Page Speed Quick-Fix Guide

Test your site in five minutes, fix the three things that need no developer, and know when the real problem is your hosting.

> **Why bother.** Most small business sites should load in under 3 seconds on a phone. Slower and people tap back before they see your number. Google uses speed as a ranking signal and Google Ads charges more for a slow landing page.

Step 1: Test it (5 minutes)

1. **Go to pagespeed.web.dev.**
   Paste your homepage address and your busiest service page. Test one at a time.

2. **Stay on the Mobile tab.**
   It's the default and it's the one that matters. Most of your visitors are on a phone, and the mobile test is harsher than desktop by design.

3. **Run it twice and write the average in the table on page 2.**
   The score moves a few points each run; 38 to 41 means nothing, 38 to 70 means you fixed something. Page weight is under "Avoid enormous network payloads", or use gtmetrix.com.

What the numbers mean in plain words

Number	What it measures	Good	Needs work
Performance score	Google's overall mark out of 100 for the page. Treat it as a rough guide, not a target to chase.	70+ on mobile	Under 50
LCP Largest Contentful Paint	How long until the biggest thing on screen (usually your hero image or headline) has loaded. This is what "feels slow".	Under 2.5 seconds	Over 4 seconds
CLS Cumulative Layout Shift	How much the page jumps around while loading. The thing you tapped moves and you hit the wrong button.	Under 0.1	Over 0.25
INP Interaction to Next Paint	How long the page takes to respond when someone taps a menu or button.	Under 200 ms	Over 500 ms
Page weight	Total size of everything the page downloads. Big images are nearly always the cause.	Under 2 MB	Over 4 MB

Step 2: Three fixes that need no developer

1. **Compress and resize your images (the big one).**
A phone photo is 3 to 5 MB and 4,000 pixels wide; a web page needs about 1,600 pixels and under 200 KB. Before uploading, resize in Canva, then run it through squoosh.app or tinypng.com. For images already on the site, install ShortPixel, Imagify or Smush in WordPress and press "bulk optimise" (choose WebP if offered). This alone often lifts a bad score by 15 to 30 points.

2. **Remove unused plugins and scripts.**
In WordPress, Plugins: deactivate then delete anything you don't use (old sliders, replaced contact forms, share bars, the second SEO plugin). Each one loads code on every page. Then remove chat widgets, heat-map tools or pixels you stopped using from Google Tag Manager. Aim for under 20 active plugins.

3. **Turn on caching.**
Caching keeps a ready-made copy of each page so the server doesn't rebuild it for every visitor. Ask your host first: many have it built in and just need switching on. Otherwise install WP Rocket (about $80 a year, easiest) or LiteSpeed Cache (free, if your host runs LiteSpeed). Turn on page caching and lazy-load images, then re-test.

Step 3: Three fixes that need a developer or a better host

- **Theme and page builder bloat.** Heavy "multipurpose" themes and builders with every module on can add a second or more. A developer can disable unused modules, swap to a lighter theme or rebuild the slow page.
- **Slow server response (TTFB over 0.8 seconds).** Shown as "Reduce initial server response time". No plugin fixes it; it's the host's hardware, PHP version (ask for 8.2 or newer) and database. The fix is better hosting, closer to your customers.
- **Render-blocking code and layout shift.** "Eliminate render-blocking resources" and a high CLS usually mean fonts or scripts loading in the wrong order, or images with no set width and height. A developer fixes it in a few hours; a cache plugin's "delay JavaScript" setting sometimes does, but it can break forms.

Before and after

Page: _____	Before (date: _____)	After (date: _____)	Target
Performance score (mobile)			70+
LCP (seconds)			Under 2.5
CLS			Under 0.1
INP (ms)			Under 200
Page weight (MB)			Under 2

When slow speed is actually a hosting problem

You've compressed the images, cut the plugins and switched on caching, and the score barely moved. That usually means the server, not the site. How to tell:

- [ ] **"Reduce initial server response time" is still in the red**
  PageSpeed is telling you the server took more than 0.8 seconds to send the first byte. Nothing on the page has loaded yet at that point, so no front-end fix will help.

- [ ] **A blank page with no images is still slow**
  Create a draft page with one line of text and test it. If LCP is still over 2 seconds, it's the server.

- [ ] **The site is fine at 7am and slow at 7pm**
  Shared hosting puts hundreds of sites on one machine. When a neighbour gets busy, you slow down. $5 a month hosting works this way.

- [ ] **Your server is overseas and your customers aren't**
  Each request travels there and back. A Sydney visitor to a US server waits 0.2 to 0.3 seconds before anything happens, on every request. Check where your host's data centre is; if you don't know, ask them.

- [ ] **PHP version is 7.x or older**
  Look under Tools, Site Health, Info, Server in WordPress. PHP 8.2 or newer is noticeably faster. If your host won't upgrade it, that tells you something.

- [ ] **The host can't tell you what caching they run**
  Good hosts answer "server-level caching, LiteSpeed or NGINX, PHP 8.3, and here's how to clear it" in one reply. If support can't answer, the hosting is the bottleneck.

What good hosting costs

Roughly $25 to $60 + GST a month for Australian-hosted managed WordPress, or $250 to $300 a year for a solid shared plan on a Singapore or Sydney server. Under $10 a month is where most speed complaints come from. Moving hosts takes a developer two to four hours, with no downtime if done properly.

Quick decision rule. If the three no-developer fixes lift your mobile score above 60, you're done for now; re-test in March. If they don't, and server response time is still flagged, change hosting before you pay anyone to optimise code.

Want us to run the test and the fixes for you?

Our monthly support ($250 to $275 + GST, Australian high-speed hosting included) covers speed, updates and backups. First month free when you start by 31 March.

tidycal.com/ming/lets-jogo