



 STUDIOPRESS SITES

# Design 101: Dress for the Job You Want

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# Themes

Choosing a WordPress theme can be a little overwhelming at the beginning. Especially if you don't really know what you want your final website to look like.

However, before you even start browsing different designs, there are a couple of things you should first consider, because they will help you narrow down your research.

- 1. A solid theme framework**

Using a design framework like Genesis can help separate your actual theme look from the core framework features that include SEO, accessibility, performance, security, and much more.

- 2. Mobile responsiveness**

It's no longer a feature; it's a standard. If a theme you're considering is not mobile responsive, don't even bother with it ... keep looking.

- 3. Support and community**

Only get your design from a trusted theme developer, so you can count on professional support and a community when you need some help.

- 4. Minimalism**

You don't really need a bunch of fireworks. Simple-looking themes with minimal designs are much easier to customize and faster to load.



If you decide to use one of the built-in themes in StudioPress Sites (or another StudioPress theme), you don't have to worry about any of these because they're all built on the Genesis framework, are beautifully responsive with minimalistic designs, and, most importantly, come with great support and a wonderful community.

Next, your final theme design choice should be mostly influenced by the type of content you're planning for your website. A couple of important things you should consider:

- 1. Layout**

Does the layout of the home page and single posts/pages work for your content? Do you need a sidebar? Do you have all the main page layout elements you need?

- 2. Typography**

Is your website copy-heavy? Do you use long headlines or short ones? Make sure your theme's typography will work with your writing style.

- 3. Features**

Do you need a theme that supports WooCommerce? Do you need a portfolio page template or pricing page? Look for the core theme features and if they align with your content plan.

You shouldn't be worried about certain design elements like colors and imagery. Those are aspects that can be easily changed, and you'll be surprised how quickly they'll transform the entire theme's look and feeling.

So, don't get too attached to what the theme's demo looks like. Use your imagination and you can make it look like your dream site.

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# Colors

Changing your theme's color scheme is probably the easiest thing to customize. Most themes come with some simple options in the appearance settings.

Picking your own colors is definitely not easy, but there are a few simple rules you should stick to:

- 1. Choose as few colors as possible**

The best approach is to have a neutral, light background, one primary color (for text, headings, etc.), and one accent color for any buttons, links, and other actions.

- 2. Keep a good contrast**

Test all your colors with text on them and make sure there is a good contrast ratio ([use this contrast checker](#)).

- 3. Match your brand**

Pick colors that match your other visual brand elements to maintain consistency.

- 4. Choose a prominent accent color**

Your accent color should contrast the other colors in your scheme. It should break the visual pattern and attract attention.

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# Fonts

Many websites are just pure text. That's why web typography is so important. If you picked a professional theme design, you don't really have to worry about it.

If you're planning to make some advanced customizations to your theme typography, there are a few things you should keep in mind:

- 1. Don't mix more than 2 typefaces**

Keep your typography simple. Including more than two fonts can slow down your website, and your design may not look unified and consistent.

- 2. Make sure it's readable**

Form follows function. Readability should be the basic function of every typography design.

- 3. Keep a visual hierarchy**

Hierarchy in typography can help your readers scan your content and find what they need much faster. Your H1 should be bigger than H2, and H2 should be bigger than H3, etc.



# Layout

Your page layout can be easily customized without any code knowledge if you use one of the popular page builders (for example, the Beaver Builder Lite plugin that comes with every StudioPress Site).

While you have a lot of freedom when you design your own page content, don't forget the key elements of every good web page layout:

- 1. Consistency**

Your page layout should be consistent across the entire website. Keep the navigation and the main sidebar where it is. Start every page with a clear and big heading. Don't move things around, as those changes may easily confuse your visitors.

- 2. Simplicity**

Don't overload your pages with excessive content. Too many different calls to action and long sidebars full of ads, buttons, and information can distract users from the main point of your page. A single-column layout is often the best approach.

- 3. One page, one goal**

This is really true for a landing page or sales page design, but it's also a good rule of thumb for regular content pages, as well. Select one main goal or task for every page and make sure your visitors can easily find what they're looking for.

