

# Shopify Store Optimisation Checklist

Written against Shopify API version 2026-07. Every item traces to Shopify's own performance documentation or to Google's Core Web Vitals guidance, checked on 1 August 2026.

Work through it in order. Section 1 exists to stop you paying for work the platform already does.

## 1. Rule Out What Shopify Already Handles

Shopify states these are automatic and cannot be controlled by the merchant. If a proposal quotes for any of them, ask why.

- ☐ Content delivery network. Shopify uses Cloudflare.
- ☐ Browser caching, set to a maximum one year duration.
- ☐ Gzip compression on CSS, JavaScript and images.
- ☐ Image optimisation, with images served in WebP format.
- ☐ CSS and JavaScript minification.

Shopify says directly that many third party performance tool recommendations are irrelevant because these optimisations are already included by default.

## 2. The Four Things You Control

Shopify names these as the biggest factors affecting performance.

- ☐ **The theme.** Age, source, and how many parties have edited it.
- ☐ **Apps loading assets on the storefront.** Too many can slow performance.
- ☐ **Images you upload.** Pages with numerous high quality images can load slowly.
- ☐ **Third party code added manually**, including tag managers and the tags inside them.

## 3. The App Audit

- ☐ List every installed app.
- ☐ Mark which ones inject anything into the storefront.
- ☐ For each, write down what it costs per month and what it earns. Shopify's own guidance is to check that apps create enough value to offset any potential performance losses.
- ☐ Identify apps loading on pages where their feature is not used.
- ☐ Check whether any previously uninstalled app left code behind in the theme.
- ☐ Compare the app list against what the theme actually loads. Do not trust either alone.

## 4. The Script And Tag Audit

- ☐ Find every manually added script in the theme.
- ☐ List every tag firing through any tag manager.
- ☐ For each tag, name the tool it reports to and the person who reads it.
- ☐ Remove tags whose destination tool is no longer in use.
- ☐ Confirm remaining script tags carry `defer` or `async` so they do not block DOM construction.

## 5. Theme Checks

Numbers Shopify publishes, which you can hold a developer to.

- ☐ Minified JavaScript bundle is 16 KB or less.
- ☐ JavaScript is not required for basic functionality such as finding or purchasing products.
- ☐ No large frameworks. Shopify names React, Angular, Vue and jQuery.
- ☐ No polyfills for outdated browsers.
- ☐ Injected scripts are wrapped in an immediately invoked function expression, to prevent global namespace collisions.
- ☐ Below the fold images are lazy loaded.
- ☐ Responsive images use the `image_tag` filter.
- ☐ Fonts: a system font avoids an extra resource download.
- ☐ Assets are hosted on Shopify's CDN via the `/assets` folder rather than external sources, to take advantage of HTTP/2 prioritisation.

Reference point: themes submitted to the Shopify Theme Store must reach a minimum average Lighthouse performance score of 60 across the home, product and collection pages. That is a Theme Store submission requirement, not a target Shopify sets for every store, but it is a reasonable floor for paid custom work.

## 6. Measure The Right Thing

- ☐ Pull real user monitoring data from the Web Performance dashboard and reports.
- ☐ Check Core Web Vitals against Google's good thresholds: Largest Contentful Paint within **2.5 seconds**; Interaction to Next Paint **200 milliseconds or less**; Cumulative Layout Shift **0.1 or less**.
- ☐ Confirm you are reading the 75th percentile of page loads, segmented across mobile and desktop, which is how Google says to assess them.
- ☐ Check any audit you have been sent still leads on Interaction to Next Paint. It replaced First Input Delay as a Core Web Vital in 2024.
- ☐ Set up Lighthouse CI if you want continuous lab monitoring alongside the field data.

Shopify publishes a Lighthouse weighting for evaluating theme performance across page types:  $[(p * 31) + (c * 33) + (h * 13)] / 77$ , where  $p$  is product,  $c$  is collection and  $h$  is home. Collection and product together carry far more weight than the home page, so optimising the home page alone moves the smallest input.

## 7. Before You Sign Anything

- ☐ Does the proposal recommend compression, next generation images or browser caching? Those are already handled.
- ☐ Does it name which apps or scripts it will remove, or only promise a score?
- ☐ Does it commit to a real user metric, or only a lab score?
- ☐ Does it sequence apps and scripts before a theme rebuild? A rebuild done first has to be built around whatever the apps are doing.
- ☐ Is there a before and after measurement on the same page types, at the same percentile?

## 8. Sources

1. improving your online store performance  
[help.shopify.com](https://help.shopify.com)
2. theme best practices for performance  
[shopify.dev](https://shopify.dev)
3. Core Web Vitals  
[web.dev](https://web.dev)

All checked 1 August 2026.

### Free Shopify Store Audit

If section 7 turned up more questions than answers on a proposal you have been sent, send the store URL and the proposal. The Shopify store audit costs nothing.

**[edm-uk.com/#form-start](https://edm-uk.com/#form-start)**

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Expert Digital Marketing Ltd. Accompanies the article at  
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