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The Studio Website Checklist, fill the chair, class and studio

This is the checklist we use when we take on a UK salon, gym, tattoo studio or class-led studio. It is built around one hard truth about visual, personality-led trades: you do not sell a website, you sell a look and a feeling, and the site has only a few seconds to make someone feel the place is for them before they tab away. So this checklist gives the gallery and the booking flow the weight they deserve, then treats your Google Business Profile as the other half of the job, the free listing that decides whether you show up on Maps when someone nearby searches "salon near me", "gym near me" or "tattoo studio in town".

A GUIDE FOR UK OPERATORS

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Edition
v1.2 · November 2026

Audience
UK salons, gyms, tattoo studios and class-led studios.

The checklist is opinionated. Where we say "do this", we mean we would not let a studio go live without it. We name no booking or class system and quote none of their prices: which one fits depends on your trade and your class or chair count, and what each charges is its own to state.

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01 The checklist at a glance

#	ITEM	LIVES UNDER
1	Gallery of your actual work, not stock	Gallery
2	Gallery images compressed and fast on 4G	Gallery
3	Staff, stylist, artist or instructor profiles	Gallery
4	Google Business Profile claimed and verified	Google Business Profile
5	Primary category set to your real trade	Google Business Profile
6	Opening hours exact, with holiday hours set	Google Business Profile
7	Services or classes listed with prices	Google Business Profile
8	Real photos of the space, team and work	Google Business Profile
9	Booking or class link connected to the profile	Google Business Profile
10	Online booking available 24/7	Booking
11	Deposit or card-on-file for no-show protection	Booking
12	Class-pass, credit and cancellation rules stated	Booking
13	Cancellation window stated in plain words	Booking

#	ITEM	LIVES UNDER
14	Calendar and class schedule synced to staff	Booking
15	Every review answered, good and bad	Reviews
16	You ask every client for a review the same way, after the appointment	Reviews
17	Zero bought or fake reviews	Reviews
18	Site is mobile-first and fast on 4G	Website
19	Click-to-call phone number on every page	Website
20	Prices and class times as text, not an image	Website
21	Name, address, phone consistent and crawlable	Website
22	Map and booking embedded on the page	Website
23	NAP matches across every directory	Local SEO
24	LocalBusiness structured data on the site	Local SEO

02 The gallery, your work has to land first

For a salon, gym, tattoo or class studio, this is the part most template sites get wrong. Your trade is visual. Before anyone reads a word or checks a price, they look at the work, and they decide in a second or two whether the place is for them. A slow or generic gallery loses that impulse booking to the studio down the road with a bolder page.

2.1 Show your actual work, never stock

Use your own colour work, your own ink, your own transformations, your own room and your own classes in full swing. Stock photos of a generic salon or a smiling model read as fake to anyone who has seen them on ten other sites. Real photos are the cheapest trust you can buy, and they are the whole reason a first-timer books you over someone cheaper.

2.2 Make the gallery fast

A gallery is only an asset if it loads before the visitor gives up. Compress every image, size it for a phone, and load images lazily so the page is usable straight away. Test it on an actual phone away from your wifi. A beautiful gallery that takes four seconds to appear is a lost booking, not a portfolio.

2.3 Put the people up front

People book people. Give your stylists, artists, trainers and instructors a short profile with their name, their speciality and a photo of their actual work. For tattoo and colour work especially, clients pick the artist before they pick the studio, so make choosing one, and booking with them, effortless.

2.4 Match the gallery to the booking

The gallery and the booking should feel like one motion. When someone falls for a particular artist's work or a specific class, the "Book" button should take them straight to that person or that session, not dump them at a generic contact form. The shorter the gap between "we want that" and "it is booked", the more bookings you keep.

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03 Google Business Profile, your biggest lever

Alongside the gallery, this is the thing that sends the most new clients. For a local studio, the Google Business Profile (the free Maps and Search listing) often sends more new clients than the website itself. Most people searching "salon near me" or "tattoo studio near me" decide from the listing, the stars, the photos and the hours, before they ever click through to a site.

3.1 Claim and verify the profile

Search your studio name on Google. If a listing exists that you do not control, claim it at **business.google.com**. If none exists, create one. Then verify it, by video, postcard or phone, depending on what Google offers you. Verifying is what puts the profile in your hands. Google says that once verified you gain ownership of your Business Profile and can make sure your business information is accurate. Anyone can suggest an edit to a profile, and Google says it tells the owner about certain suggested edits before they are published, with four days to accept or reject each one; with no answer, it may publish an edit that other public information, such as your website, supports (Google Business Profile Help, checked 29 November 2026).

3.2 Set the right categories

Set your **primary category to your real trade**, "Beauty salon", "Hair salon", "Gym", "Tattoo shop", "Yoga studio", whichever you actually are. This single field tells Google what you are: Google says relevance, how well a profile matches what someone is searching for, is one of the three things local results are mainly based on, and that businesses with complete and accurate information are more likely to show up in local search results. Add secondary categories only if they are genuinely true, for example "Nail salon" alongside "Beauty salon". Do not stuff categories you do not serve.

3.3 Opening hours, exact, with holidays

Wrong hours are the fastest way to lose a walk-in and earn a one-star "they were closed". Set your regular hours precisely, and set **special hours for bank holidays and Christmas** ahead of time. Google surfaces holiday hours prominently, and a profile that gets them right looks open and reliable.

3.4 Services or classes with prices

Use the Services section to list what you do, colour, cut, gel manicure, day pass, class block, sleeve consultation, with a price against each. Clients filter on price before they book, and a listing that answers "how much" saves them messaging to ask.

3.5 Photos on the profile

Add real photos: the shopfront so people recognise it from the street, the inside, the team, and your actual work. Refresh them now and then. For a visual trade, the profile photos are doing the same job as your on-site gallery, and a busy, current set of images makes a profile feel trustworthy in a way an empty one never will.

3.6 Connect the booking or class link

Connect your booking or class-schedule link so clients can go from the listing straight into your system. The fewer taps between "found you" and "booked", the more bookings you keep, and Google favours profiles that make booking easy.

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04 Booking, deposits and class passes

A studio that only takes bookings by phone loses the client who is deciding at 11pm, and the class member who wants to grab a place on the way to bed. Online booking that is open 24/7 catches that demand. The other half of the job is cutting no-shows and half-empty classes, and the lever there is a deposit, a card on file, or a class-pass rule.

4.1 Cut no-shows with deposits and a cancellation window

A no-show or a late cancel is a slot you cannot resell at short notice. A small deposit at booking, or a card held on file, is the usual answer. Pair it with a clear cancellation window, say 24 or 48 hours' notice for a full refund, so the policy is fair and enforceable.

4.2 Set class-pass, credit and cancellation rules on the form

For class-led studios and gyms, the equivalent of a deposit is the class-pass or credit rule: a place forfeited if cancelled inside the window, a cap on how far ahead a pass holder can book, a waitlist that fills a dropped spot. Enforce these on the booking form itself, not in a policy nobody reads, so nobody disputes them at the door.

4.3 What to ask a booking or class system

ASK	WHY IT MATTERS
What it charges, and for what	A monthly plan, a fee on card payments and a charge for customers its marketplace sends you are different costs
Whether deposits can be set per service	So the right rule applies to the right appointment
Whether your customer list can be exported	So the list stays yours if you move
Whether it embeds on your own pages	So the customer books on your site, under your name
Whether it handles class passes, credits and waitlists	So the rules are enforced on the form, not at the door
Whether it syncs with the calendar you use	So a personal appointment blocks the slot

We name no booking system and quote none of their prices: what each charges is its own to state. Check each answer on the supplier's own pages before you commit.

4.4 Sync the calendar and schedule

The booking system must sync to whatever the team actually looks at, phone calendars, the reception iPad, the studio screen. A booking or a class place that does not appear in front of the person running the room is a double-booking waiting to happen.

05 Reviews and social proof

Reviews do two jobs. They feed prominence, one of the three things Google says local results are based on: its page on local ranking says how many reviews you have is part of it, and that more reviews and positive ratings can help your local ranking. And they are social proof that turns a profile view into a booked client. For a visual, personality-led studio, a steady flow of genuine reviews, ideally with photos, is one of the biggest things you can grow over time.

5.1 Ask at the right moment, without being pushy

Ask every client the same way, at the end of the appointment, as they see the result: the finished colour, the healed tattoo, the class they have just done. A short, honest line works: "A quick Google review really helps us." A small QR code at reception that opens your review form removes the friction. Do not nag, and do not offer a discount for it, incentivised reviews break Google's policy and the UK rules.

5.2 Respond to every review

Reply to the good ones with a genuine thank-you. Reply to the difficult ones calmly, briefly and without arguing, a measured reply to a one-star tells the next reader far more than the complaint does. Responding to everything signals an owner who cares, and that pattern of replies is itself good for the profile.

5.3 Never buy fake reviews

Bought, swapped or fake reviews are against Google's policy and the UK rules on misleading consumers. Google detects and removes them, and a profile caught gaming reviews can be penalised or suspended. It is not worth it. Earn them at the chair or on the mat instead, it is slower and it lasts.

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06 The website itself

The website's job is to make someone feel the place, prove you are real, show the work and the prices, and get them into the booking flow. Build it for the phone first.

6.1 Mobile-first and fast on 4G

Assume a phone on a patchy connection, not a desktop on fibre. Compress the gallery, keep the scripts light, and test it on an actual phone away from your wifi. For a visual trade, a slow site is doubly costly, it loses the impulse before the first image even loads.

6.2 Click-to-call on every page

The phone number is a `tel:` link so one tap dials it. Put it in the header on every page. Plenty of clients still prefer to ring to ask about a specific treatment, a consultation or a class, do not make them copy a number out.

6.3 Prices and class times as text

List prices and class times as actual text on a page, not as a photo of a price list or a timetable. Text can be read by Google and by screen readers; a JPEG cannot, and it ages badly the day you change a price or move a class.

6.4 NAP consistent and crawlable

Your **Name, Address and Phone** must appear as real text on the site (commonly in the footer), spelled and formatted identically to your Google profile. Not baked into an image, Google has to be able to read it. Inconsistent NAP between your site and your listings confuses Google and can hold your ranking back.

6.5 Embedded map and booking

Embed a map so people can see exactly where you are and tap for directions, and embed or prominently link your booking or class system so the path from "this looks good" to "booked" is one screen, not three.

6.6 Simple navigation

A studio site needs a handful of things: home, the gallery, services or classes and prices, book, and contact. Resist the urge to add more. Every extra menu item is one more decision between a visitor who liked what they saw and a booking.

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07 Local SEO basics

Local SEO is mostly about being consistent and being clearly local. You are not competing with the whole internet, you are competing with the other studios in your town. A few fundamentals do most of the work.

7.1 NAP consistency across directories

Your Name, Address and Phone should match, exactly, across your website, your Google profile, and every directory you appear in (Yell, Apple Maps, Bing Places, Facebook, and any salon, fitness or tattoo directories). Old addresses and abbreviations that differ from listing to listing send mixed signals to Google. Pick one canonical format and make everything agree with it.

7.2 A page per location

If you run more than one studio, give each its own page with its own address, hours, map and phone number, and its own Google Business Profile. One blended "our studios" page makes it hard for Google to rank either location for its own town.

7.3 Local keywords used naturally

Use the words people actually search, "hair salon in Leeds", "boxing class Croydon", "tattoo studio near me", in your page titles, headings and copy, but write for a human. Naming your town and your services plainly is enough. Repeating "best salon Leeds salon Leeds" over and over is keyword-stuffing, and it reads as spam to people and to Google.

7.4 Structured data for local business

Add **LocalBusiness structured data** (schema.org markup) to the site. It is a small block of machine-readable code that hands Google your name, address, phone, hours and price range in a format it can trust. It does not guarantee a ranking, but it helps Google understand the business and can support richer search results.

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08 What we do NOT do, the anti-checklist

A few opinionated negatives. These are positions we take when building the studio's presence.

- **We do not use stock photos in the gallery.** For a visual trade, stock is a lie the client sees through, and it undoes the trust the rest of the site is trying to build. Your own work, always.

- **We do not use auto-playing audio or video.** It eats mobile data, it surprises someone scrolling on the bus, and it slows the gallery. If a video earns its place, it loads muted and on a tap.
- **We do not buy reviews or write fake ones.** It breaks Google's policy and UK consumer law, Google removes them, and a flagged profile can be suspended. Reviews get earned at the chair or on the mat.
- **We do not keyword-stuff the business name.** Your Google profile name should be your real studio name, not "Zoe's Salon | Best Hair Colour Leeds | Balayage Nails Wax". Fake name embellishment is against Google's guidelines and gets reported by competitors.
- **We do not buy cheap directory spam.** Bulk "submit your site to 500 directories" packages add junk citations with inconsistent NAP and do more harm than good. A handful of real, correct listings beats hundreds of bad ones.
- **We do not over-build the booking.** If a studio has a couple of chairs and a steady regular trade, a clean booking link beats a heavyweight system nobody on the team wants to manage. Match the tool to the studio.

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09 Sources + further reading

- Google Business Profile Help, set-up, verification, categories, hours, services · `support.google.com/business`
- Google Business Profile Help, Verify your business on Google, checked 29 November 2026 · `support.google.com/business/answer/7107242`
- Google Business Profile Help, Understand Google updates on your Business Profile, checked 29 November 2026 · `support.google.com/business/answer/3480441`
- Google Business Profile Help, How to improve your local ranking on Google, checked 29 November 2026 · `support.google.com/business/answer/7091`
- Google, Prohibited and restricted content for reviews and profiles · `support.google.com/contributionpolicy`
- Google Search Central, Local Business structured data · `developers.google.com/search/docs/appearance/structured-data/local-business`
- schema.org, LocalBusiness type reference · `schema.org/LocalBusiness`

If you would rather we did it

Everything in this checklist is yours to use as it stands. If you would rather we built and ran the site and the Google profile for your studio, tell us what you need at `veryseoly.com/contact` and we will send you a written quote.