

COMPANION GUIDE

WordPress + Rank Math: How to Set Heading Structure

A hands-on version of the Search Sherpa heading guide. Built for any WordPress site that uses Rank Math. This is not locked to one theme or page builder.

Pair with	CMS	Plugin	Updated
HTML Heading Structure Guide	WordPress (block, classic, or builder)	Rank Math SEO (Free or Pro)	September 14, 2026

Read this first

The other guide explains what a good heading outline looks like. This one shows where those headings live in WordPress and which Rank Math fields to fill so the outline, the title tag, the slug, and the schema all tell the same story.

What this guide assumes

- You have WordPress and Rank Math installed and connected.
- You can edit Pages and Posts.
- You may use the block editor, the classic editor, Elementor, Divi, or another builder. The heading rules stay the same. Only the click path changes.
- You are not chasing a 100/100 Rank Math score. You are building a page a customer can scan.

If Rank Math is not active yet, install it from Plugins > Add New, run the setup wizard, connect Google Search Console when prompted, and turn on Schema Markup. That is enough to follow every step below.

The two titles WordPress keeps confusing

WordPress stores two different titles. Rank Math adds a third. Treat them as three jobs, not one field copied three times.

Field	Where you edit it	What it becomes
WordPress title	The big title field at the top of the editor. Pages > All Pages > Edit.	Usually the visible H1 on the page. Also the default source Rank Math uses for the SEO title if you leave the snippet blank.
SEO title	Rank Math panel > Edit Snippet, or the title field in the sidebar.	The title tag in the HTML head. This is what Google usually shows as the blue link.
Heading blocks	Inside the page body. Heading block, or a headline widget in a builder.	H2 through H6. Only become an H1 if you force the level. Do not do that if the page title is already the H1.

Jeremy's default

Write the WordPress title as the H1 you want people to see. Write the Rank Math SEO title as the click line you want in Google. They should name the same page. They do not need identical wording. Example H1: Xeomin in Mokena, IL. Example SEO title: Xeomin in Mokena, IL | Practice Name.

Where the H1 actually comes from

On a normal Page or Post, WordPress prints the WordPress title as the H1. Your first body heading should be H2. That is the clean setup. Themes break it in three common ways.

Problem 1. The site title or logo is also an H1

Many headers wrap the Site Title block or the logo in H1. Then every page has two H1s: the brand in the header and the page title in the content.

Fix it in the header template, not on every page.

1. Block themes: Appearance > Editor > Patterns or Template Parts > Header. Click the Site Title or Logo block. In block settings, set the heading level to a paragraph or to a lower heading if the theme forces a heading. Logo should be a link, not an H1.
2. Classic themes: Appearance > Customize > Header or Site Identity. If the customizer cannot change the tag, the header file is wrapping the blog name in h1. A developer can change that wrapper to a div or a p. You should not fight this on each page.
3. Page builders: open the Theme Builder or Theme Header template, not a single page. Change the logo or site-name widget HTML tag from H1 to Div or Span.

Problem 2. The page hides the WordPress title

Landing page templates often uncheck "Show title." Then the page has no H1 unless you add one in the body.

If you hide the title, add one Heading block set to H1 at the top of the content. Do not hide the title and also skip the H1. Pick one source and stick to it.

Problem 3. Someone added a second H1 in the body

The Heading block defaults to H2. Editors change it to H1 because the text looks small. That is a style problem. Change the font in the block styles or in theme CSS. Leave the level at H2.

How to add headings in the block editor

1. Open the page. Click the + inserter or type /heading and press Enter.
2. Type the section name.
3. Click the heading. In the toolbar, set H2, H3, or H4. Use H2 for chapters. Use H3 only under an H2.
4. Shortcuts: type ## then space for H2. Type ### then space for H3.

5. Open Document Overview (the list-view icon, three stacked lines). Switch to the Outline tab. You should see one H1 at the top, then H2s, then H3s nested under the right H2.

If Outline shows H1, then H3, then H2, the page is out of order. Fix the levels before you write more copy.

Do not put the only important heading inside an image, a cover overlay that is not a Heading block, or a paragraph styled to look large. Rank Math and Google both read the HTML tag, not the font size.

How to add headings in a page builder

Elementor, Divi, Bricks, Oxygen, and similar tools give every headline a tag dropdown. That dropdown is the whole game.

- Hero headline: H1 only if the WordPress title is hidden. Otherwise H2, or leave the hero as styled text and keep the WordPress title as H1.
- Section titles down the page: H2.
- Subheads inside a section: H3.
- Never pick H4 because you wanted smaller type. Use the typography controls.

After you publish, view the page, right click, Inspect, and search for h1. You want one result in the main content, not one in the header plus three in stacked hero widgets.

Rank Math setup that affects headings

Open any page. The Rank Math button sits in the top-right of the editor. The score badge is not the goal. The fields behind it are.

1. Focus Keyword

In the Rank Math sidebar, General tab, type the primary phrase for this page. One phrase per page. For a local service page that is usually service + city.

xeomin mokena

You can add secondary focus keywords in Pro. Use them for close variants, not for a second business offering. One page, one primary job.

Rank Math will now test whether that phrase appears in the SEO title, the slug, the first 10 percent of the content, and at least one subheading. Those tests are reminders. They are not orders to paste the phrase into every H2.

2. Edit Snippet

Click Edit Snippet. You get three fields.

- **SEO Title.** This writes the title tag. Pattern I use: %focus_keyword% | %sitename% or a written line such as Xeomin in Mokena, IL | Practice Name.
- **Permalink.** Short slug. /xeomin-mokena/ is better than /what-is-the-best-xeomin-provider-near-mokena-illinois/.
- **Description.** One or two sentences. Include the phrase once. Write it for the click, not for a density score.

Preview the SERP snippet in that same box. If the title truncates badly, shorten it. Google can still rewrite titles. A clear title is the best way to keep yours.

3. Content analysis tests that mention headings

On the General tab, Rank Math lists Basic SEO and Additional tests. The heading-related ones are:

Rank Math test	How to pass it without wrecking the page
Focus keyword in SEO title	Put the phrase near the front of the Edit Snippet title. Do not stuff the city twice.
Focus keyword in URL	Edit the permalink. Keep it short. Lock it before you build backlinks to the page.
Focus keyword in introduction	Use it once in the first paragraph under the H1. Write a normal sentence.
Focus keyword in subheading	Use it, or a close variant, in one H2. Example: What to expect from Xeomin in Mokena. Do not repeat it in every heading.
Keyword density	Ignore the urge to hit a number. If the test is red because you wrote like a person, leave it. Stuffing headings to turn the test green is a loss.
Content length / heading count	Content AI may suggest a heading count. Use it as a range, not a quota. Four to seven H2s is plenty on a local service page.

Do not worship the score

A page can sit at 70 and outperform a page at 100 if the 100 page has eight identical H2s. Green tests that came from natural writing are useful. Green tests that came from repeating the focus keyword are not.

Use Content AI for outline ideas, not for the final H1

If you have Rank Math Content AI, open it from the editor. Enter the same focus keyword. Look at two panels.

- **Heading or outline suggestions.** Steal the section ideas. Rewrite them in your voice.
- **Questions tab.** These are close to People Also Ask. The best ones become H2s or H3s, or they go into the FAQ block.

Do not paste an AI outline as-is. AI headings tend to stack the focus keyword and skip the local entities that actually help a service page. After you paste, rewrite so the outline covers fit, process, aftercare, local proof, and questions.

Build the page in this order

1. Set the WordPress title. That is your H1 on a standard template.
2. Set the Focus Keyword in Rank Math.
3. Click Edit Snippet. Write the SEO title, slug, and meta description.
4. Write the first paragraph with the phrase used once.
5. Add H2s for the real sections of the page.
6. Add H3s only where a section needs a split.
7. Check Document Overview > Outline, or the builder's navigator.
8. Add the Rank Math FAQ block if the page answers short questions.
9. Open Rank Math > Schema and confirm the type matches the page.
10. Publish. View source or Inspect and count H1 tags.
11. In Search Console, use URL Inspection > Request indexing after the template is clean.

The Rank Math FAQ block

Use this when the page has real questions. Do not add fake FAQs to chase rich results.

1. In the block editor, click +, search Rank Math FAQ, insert the block.
2. Each question should match the visible question text. If you also want that question in the outline, add a Heading block set to H3 above the group, or set the FAQ block title wrapper to H3 under an H2 called Frequently asked questions.
3. Write short answers. First two sentences should answer the question. Then add detail if needed.
4. Rank Math writes FAQ schema from this block. Do not also add a second FAQ schema in the Schema tab unless you are marking up questions that are not in the block. Duplicate FAQ schema is a mess.
5. On builder pages that cannot use the block, add visible questions as H3s, then add FAQ schema once in Rank Math > Schema > Schema Generator > FAQ.

The visible headings and the schema questions must match. If schema says one thing and the H3s say another, you have given Google two outlines.

Schema that should follow the headings

Open Rank Math > Schema on the page. Pick one primary type.

- Homepage: Organization or LocalBusiness.
- Service page: Service, tied to the LocalBusiness entity.
- Location page: LocalBusiness for that address.
- How-to guide: Article, plus FAQ if you used the FAQ block.

The Service name in schema should be the same service named in the H1. The areaServed values should match the cities you named in the H2 or H3 local section. Schema is confirmation, not a workaround for a vague heading.

Templates you can drop into WordPress

Service + city page

WordPress title / H1

Hydrafacial in Frankfort, IL

Rank Math SEO title

Hydrafacial in Frankfort, IL | Practice Name

Slug

/hydrafacial-frankfort/

Focus keyword

hydrafacial frankfort

Body outline

H2 Is a Hydrafacial right for your skin

H2 What happens during the treatment

H3 Cleanse and extract

H3 Serum and recovery

H2 Aftercare and what to skip for 24 hours

H2 Serving Frankfort, Mokena, and New Lenox

H2 Frequently asked questions

then Rank Math FAQ block with 3 to 5 questions

Homepage

WordPress title / H1

Practice Name | Medical Spa in Mokena, IL

Rank Math SEO title

Medical Spa in Mokena, IL | Practice Name

Body outline

H2 Treatments we offer

H2 What a first visit looks like

H2 Serving Mokena and nearby towns

H2 Ready to book

If your homepage template hides the title, put that H1 in a Heading block at the top of the homepage content and keep the header logo as a link, not an H1.

Sitewide heading audit inside WordPress

1. Install or open Rank Math Analytics if it is connected. It will not show heading tags. Use it after the fix to watch queries.
2. For a fast page-by-page check, edit the page, open Document Overview > Outline.
3. For a whole-site check, crawl the domain in Screaming Frog. Open H1 and H2 tabs. Filter Missing, Duplicate, and Multiple.
4. Duplicate H1 across many URLs usually means the theme is printing the site name as H1. Fix the header template once.
5. Missing H1 usually means the template hides the title. Turn the title back on or add one Heading block set to H1.
6. Multiple H1 on a single URL usually means header plus hero plus page title. Leave one. Demote the rest to H2 or to styled text.
7. After template fixes, pick the top five money pages and rewrite their H2s so they are sections, not slogans.

Rank Math settings worth checking once

- Rank Math > Titles & Meta > Global Meta. Confirm you are not forcing the same SEO title on every page.
- Titles & Meta > Posts and Titles & Meta > Pages. Title format can stay %title% %sep% %sitename%. That uses the WordPress title, which should already be your H1 wording.
- Titles & Meta > Homepage. Write a unique homepage SEO title. Do not let it inherit a blog description.
- Schema Markup. Keep it On. Set the default Schema Type for Pages to Article or the type that matches most of your pages, then override per page.
- Breadcrumbs. If you enable them, they help the outline in the SERP. They are not a substitute for H2s.

Leave the focus-keyword automation snippets alone unless you have a developer and a backup. Auto-writing the post title into every focus keyword field will flatten your service pages.

Pre-publish checklist

- One H1. It names the service and the city on a local page.
- SEO title names the same page and includes the brand at the end if there is room.
- Slug is short and stable.
- First paragraph uses the phrase once.
- H2s form a table of contents a stranger could follow.
- No skipped levels.
- Focus keyword appears in one subheading, not all of them.

- FAQ questions match visible text and use one schema source.
- Header logo is not an H1.
- Rank Math score is whatever it is after those items are true.

When the plugin and the outline disagree

Rank Math will sometimes stay orange because the exact focus keyword is missing from headings. That is fine when the H2 already uses a natural variant. “What Xeomin can treat” is a better heading than “Xeomin Mokena Xeomin Mokena.”

If you need the test green for a client screenshot, put the phrase in one H2 that still reads like a section name. Then stop.

The heading structure guide still applies. WordPress is just the place you type it. Rank Math is just the checklist that keeps the title tag, the slug, and the H1 from drifting apart.

The Search Sherpa

Companion to the HTML Heading Structure Guide. WordPress and Rank Math only.

thesearchsherpa.com • Mokena, Illinois