How to Set Up a WooCommerce Store, From the Start to Your First Order

Programming and design · https://www.hyyat.com/en/knowledgebase/how-to-set-up-a-woocommerce-store/

In shortA WooCommerce store is built in order: **hosting, domain and HTTPS**, then **WordPress and WooCommerce**, then **store settings** (currency, address, tax), then **products**, then **payments and shipping**, then **legal pages**, then a **complete test order** before launch. Most problems in new stores come from jumping to design before payments and shipping are set up.

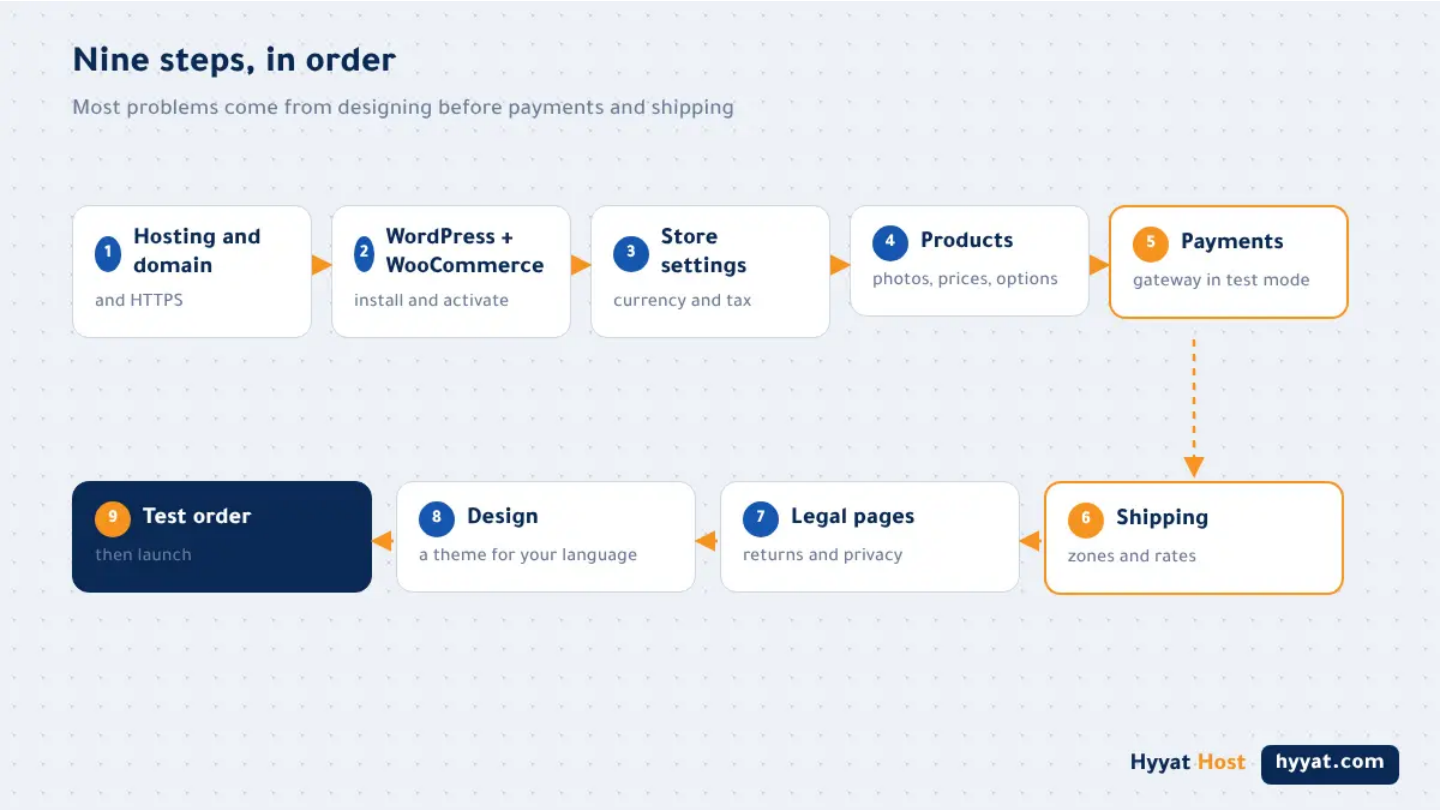
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WooCommerce is a free plugin that turns a WordPress site into a full online store: products, cart, checkout, orders and customer accounts. Its strength is that you fully own your store on your own hosting and domain, and can extend it with plugins as you need.

This guide sets out the steps from scratch to your first real order, with what you need to decide at each step. We do not go deep into security here because it has its own guide in WooCommerce security.

Before you start

- A product list: name, price, description and photos for each product.
- The payment gateway you will use, with a merchant account in your business name.
- Your shipping and delivery method and its cost by city or region.
- A written return and exchange policy.



Step 1: Hosting, domain and HTTPS

A store needs stable, fast WordPress hosting, because cart and checkout pages are not cached like other pages and hit the database on every request. It also needs a domain in your store's name and HTTPS enabled before anything else, because customers will enter their details.

Our hosting includes a free SSL certificate; enabling it is covered in enabling HTTPS for your site. To choose a plan, see WordPress hosting.

Step 2: Install WordPress and WooCommerce

Install WordPress from your control panel as in one-click WordPress installation, then go to Plugins, Add New, search for WooCommerce, install and activate it. The setup wizard will start and ask about your store type and location.

Step 3: Core store settings

Setting	What to set

Address and country	The store address used for shipping and tax.
Currency	The price currency and how it is shown: symbol position and decimals.
Tax	Enable tax if your business is registered, and decide whether prices include tax.
Accounts	Can customers buy without an account? Are accounts created automatically?
Email	The sender name and address for order emails, ideally an address on your own domain.

Order emails are an important part of the customer experience. Use an address on your domain and make sure SPF and DKIM are set up so order emails do not land in spam, as explained in why your site emails go to spam.

Step 4: Add products

Each product needs a clear name, a price, a short description next to the images, a detailed description further down, consistent photos and a category. If a product has options such as size or colour, use a **variable product** instead of creating one product per option.

For how to present the product itself so it persuades people to buy, see our full guide on product page design.

Step 5: Payments

WooCommerce includes simple methods such as bank transfer and cash on delivery. To accept cards you need a payment gateway and its WooCommerce plugin. Choose a gateway that supports the cards your customers use, and check its fees and payout timing. We covered the criteria in choosing a payment gateway.

Rule of thumb: Enable test mode in your payment gateway first, complete a test order, then switch to live mode. Never test payments for the first time with a real customer.

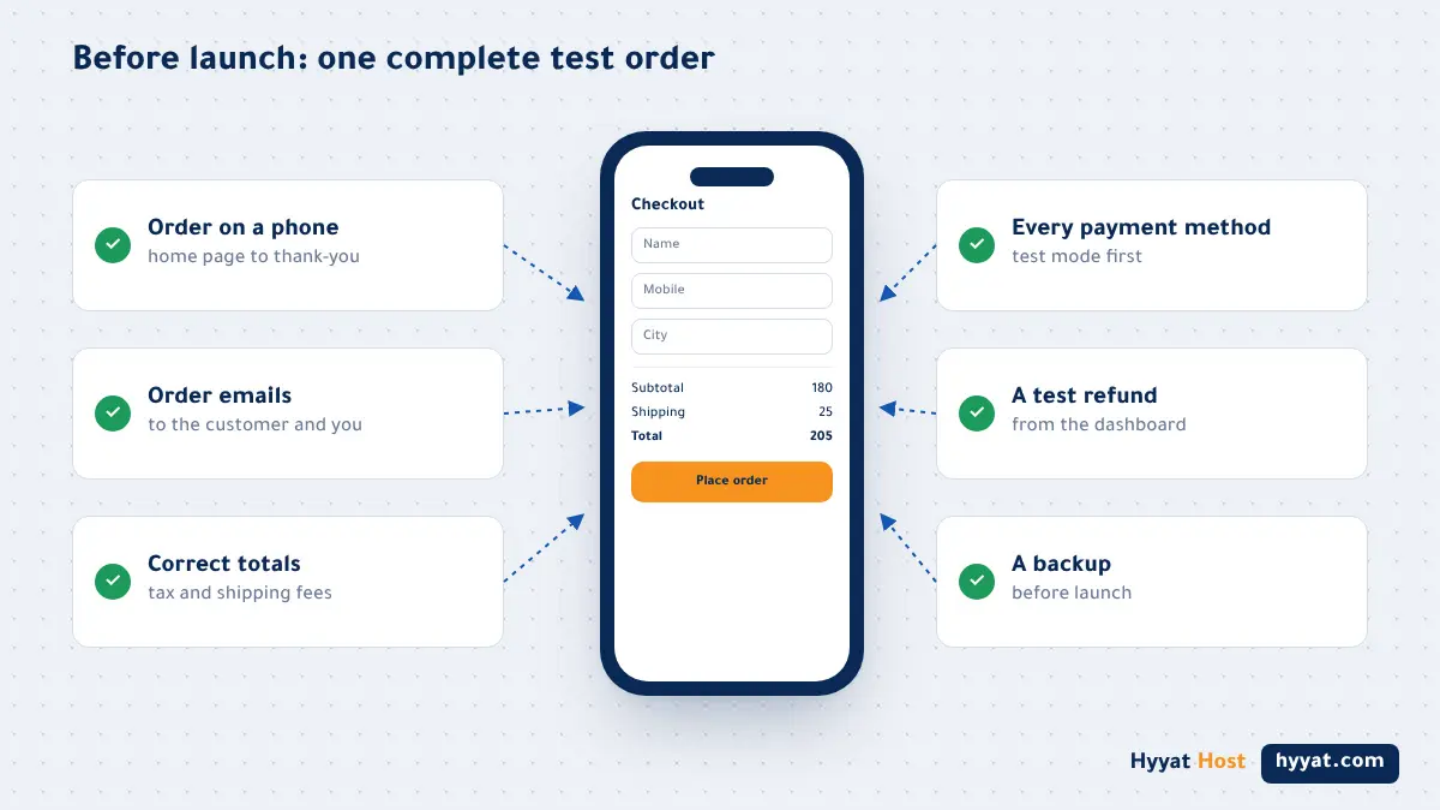
Step 6: Shipping

In the shipping settings, create **shipping zones**: your city, other cities and other countries if you ship there. For each zone, set the method: a flat rate, free shipping above a certain amount, or local pickup. If you work with a courier, they may offer a plugin that sends orders straight to their system.

Step 7: Legal and trust pages

- Return and exchange policy.
- Privacy policy.
- Terms and conditions.
- Clear contact details and your registration number if you have one.

These pages build trust, and some payment gateways require them before activating your account.



Step 8: Design

Once the store works technically, design comes next: a theme compatible with WooCommerce and your language, a home page showing categories and featured products, a persuasive product page,

and a cart and checkout with as few steps as possible. Choosing a theme is covered in how to choose a WordPress theme.

Step 9: A complete test order before launch

1. **Order a product on your phone** as a new customer, from the home page to the thank-you page.
2. **Check the emails** Did the order email reach both the customer and you? Is it in the right language and in your store's name?
3. **Try every payment and shipping method** and confirm amounts, tax and shipping fees are correct.
4. **Cancel and refund the order** to learn how refunds work from the dashboard.
5. **Take a backup** before launch, and enable scheduled backups.

Example: A perfume store launched without a test order and discovered after the first orders that shipping was charged per item instead of per order. One wrong setting that a single test order would have revealed in two minutes.

After launch: the first week

- **Check orders daily** in the WooCommerce dashboard, and make sure each order's status moves correctly: processing, then completed.
- **Watch stock:** if stock management is on, make sure quantities drop with each order and the product shows "out of stock" at zero.
- **Read customer messages:** the first questions you receive reveal what product pages are missing, so add the answers there.
- **Confirm backups:** a store changes with every order, so an old backup is not enough. Enable frequent scheduled backups.

As the store grows, keep an eye on hosting resource usage, because orders and in-store search use more than ordinary page views.

Summary

- Foundation first: hosting, domain, HTTPS and WooCommerce.
- Then settings, products, payments, shipping and legal pages.
- Design once everything works, and a full test order before launch.

We build complete WooCommerce stores with payments and shipping as part of WordPress website design. For custom integrations with other systems, see web development.

Frequently asked questions

Is WooCommerce free?
Yes, the core plugin is free. You may need paid plugins for some payment gateways, couriers or advanced features.

What is the first step in setting up a WooCommerce store?
Stable WordPress hosting, a domain in your store's name and HTTPS enabled.

How do I accept card payments?
Sign up with a payment gateway, install its WooCommerce plugin and test it in test mode before going live.

How do I set shipping by city?
In the shipping settings, create shipping zones and set a method and cost for each zone.

Why are order emails not reaching customers?
Usually because SPF and DKIM are not set or a non-domain address is used. Use an address on your domain and enable authentication.

Related guides

- Product Page Design for Online Stores: The Elements That Persuade Customers to Buy
- How to Choose a WordPress Theme for Your Company Site: Design, Speed and Language Support
- WooCommerce Security: How to Protect Your Store, Payments and Customers

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