

Steps	Explanation
<input type="checkbox"/> Backup	<p>Make sure to back up your local data and your database before making any changes, this gives you the possibility, should you need to, of restoring an older version of your data. Backups can be restored at any point, either manually or by using specific tools in just a few clicks.</p> <p>Additional links:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Database backup with MySQL Dumper • Restoring a backup using WordPress plugins
<input type="checkbox"/> Redirect all existing URLs using a “301”	<p>Once the SSL-certificate has been activated and the website is reachable via https, all the http URLs equivalents (not just the homepage) must be redirected. A 301 redirect should be used, as this signals that the content of the old http URLs has been permanently moved and is now available under the new https URLs. Do not use any other status code and ensure that the redirects are set onto the www-variant <u>or</u> the variant without www. Using the following command, a redirect can be set on all URLs via htaccess data:</p> <p>Onto URLs with www:</p> <pre>RewriteEngine On RewriteCond %{HTTP_HOST} !^www\. [NC,OR] RewriteCond %{SERVER_PORT} !^443\$ RewriteRule ^(.*)\$ https://www.mydomain.co.uk/\$1 [R=301,L]</pre> <p>Onto URLs without www:</p> <pre>RewriteEngine On RewriteCond %{HTTP_HOST} !^mydomain\.com\$ [NC,OR] RewriteCond %{SERVER_PORT} !^443\$ RewriteRule ^(.*)\$ https:// mydomain.co.uk/\$1 [R=301,L]</pre> <p>Alternatively, you can resort to a CMS plugin like “Redirection”, the free WordPress plugin.</p> <p>Additional link:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domain redirection using .htaccess, PHP, HTML and JavaScript

SSL SWITCH CHECKLIST

<input type="checkbox"/> Adjust internal links	Internal links can be adjusted using the “search and substitute” command. In the static HTML/PHP data, using a HTML editor (e.g. Phase5), search for <code>http://www.yourpage.com</code> and substitute this address with <code>https://www.yourpage.com</code> . If you use a CMS with a database, you can replace your links using the “UPDATE” command. To find out more, contact your CMS provider. Please note that after changing internal links in a CMS database, the domain must still be adjusted in the configuration information and in the template files/scripts. In WordPress for example, these can be found in the <code>wp-config</code> file and in each theme file.
<input type="checkbox"/> Adjust important external links	The purpose of adjusting important external links (e.g. a link to well-known, trusted web page such as The Times Online) serves to avoid the user or the crawler being routed via the old link to the new URL. This does not only cost valuable time, but the redirected link also loses authority from Google’s perspective and will therefore not be as highly valued for the internal ranking algorithm. For these aforementioned reasons, the relevant Webmaster should carry out the necessary adjustments to all the important links.
<input type="checkbox"/> Adjust existing redirects	Redirects, including canonicals, must be altered in order to avoid redirect chains (redirects being redirected onto redirects). The Google-Bot only follows a set amount of redirects before ending the process. Long redirect chains could therefore be the reason why your website does not appear in Google’s search index. You can find redirect chains on your website using certain purchasable tools such as Screaming Frog. Such redirects can be found in the <code>.htaccess</code> file, directly in the CMS or in the server configuration file (e.g. NGIX, Lighttpd, IIS).
<input type="checkbox"/> Adjust canonicals, hreflangs and other header entries	<p>References in which the new URLs must also appear should be visible in the header section of the website. Pay attention to the following header elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Canonicals• Hreflangs• Open Graph• Base-URL

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<input type="checkbox"/> Adjust structured data	If the structured data is located directly in the source code (e.g. breadcrumb mark-up with JSON-LD), the URL data must be replaced with the new https variants.
<input type="checkbox"/> Check/adjust robots.txt if necessary	So that the web-crawler also abides to the robots.txt instructions in the new https version, robots.txt applications must be adjusted for all absolute URLs. However, no adjustment is necessary for relative URLs.
<input type="checkbox"/> Modify/update the site map	To ensure rapid validation of new URLs into the search index and to preserve the crawl budget impacted by outdated URLs, the sitemap should be updated with the new URLs. It is therefore good practice to submit the new sitemap to the relevant search engines, such as Google or Bing, via the applicable Search Console/Webmaster Tools.
<input type="checkbox"/> Update/set URLs in external tools	External tools and services must not be forgotten about, for instance Ranking-Checker, AdWords or Search Console (in this case, a previously existing disavow file must also be uploaded again for the new https URL). In such cases, a small URL adjustment is often sufficient.
<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure that no other internal and external resources are loaded via http	No non-secure connection should remain on a https page, as this would lead to an unsightly and dissuasive warning message appearing in the user's browser. It is therefore important to check that your own content (such as images, CSS files, internal search, order lines, forms, JavaScript libraries etc.) and external content (e.g. advertising, tracking codes etc.) are integrated over http. If this is the case, the appropriate providers should be contacted in order to check if the corresponding content is accessible via https.
<input type="checkbox"/> Final SSL check	Once the SSL transfer is complete, you should perform a comprehensive check. Firstly, check the integration of the SSL certificate with an SSL checker . The log files should also be checked to ensure that the crawler retrieves the correct URLs. Check your rankings daily in order to rapidly and efficiently tackle potential issues. Monitor both old http URLs and new https URLs. A temporary dip in ranking is a common phenomenon when switching to https, you should therefore wait a few days for the rankings to go back to normal. Additionally, you should crawl your page using an external tool such as Screaming Frog to check for any errors.