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Image optimisation and WebP

Speed, Cache & CDN

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Image optimisation and WebP

Speed, Cache & CDN Created on **October 10, 2026** 3 min read



Images are often the heaviest part of a page. **WebP** is an image format made by Google that usually keeps the same look in fewer bytes than JPEG or PNG, and current browsers display it without trouble. But changing format is only one of three steps. The order that pays off is: **right size, compression, format**.

Which format for what

Format	Good for	Worth knowing
JPEG	Photographs.	Universal. No transparency.
PNG	Graphics with transparency, screenshots.	Lossless, so it is heavy for photographs.
WebP	Photographs and graphics, with or without transparency.	WordPress accepts it on upload. Some e-mail programs do not display it.
SVG	Logos and icons.	Vector drawing: sharp at any size and almost weightless.

What to do, in order

1. **Cut the dimensions before you upload.** A phone photo has far more pixels than any screen will show. Resize it to the largest size the site will actually display it at. It is usually the biggest saving and the cheapest.

2. **Compress.** Browser tools such as Squoosh (from Google Chrome Labs) let you see the result before you download and let you pick WebP. On the command line, on a computer of your own, there is `cwebp`: `cwebp photo.jpg -o photo.webp`.

3 **Convert what is already on the site.** An image optimisation plugin does this in bulk. LiteSpeed Cache has an “Image Optimization” tab, but it works through an outside service (QUIC.cloud), under that service’s rules. Plugins from other authors do the same; read the terms of any of them before handing over your images.

4 **Confirm WebP is really being served.** In the browser, F12, Network tab, filter by “Img”, click an image and read the content type: it should say `image/webp`.

5 **Keep the originals.** Store the source images somewhere of your own. If you ever change plugin or format, going back to the source beats recompressing an image that was already compressed.

! **Converting is not the same as serving.**
If the theme or page builder writes the `.jpg` address straight into the page, the new `.webp` file is never used unless the plugin rewrites the address. That is why the confirmation step is not optional. And in an e-mail marketing message, stay with JPEG or PNG: not every mail program displays WebP.

! **Uploads failing with “HTTP error”?**
It can be an image too large for PHP’s memory, or a missing image library. See **the HTTP error on image uploads** and **switching Imagick on in PHP**.

WordPress already defers off-screen images
with the `loading="lazy"` attribute. But the big image at the top of the page should not be deferred: it is often the one that decides how fast the page feels to a visitor. See **Core Web Vitals in plain words**. For shops there is also **product images for a fast shop**.

NEED A HAND?

Converted your images and the site did not improve, or you ended up with broken pictures? Tell us the page and we will look at what the server delivers.

Open a support ticket →

SEE ALSO

- **Product images for a fast shop** →
- **Core Web Vitals in plain words** →

Measuring your site speed

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