WordPress Speed Checklist

Measure first, fix second, re-test always · tested with Google Lighthouse 12.8.2 (Oct 2026)

1. Get a baseline (free)

Option A, browser: open **pagespeed.web.dev**, paste your URL, run the **Mobile** test. Option B, command line (needs Node.js and Chrome):

```
npx lighthouse https://yoursite.com --only-categories=performance --output html --output-path ./speed-report.html
```

Write down: Performance score, **LCP** (Largest Contentful Paint), **TBT** (Total Blocking Time) and **CLS** (layout shift). Run it 2–3 times; scores vary between runs.

2. Read the report the right way

- Start with the **LCP element** Lighthouse names: it's usually the hero image or a heading.
- Open **Opportunities** and **Diagnostics**; fix the top 3 items before anything else.
- Test the pages that matter: home, a top product or service page, checkout/contact.

3. The checklist

- ☐ Hero image: correctly sized, modern format (WebP/AVIF), **not** lazy-loaded.
- ☐ Other images below the fold lazy-loaded, with width/height set (helps CLS).
- ☐ Page caching on (host-level cache or one well-maintained cache plugin, not two).
- ☐ Remove plugins you don't use; check what each page actually loads.
- ☐ Defer or delay non-critical JavaScript (chat widgets, trackers, sliders).
- ☐ Fonts: fewer families/weights, `font-display: swap`, host locally where allowed.
- ☐ Avoid heavy page-builder sections above the fold where a simple block will do.
- ☐ Keep PHP and WordPress core up to date (check with your host).
- ☐ Use a CDN for static files if visitors are spread across regions.
- ☐ Check server response time in the report; slow TTFB often means hosting or no caching.

4. Re-test and keep proof

After each change, run the same test again and save the report. Change one thing at a time so you know what helped.

Honest note: no checklist guarantees a score. Lighthouse lab results are a guide; real-user data (Search Console "Core Web Vitals") shows what visitors experience.