a topic you know and like.

Tip 76: Change your posting style

Sick of your usual ways? Maybe it's time to shake things up a little with a different type of post. Break the mould and try something new.

Tip 77: Comment on other blogs

If you write a decent comment, you may find that it opens a few avenues for you. Is it something you could transform into a new post?

Tip 78: Do some networking

Engaging with other people, bloggers or otherwise, is a good opportunity to step away from trying to think of a new topic. You may find that something hits you when you least expect it.

Tip 79: Answer a comment

Did you receive a comment on a previous post that you could reply to in a new post?

Instead of expecting people to go and read your reply in the comments section, bring it to a wider audience by writing a new post.

Tip 80: Write some constructive criticism

Is there a product or service you feel strongly about, either positively or negatively? Why not write a constructive review of it? Forget the paid links - and forget trying to dress it up. Keep it honest and relate it back to your niche, and you may find it attracts quite a bit of interest.

Planning

Tip 81: Write post headings first

Got a great idea for a post, but not sure how to write it? Start with the headings. It makes writing the post a lot easier.

Tip 82: Set a time for writing posts

That way, you can warn your family that you'll be unavailable at that time. Otherwise, you may get interrupted, or forget to write altogether.

Tip 83: Plan several posts at once

This can be a really good way to write lots of content in a short amount of time. Write just the headings for several posts in a row - you may find you make better use of your writing time.

Tip 84: Build up a stock of posts

This allows you to take a break when you need to. It's better to get ahead when you can, than run out of posts and have nothing new to go up.

Tip 85: Schedule your upcoming posts

If you have a few new posts ready to be published, don't push them all out at once. Spread them out. Then you won't overwhelm your readers - and you won't forget to publish them!

Tip 86: Tell people what's coming up

If you have a few new posts to publish in the next few days, you can mention to people that there are some great topics waiting in the wings. Give them the post titles. They may be more likely to subscribe if they can see what to expect in the near future.

Tip 87: Devise a strategy for quiet periods

When the Internet is quiet, that doesn't mean you have to be, too. But you could come up with themed posts to suit the seasons. Just steer clear of the supposedly-obligatory "Merry Christmas" posts that everyone else is writing. Relate the season back to your niche instead.

You could also write different types of post at the weekend, or schedule guest posts on a certain day of the week. Be sure to keep things fresh though - don't get stuck in a rut.

Tip 88: Find a schedule that suits you

Is Wednesday your busiest day? Do you prefer to write at the weekend then publish your posts through the week? Experiment, and find what works best for you.

Tip 89: Turn “dead time” into usable time

Do you get the train to work? Why not plan your next post on your way? If you have quite a way to go, this can be a very effective use of your time.

Tip 90: Plan a series of posts

Planning is absolutely vital if you want to go beyond one post wonders and join a few posts together to make a series. You can go into much more depth if you write a series, but each part must be well thought out, and it's important to divide the series in a logical way. That's where planning really helps.

Post Frequency

Tip 91: Forget about posting daily

You DO NOT need to post every single day to have a blog that people want to read. Whether it's a success is really down to your interpretation of what success means.

If you attract 100 readers who love your content, that's a great achievement. If your blog isn't as big as the biggest blogs on the Internet, does it matter?

Don't chase stats, don't feel you have to write more often than you feel able to, and don't write when you have no ideas. Take your time.

Tip 92: Set some expectations

A consistent schedule works for some people. If you're more likely to keep up with your blog by sticking to a schedule, do it. Find a schedule that works for you. Tell your readers when to expect the next post. Set their expectations, and funnily enough, they'll know what to expect!

Tip 93: Irregular posting isn't a bad thing

Contrary to popular belief, Twitter is not the only method that people are using to read blogs.

Twitter moves so quickly, it's easy to miss a post if you're not online when the author shares it. And no, it's not as simple as "the good stuff will be retweeted" - an awful lot of great content is hardly shared at all, while a mediocre post from a big blog seems to be shared by everyone.

People who want to keep up with a particular blog are quite likely to subscribe. If they subscribe, it doesn't really matter when you post, because they'll be notified as soon as you do.

Tip 94: Don't post too often

If you're posting frequently, don't cram the posts so close together that a last minute post wouldn't fit in anywhere.

This tip extends to your readers, too - I know a lot of big blogs post a lot of content, but it's far too much for me. I unsubscribed from most of the bigger blogs out there for this reason. They flooded my reader with posts. Even if a lot of the posts are good, it's too much to take in.

Tip 95: Relate post length to post frequency

Post length and frequency are connected. This is a particularly important tip to remember if you decide to publish lots of posts every week. Some blogs can get away with publishing a high volume of content as their posts are quick and easy to read.

I think you'll come unstuck if you try to write long, detailed posts too often. Your readers may find that it's impossible to keep up with you; and you may struggle to keep to that posting frequency.

It's one thing to embark on a posting marathon for a week, or for a month - but a very frequent publishing schedule doesn't usually work well with "heavy" content.

Tip 96: Be sure to avoid burnout

This can be a problem if you write a lot of posts in a short space of time. On the other hand, you should be careful not to slow down to the point that you can't be bothered to write anything at all. It's all about balance.

Tip 97: Frequency matters less in the long run

This is partially a time factor, but it's mostly to do with how much content is on your site.

I've changed my posting frequency at Top Ten Blog Tips a few times now, and while the regular readers might be happier if I posted a bit more often, new readers have plenty of past posts to browse through.

I think that once you go beyond 50 posts, the importance of posting constantly decreases a great deal.

Now, I'm sure there will be people thinking that nobody will visit if they don't update for ages. But if your blog has a domain name with strong keywords, and your posts have decent URLs (i.e. the post title appears in the URL, rather than ?p=1), your posts may start to attract a lot of search engine traffic.

I've seen a lot of blogs that disappear after just a few months, and this is a huge shame - even if they didn't update all that often, a site can take several months before it starts to attract decent traffic from search engines.

In the beginning, my blogs have very, very little search engine traffic - right now it accounts for 70% of my traffic, and counting. I may not get massive views, but I do get some, and it's only picked up in the last few months. In fact, when I stopped posting for a couple of months, my search engine traffic slowly crept up. New people find my blog all the time.

It's easier for people to find your blog if it's been running for a while - and easier still if you don't change the domain name every few months.

In summary, don't worry about how often you post if you can keep your blog running for the first 6 months. You'll be fine!

Tip 98: Just one new post can work wonders

The funny thing about search engine traffic is that it can look like it's "bubbling under" for an extended period of time... and then you post something new. Generally, it will go up a bit. If your post is popular, it may spike a lot.

The key here is that no matter what your posting frequency is, and especially if you decide to go AWOL for months at a time, never forget that even one post a month is enough to keep a steady flow of visitors checking out your site.

On the other hand, don't bother promoting your site heavily if you don't have any new content. You may as well just let the traffic from search engines keep on rolling in. (But that's really a topic for the Advertising and Promotion section!)

Tip 99: Don't push great posts down the page

If you just posted something that's attracting a lot of comments, let it run for a bit. There's nothing worse than posting something new just as the previous post was getting started, and potentially killing the comments (a lot of people only seem to read the first post on your home page - few people will read everything). It's especially daft to push your best posts down the page with something dull.

Tip 100: Some things are better as a footnote

If you change your posting frequency, or you've been away for a while, it's OK to mention it - but only as a brief comment in another post. Don't waste a whole post saying "I'm away for now, but will be back next week. See you then!" - it's a pointless post.

A tip to live by

Tip 101

Write what you know and like, because blogging should be achievable and enjoyable.

Want some more?

This ebook listed 101 tips for improving your blog. There are plenty more where they came from. Namely:

- quickblogtips.com - If you enjoyed this ebook, you'll love the accompanying blog. The blog contains hundreds of tips and tricks for improving your blog.