Image Optimization Quickstart Guide

What is image optimization?

The simplest definition of image optimization is getting the best image quality that you can with the smallest file size possible. Essentially, it's a balancing act that answers the question of "how small can I make my image's file size and still maintain the quality of the image that I want?"

There are a few best practices that help us get to the goal of image optimization and they are as follows:

General image size rule of thumb

- Typically less than 100 KB is a good file size. The exception to the rule is high resolution images. When you resize high resolution images they usually end up being a little over 100 KB, therefore, the main goal would be to reduce the file size to a fraction (about a 1/4th or less) of its original size while still maintaining the quality of the image.

Good information to know about image file compression (2 main types):

1. **Lossless:** no data is lost, but gets compressed. Compression is reversible
   - Does not reduce the quality of the image
   - [ImageOptim](#) uses this type of compression
   - Does cut out unnecessary metadata made by item that was used to take the picture
   - On average reduces file size by about 10%
   - Makes your site a little faster
   - Best for food bloggers or photographers who need to use high resolution images
2. **Lossy**: data is lost. Compression is irreversible
   - Because data is lost, images can look grainy or pixilated if reduced too much
   - Photoshop and GIMP let you use this type of compression.
   - This is the method that Google recommends.
   - On average reduces file size by about 80-90%
   - Makes your site a lot faster
   - Best for anyone who doesn't need to have immaculate images
- Which one to use: Experiment and see which give you the best results for your use case

- **Wordpress plugins that give you both Lossless and Lossy options**
  - [Ewww Image Optimizer](#)
  - [Imagify](#)
  - [Smush](#)
  - [ShortPixel](#)
- **Other great WordPress plugin options:**
  - [Optimole](#)
  - [Compress JPG & PNG](#)
  - [WP Rocket](#)

Use the right file format

- .png files are quite large compared to .jpg files. There is rarely a case when you would need to use a .png file so it is recommended that you use .jpg files.
  - One exception would be if you need a transparent background for an image, for example, a logo.

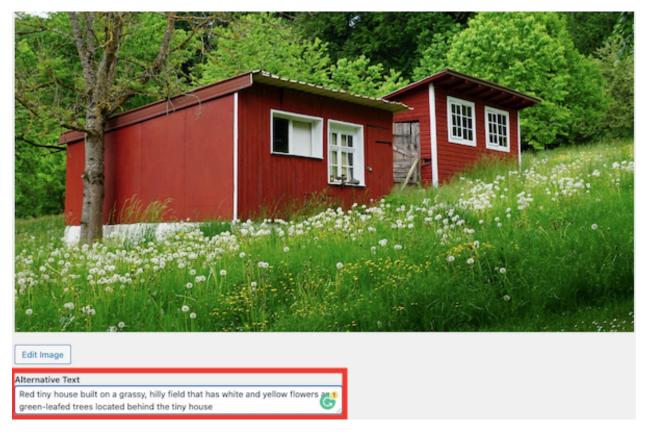## Tools to reduce the size of your image but maintain the quality

- [ImageOptim:](#) To reduce the size of your image file but maintain the quality of it use ImageOptim. It's free to download. You simply download and install it and then drag and drop your image files into its dialog box.
- Other options:
  - [Affinity Photo](#): great price and gives you a lot of the same options as Photoshop $11.99-99.99
  - [Image Compressor:](#) Free online tool to quickly compress images.
  - [JPEGmini:](#) Takes the guess work out of image optimization. $59-$89

Name your image files in a way that makes sense

- So that Google to understand what your image is, name your images in a way that describes what the image shows.
- Keep the letters all lowercase and use dashes instead of spaces
  - For example, rather than keeping the image number that a lot of cameras give to a picture, like DC123847632.jpg:
    - rename your image: tiny-home-kitchen.jpg.

Put a descriptive sentence in the Alt (alternative) Text box

- Tell Google what your image is a picture of in the alt text (see example below):

- In the Alternative Text box above, it says "Red tiny house built on a grassy, hilly field that has white and yellow flowers and green-leafed trees located behind the tiny house"