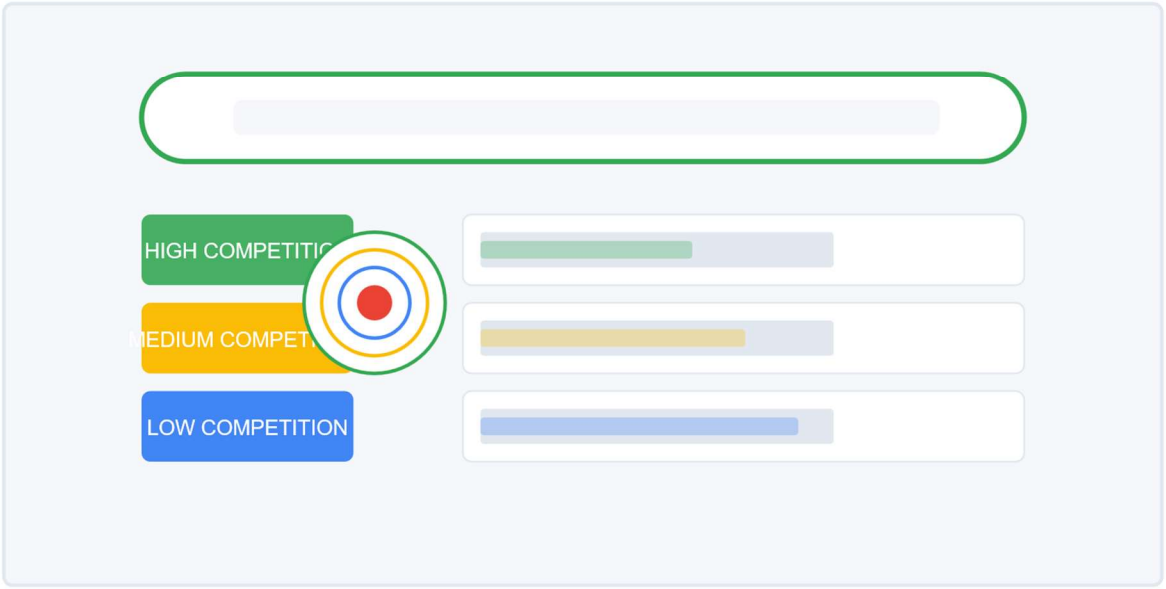
THE SMART AFFILIATE'S
SEO KEYWORD RESEARCH GUIDE

ind keywords you can actually rank for as a beginne



INTRODUCTION

This guide will help you find and select keywords that:

1. Have sufficient search volume to be worth targeting
2. Have low enough competition that a new site can rank
3. Match your audience's needs and intent
4. Can lead to affiliate conversions

As a beginner, your goal isn't to compete for high-volume keywords. Instead, you'll focus on finding "hidden gems" – specific keywords with less competition but high relevance to your audience.

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Find keywords you can actually rank for as a beginner

INTRODUCTION

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PART 1: UNDERSTANDING KEYWORD TYPES

Before diving into research, you need to understand the different types of keywords and which ones are most valuable for affiliate marketers at different stages.

Types of Keywords by Intent

Commercial/Transactional Keywords

- Directly related to buying
- Examples: "best budget laptop for students," "buy protein powder online"
- Common modifiers: best, buy, top, review, vs, compare, affordable
- Conversion potential: High
- Competition: Usually high
- Affiliate value: Highest

Informational Keywords

- Seeking knowledge
- Examples: "how to start affiliate marketing," "what is intermittent fasting"

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- Common modifiers: how to, guide, what is, tips, learn
- Conversion potential: Low to medium
- Competition: Moderate to low
- Affiliate value: Medium (when part of a conversion funnel)

Navigational Keywords

- Looking for specific websites/brands
- Examples: "amazon affiliate program login," "wealthy affiliate dashboard"
- Conversion potential: Very low
- Competition: Usually low
- Affiliate value: Minimal (rarely worth targeting)

Types of Keywords by Length

Head Keywords

- 1-2 words
- High search volume
- Examples: "affiliate marketing," "weight loss"
- Competition: Extremely high
- Realistic ranking potential for beginners: Very low

Mid-tail Keywords

- 3-4 words
- Moderate search volume
- Examples: "affiliate marketing for beginners," "weight loss meal plan"
- Competition: High to moderate
- Realistic ranking potential for beginners: Low

Long-tail Keywords

- 4+ words

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- Lower search volume
- Examples: "how to promote affiliate products without a website," "easy weight loss meal plan for working moms"
- Competition: Usually lower
- Realistic ranking potential for beginners: Moderate to high

Best Keyword Types for Beginner Affiliates:

Focus primarily on:

- Long-tail informational keywords with commercial intent
- Long-tail commercial keywords in less competitive niches
- Problem-specific keywords with clear product solutions

Avoid:

- Head keywords
- Brand-specific navigational keywords
- Generic informational keywords without commercial potential

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PART 2: FREE KEYWORD RESEARCH TOOLS

Each of these tools has limitations in its free version, but by combining them, you can get a comprehensive picture without spending money.

Google Keyword Planner

- **Access:** Requires Google Ads account (free)
- **Features:** Search volume ranges, competition level, related keywords
- **Best for:** Initial keyword ideas and search volume ranges
- **Limitation:** Groups similar keywords together, limited data for low-volume terms
- **Pro tip:** Set up a dummy ad campaign to access, but don't actually run ads

Google Search Console

- **Access:** Free with website verification

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- **Features:** Shows actual keywords you rank for, position, clicks, impressions
- **Best for:** Finding keywords you already rank for and could improve
- **Limitation:** Only shows data for your existing content
- **Pro tip:** Check the "Queries" report for keywords ranking on page 2-3 for quick wins

Ubersuggest

- **Access:** Free for limited searches (3 per day)
- **Features:** Keyword ideas, search volume, competition metrics, content ideas
- **Best for:** Competition analysis and finding related keywords
- **Limitation:** Limited searches per day in free version
- **Pro tip:** Make the most of your 3 daily searches by starting with broader terms

Answer The Public

- **Access:** Free for limited searches
- **Features:** Visual display of questions people ask around a topic
- **Best for:** Finding question-based keywords
- **Limitation:** Limited data on competition
- **Pro tip:** Look for questions that align with your affiliate products' benefits

Free Browser Tools

Google itself:

- **Autocomplete:** Type your base keyword and note suggestions
- **"People also ask" boxes:** Expand these to find related questions
- **"Related searches" section:** Check bottom of search results page
- **Pro tip:** Use incognito mode for less personalized results

Keywords Everywhere (Chrome/Firefox extension)

- **Access:** Free version shows related keywords (paid version shows volume)
- **Best for:** Quick expansion of keyword ideas

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- **Pro tip:** Use in combination with Google searches to find related terms

Keyword Surfer (Chrome extension)

- **Access:** Free
- **Features:** Shows search volumes directly in Google results
- **Best for:** Quick volume checks while browsing
- **Pro tip:** Pay attention to the "Similar keywords" sidebar

Combining Free Tools for Maximum Insight

No single free tool gives you everything, so use this combination approach:

1. Generate ideas with Google autocomplete and Answer The Public
2. Check volume estimates with Keyword Planner or Keyword Surfer
3. Assess competition by searching keywords in incognito mode
4. Track performance with Google Search Console once published

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PART 3: STEP-BY-STEP KEYWORD RESEARCH PROCESS

Step 1: Start with Seed Keywords

1. Write down 5-10 broad topics related to your niche
2. For each topic, list 3-5 related terms your audience might search
3. Don't worry about search volume yet – just brainstorm

Example Seed Keywords for Affiliate Marketing:

- affiliate marketing
- make money online
- affiliate programs
- digital marketing
- passive income

Example Seed Keywords for Health Niche:

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- weight loss
- nutrition
- fitness plans
- supplements
- healthy recipes

Step 2: Expand with Google

1. Type each seed keyword into Google
2. Note the autocomplete suggestions
3. Check "People also ask" boxes
4. Scroll down to "Related searches"
5. Add promising phrases to your list

Example Expansion:

For seed keyword "affiliate marketing":

- Autocomplete: affiliate marketing for beginners, affiliate marketing without a website
- People also ask: How do I start affiliate marketing as a beginner? What is the best way to do affiliate marketing?
- Related searches: affiliate marketing programs, how to start affiliate marketing

Step 3: Use Free Tools to Find Long-tail Variations

1. Enter your expanded seed keywords into Answer The Public
2. Look for question-based keywords (how, what, why, when)
3. Use Ubersuggest to find 10-15 related keywords per seed
4. Focus on keywords with 100-1000 monthly searches
5. Add modifiers to create more long-tail variations:
    - Beginner modifiers: for beginners, step by step, easy
    - Limitation modifiers: without [common requirement], free, no cost

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- Comparison modifiers: vs, or, versus, alternative to
- Format modifiers: guide, tutorial, examples, checklist

Step 4: Assess Competition (Without Paid Tools)

For each potential keyword:

1. Search it in Google in incognito mode
2. Analyze the top 10 results using these criteria:

Ranking Factor	Low Competition (Good)	High Competition (Avoid)
Domain Authority	Personal blogs, small businesses	Major sites, big brands
Content Quality	Basic articles, thin content	In-depth guides, extensive coverage
Content Length	Under 1,500 words	2,500+ words with multiple images
Optimization	Poorly optimized titles/URLs	Exact keyword match in title, URL, headers
Backlinks	Few visible external links	Many external references
Site Age	Newer domains present	Only established sites
SERP Features	Few or no featured snippets	Multiple SERP features

3. Look for opportunities where at least 2-3 results on page 1 are from smaller sites
4. Check for forum posts or Q&A sites in results (indicates low competition)
5. Look for results that don't fully address the search intent

Competition Assessment Shortcuts:

- If you see Reddit, Quora, or forum posts in the top 10, competition is usually low
- If you see only major brands and authority sites, competition is usually high
- If you see poorly optimized content ranking, it's a good opportunity

Step 5: Check Search Intent

1. For each remaining keyword, analyze what Google is showing:

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    - Product listings? (Commercial intent)
    - Information guides? (Informational intent)
    - Videos? (Educational/visual intent)
2. Make sure your planned content matches this intent
3. Identify if there's a mismatch between intent and results (opportunity)

Examples of Intent Analysis:

- Results for "best protein powder" show product comparison lists (match with affiliate roundup)
- Results for "how to create a website" show step-by-step guides (match with tutorial that recommends hosting)
- Results for "weight loss tips" show listicles and quick guides (match with simple list post)

Step 6: Prioritize Final Keyword List

Create a spreadsheet with these columns:

1. Keyword
2. Estimated Monthly Search Volume
3. Competition Level (Low/Medium/High based on your analysis)
4. Intent (Informational, Commercial, etc.)
5. Relevance to Your Audience (1-5 rating)
6. Conversion Potential (1-5 rating)
7. Priority (1-3, with 1 being highest)

Give highest priority to keywords that have:

- Low competition
- Clear relevance to your audience
- Decent conversion potential
- At least 100 monthly searches

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Example Prioritization:

Keyword	Est. Monthly Searches	Competition	Intent	Relevance (1-5)	Conversion Potential (1-5)	Priority (1-3)
how to start affiliate marketing without a website	320	Low	Informational	5	4	1
best affiliate programs for beginners	720	Medium	Commercial	5	5	2
make money online without investment	1,900	High	Informational	3	2	3

PART 4: BEGINNER-FRIENDLY KEYWORD PATTERNS

These patterns consistently work well for affiliate sites with low authority:

Comparison Keywords

Format: [Product A] vs [Product B] **Examples:**

- Bluehost vs SiteGround
- Weight Watchers vs Noom
- Canva vs Adobe Illustrator

Why they work:

- Clear purchase intent
- Often overlooked by major sites
- Lower competition than "best" lists

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- High conversion potential

Specific Problem Keywords

Format: How to [solve specific problem] with [product type] **Examples:**

- How to record podcasts with USB microphones
- How to lose belly fat with resistance bands
- How to fix dry skin with natural moisturizers

Why they work:

- Highly specific intent
- Clear product connection
- Lower competition
- Qualified traffic

Beginner-Focused Keywords

Format: [Topic] for beginners **Examples:**

- Email marketing for beginners
- Yoga for beginners at home
- Investing for beginners step by step

Additional patterns:

- [Topic] without [common requirement]
- How to start [topic] with no experience
- [Topic] step by step

Why they work:

- Address specific audience segment
- Usually lower competition
- Clear content format expectations

Review Keywords (lower competition)

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Format: Is [product/program] worth it **Examples:**

- Is Wealthy Affiliate worth it
- Is Bluehost good for WordPress
- Is Convertkit worth the money

Additional patterns:

- [Product] honest review
- [Product] pros and cons
- [Product] after [time period] (e.g., "after 3 months")

Why they work:

- Lower competition than "review"
- Clear purchase consideration
- Opportunity for personal experience

Location-Based Keywords

Format: [Topic/Product] in [Location] **Examples:**

- Affiliate marketing in India
- Best yoga mats in Canada
- Keto diet plan for Australians

Why they work:

- Geographical targeting reduces competition
- Higher relevance for specific audiences
- Often overlooked by larger sites

PART 5: IMPLEMENTING KEYWORDS IN CONTENT

Once you've selected your target keyword:

Title Guidelines

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- Include the exact keyword near the beginning
- Add emotional triggers (discover, proven, simple)
- Keep under 60 characters for full display in search
- Include numbers when relevant (5 Ways to..., 7 Best...)
- Address the reader directly when appropriate (You Can...)

Examples:

- Bad: "Affiliate Marketing Information for People Who Don't Have a Website"
- Good: "How to Start Affiliate Marketing Without a Website: 5 Proven Methods"

URL Structure

- Keep it short and clean
- Include main keyword
- Use hyphens between words
- Remove unnecessary words (a, the, and)

Examples:

- Bad: yourdomain.com/the-complete-guide-to-how-to-start-affiliate-marketing-without-a-website-for-beginners
- Good: yourdomain.com/affiliate-marketing-without-website

Keyword Placement

Essential locations:

- First paragraph (within first 100 words)
- At least one H2 header
- Image alt text
- Meta description
- Naturally throughout content
- Conclusion paragraph

Avoid keyword stuffing - use variations and synonyms

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Content Structure

- Create a clear hierarchy with H2 and H3 tags
- Break content into scannable sections
- Include bullet points and numbered lists
- Use images with optimized alt text
- Include a table of contents for longer content
- Add internal and external links
- Include a clear conclusion with next steps

Keyword Variants: Include variations of your target keyword:

- Plural/singular forms
- Different word orders
- Synonyms and related terms

FINAL TIPS FOR BEGINNERS

1. **Start small.** Target 3-5 low-competition keywords before challenging more competitive terms.
2. **Update regularly.** Even after publishing, improve content based on performance data.
3. **Track rankings.** Use free tools like Google Search Console to monitor position changes.
4. **Build topic clusters.** Create several related articles that link to each other.
5. **Be patient.** SEO takes time—expect 2-3 months to see initial ranking improvements.
6. **Match search intent.** Focus on satisfying the searcher's goal rather than just using the keyword.
7. **Write for humans first.** Content that genuinely helps people performs better in the long run.

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8. **Start with questions.** Question-based keywords usually have lower competition.
9. **Look at SERPs before writing.** Study what's already ranking to understand what works.
10. **Don't chase algorithm changes.** Focus on creating valuable content that solves problems.

KEYWORD RESEARCH WORKSHEET

Use this worksheet to document your keyword research process:

Step 1: Seed Keywords

- Seed Keyword 1: _____
- Seed Keyword 2: _____
- Seed Keyword 3: _____

Step 2: Expanded Keywords

From Google autocomplete, related searches, and "People also ask":

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Step 3: Long-tail Variations

From Answer The Public, Ubersuggest, or other tools:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

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Step 4: Competition Analysis

For your top 3 potential keywords:

Keyword 1: _____

- Search Volume: _____
- Top 10 includes small sites? (Y/N): _____
- Content quality (Low/Medium/High): _____
- Overall competition level: _____
- Notes: _____

Keyword 2: _____

- Search Volume: _____
- Top 10 includes small sites? (Y/N): _____
- Content quality (Low/Medium/High): _____
- Overall competition level: _____
- Notes: _____

Keyword 3: _____

- Search Volume: _____
- Top 10 includes small sites? (Y/N): _____
- Content quality (Low/Medium/High): _____
- Overall competition level: _____
- Notes: _____

Step 5: Intent Analysis

For your chosen keyword: _____

- Search intent (Informational/Commercial/Navigational): _____
- SERP features present: _____
- Content format needed: _____

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- Opportunity to improve on existing results: _____

Step 6: Content Implementation Plan

- Title: _____
- URL structure: _____
- Key sections (H2 headers):
    1. _____
    2. _____
    3. _____
    4. _____
- Keywords variations to include:
    1. _____
    2. _____
    3. _____
- Content length target: _____ words
- Media to include: _____
- Call to action: _____

Remember: The best keyword is one you can realistically rank for while serving your audience's needs. As a beginner, it's better to rank #3 for a low-competition term than to never appear for a high-competition term.

Good luck with your keyword research!

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