



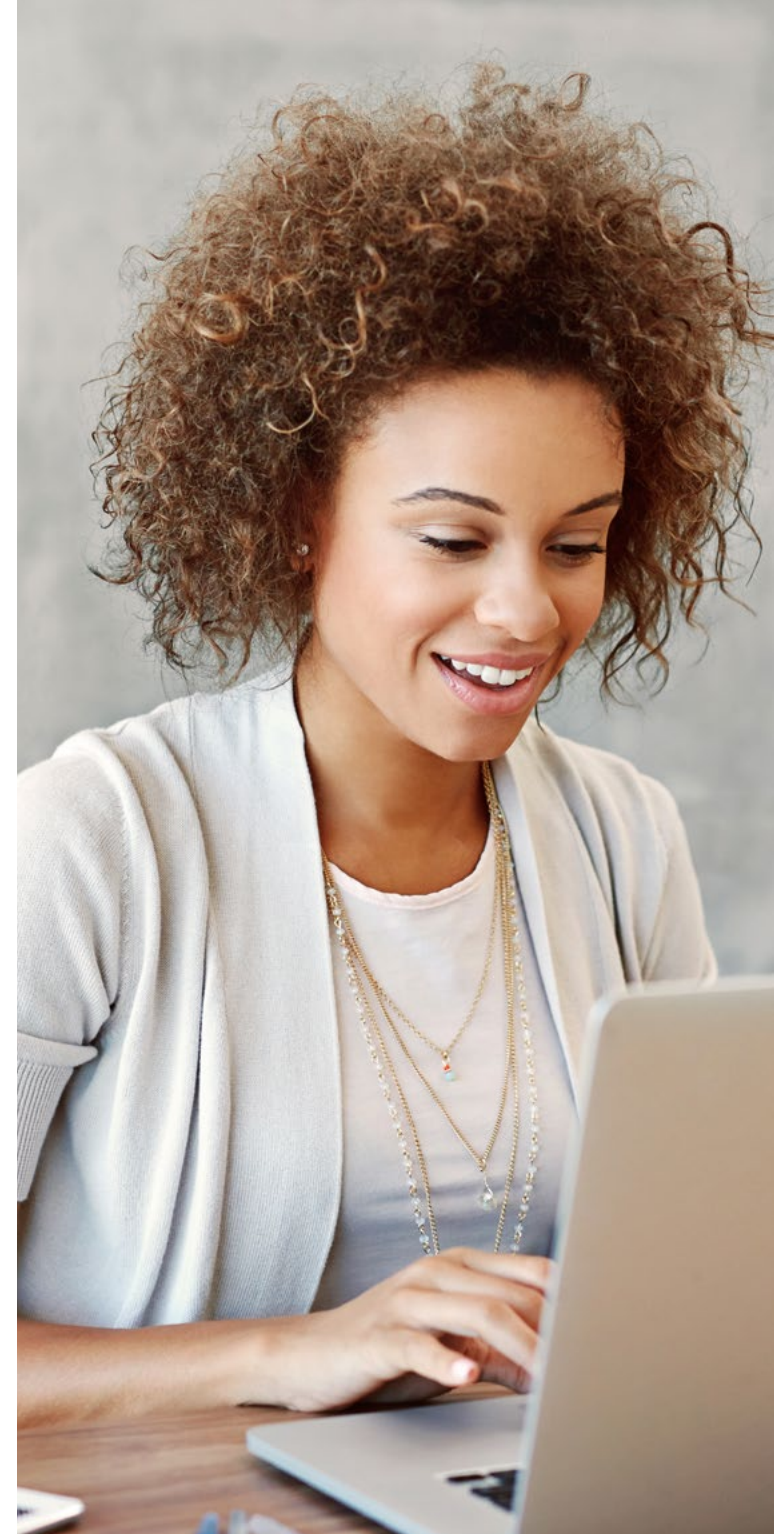
How to Build a Website For Your Business

It's no secret that your website serves an incredibly important purpose for your business. It's where potential clients come to find out who you are, what you do and what you're about, and where new and returning customers can find and book classes or appointments.

When well-designed and optimized, your website:

- Allows prospective clients to discover and learn about your business
- Makes it easy for existing clients to book classes or appointments
- Takes the pressure off your front desk by providing key information and streamlining the communication process
- Gives 24/7 access to your business
- Demonstrates your approach, helping visitors feel confident they're in the right place so they choose your business over your competitors
- Puts your business in the search results of potential clients nearby

All of these benefits add up to better customer service, more sales, and more time for you to spend tending your core business, marketing, and exploring new opportunities to grow your business. When you have a professional website that represents your brand, it does much of the heavy lifting for you.





Getting started

So, where do you start when it comes to launching a brand new website? Typically, there are two main steps involved in getting a website live: design and development.

The design phase involves determining what the site is going to look like. What pages will you include? How will content be laid out, and how will the navigation work? Which images, fonts, and colors will you use?

Once designed, the website needs to be developed. This is where your design is turned into code that internet browsers can read and display. Traditionally, getting a website live has required hiring both a web designer and a web developer (or someone with both skill sets). However, now there are many platforms that simultaneously design and develop websites.

Pro Tip:

When hiring someone to create your website, be sure to ask about their process and whether you'll need to hire any additional experts to take the website live.

Register your domain

The first step for creating your website is registering your domain name, the destination you type into a web browser to visit a website. If available, you'll want to register www.businessname.com, as this will make it easy for people to find you. You can check availability and register your chosen domain at any company that offers domain registrations. [GoDaddy](#), [Hover](#), [Dreamhost](#), and [Namecheap](#) are some popular domain providers.

You may want to also consider buying variations of your domain name like [.biz](#) or [.net](#)—or country-specific domains variations like [.com.au](#) (Australia) and [.uk](#) (United Kingdom), if applicable—to ensure no competitors create a similar domain name.

You can expect to pay under \$20 for each domain name, and you can often get a package deal if you get multiple. Make sure your domain is set to auto-renew so you don't accidentally lose it!

Pro Tip:

When you look at your website, does your address start with [https://](#) or [http://](#)? If it has the 's', you're all set—your website has what is called a Secure Socket Layers (SSL) Certificate. This technology protects sensitive information of site visitors such as credit card information, usernames, and passwords. Plus, it's increasingly important for [Search Engine Optimization \(SEO\)](#) rankings.



Establish the basics

Before you begin dreaming up and designing your beautiful new website, you'll want to ensure you have the basics in place:

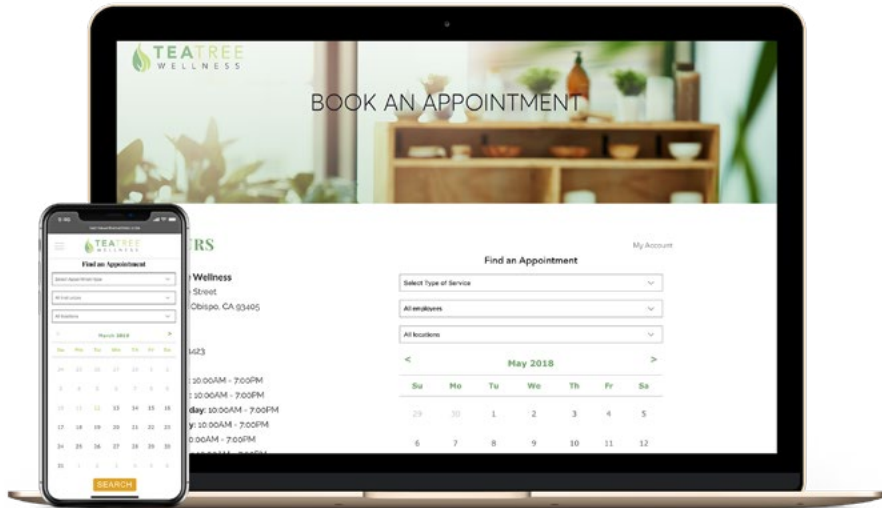
Determine your website platform

Once you have your domain name, it's time to decide where your website will be built. This is the website platform, or Content Management System (CMS), where your website lives. Some examples of popular website platforms are [Wordpress](#), [Squarespace](#), [LiveEdit](#), and [Wix](#).

Website platforms vary greatly in everything from price, features, and ease of use, to design flexibility, support, and security. Regardless of the platform you choose, you can expect to pay a few hundred dollars a year for your website's theme and hosting.

Make sure your website works on mobile devices

This means the text is clear, readable (without tons of scrolling), and easy to navigate on mobile devices. It also means that images display in the right dimensions without stretching and blurring. This is an extremely important step, as [mobile traffic has been growing every year](#). These days, most modern websites and templates on major website platforms are built mobile-responsive, but make sure you address it before you do anything else.



Pro Tip:

Asking for recommendations in the [MINDBODY One](#) community, or from a designer you'd like to work with, is a great way to research website platforms that might be a good fit for your business.

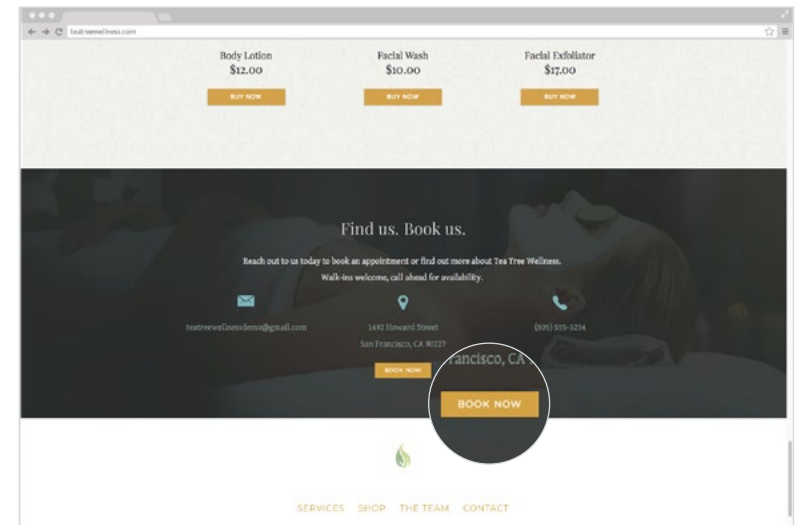
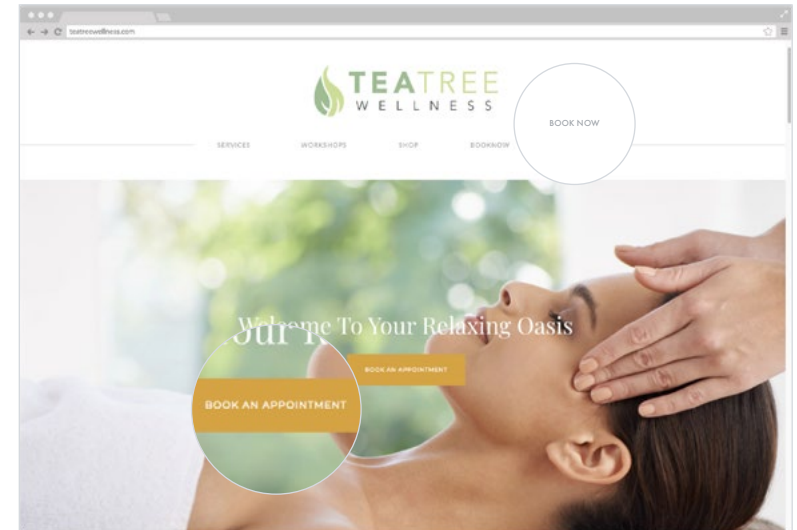
Determine your site structure

Providing a clear path from casual browser to first-time client should be the top priority for your website, and that mainly comes down to how easy it is to navigate your site. Put yourself in the shoes of your clients and soon-to-be-clients, and think about what information they **need** to take the next step with your business. Your website should take visitors on a journey, where they effortlessly obtain all the information they need.

Remember, people are busy. More information isn't always better. Visitors tend to get overwhelmed or frustrated if there are too many pages or options for them to click, so ensure each element of your website serves a well-defined purpose.

Pro Tip:

Avoid using creative names for your core booking and buying pages. Stick with easily identifiable terms like Pricing, Rates, Schedule, or Book Appointment to make it easy for your clients to find what they're looking for.





Plan your written content

Now that you have a structure in mind, you'll want to write a draft of your website copy (the written content on your site). This plays a pivotal role in getting your website found by the right people and ensuring they connect with your brand message. Well-written website copy is:

- **SEO-rich:** Optimized to help you rank on Google for your chosen keywords
- **Emotive:** Elicits an emotional reaction
- **Persuasive:** Prompts prospective clients to take action

Avoid writing just to fill space in a pre-designed website template. Instead, write succinctly, and design your pages around that. Keep the core pages of your website focused on your client and what they need to know to take the next step. Make sure your copy aligns with your brand voice so potential customers get a genuine feel for your business as they read.

Create your homepage

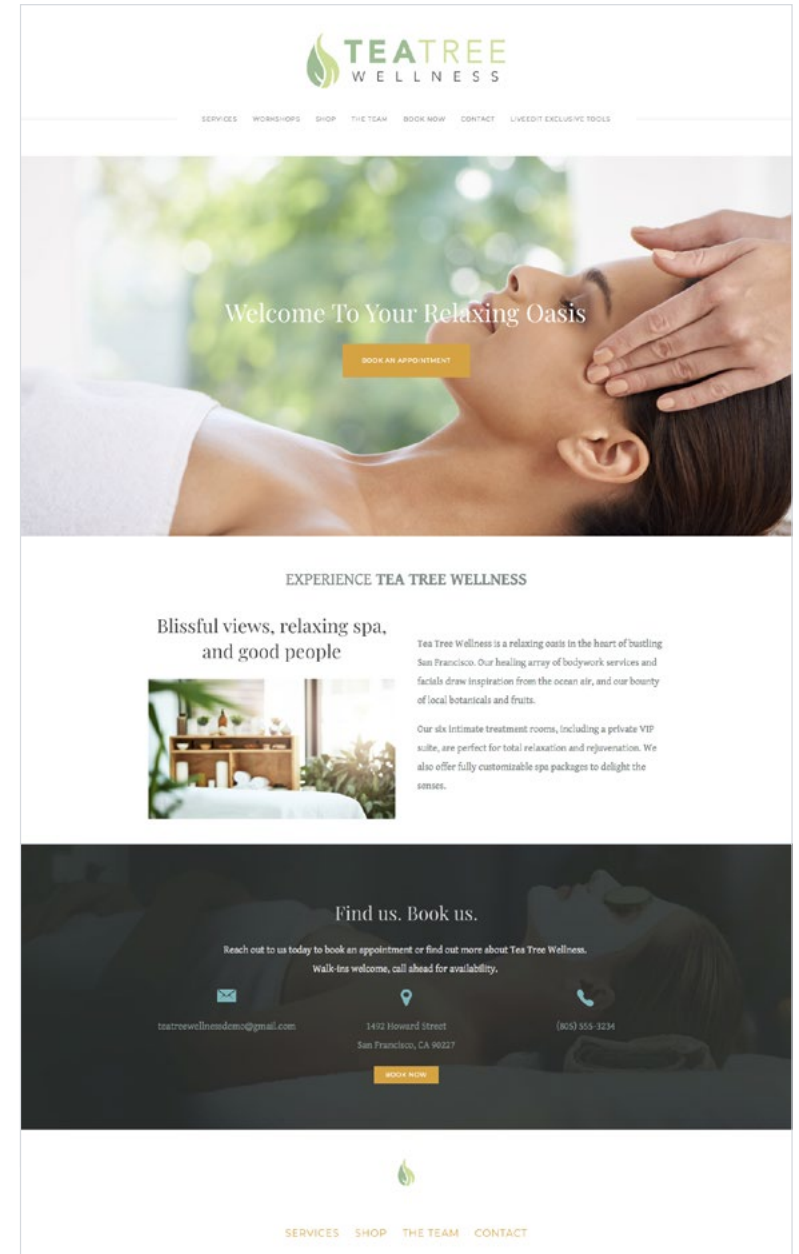
Your homepage is usually the first stop on your website, so it's no surprise that it gets the vast majority of traffic. With only a quick glance (and no scrolling), a new visitor to your site should know:

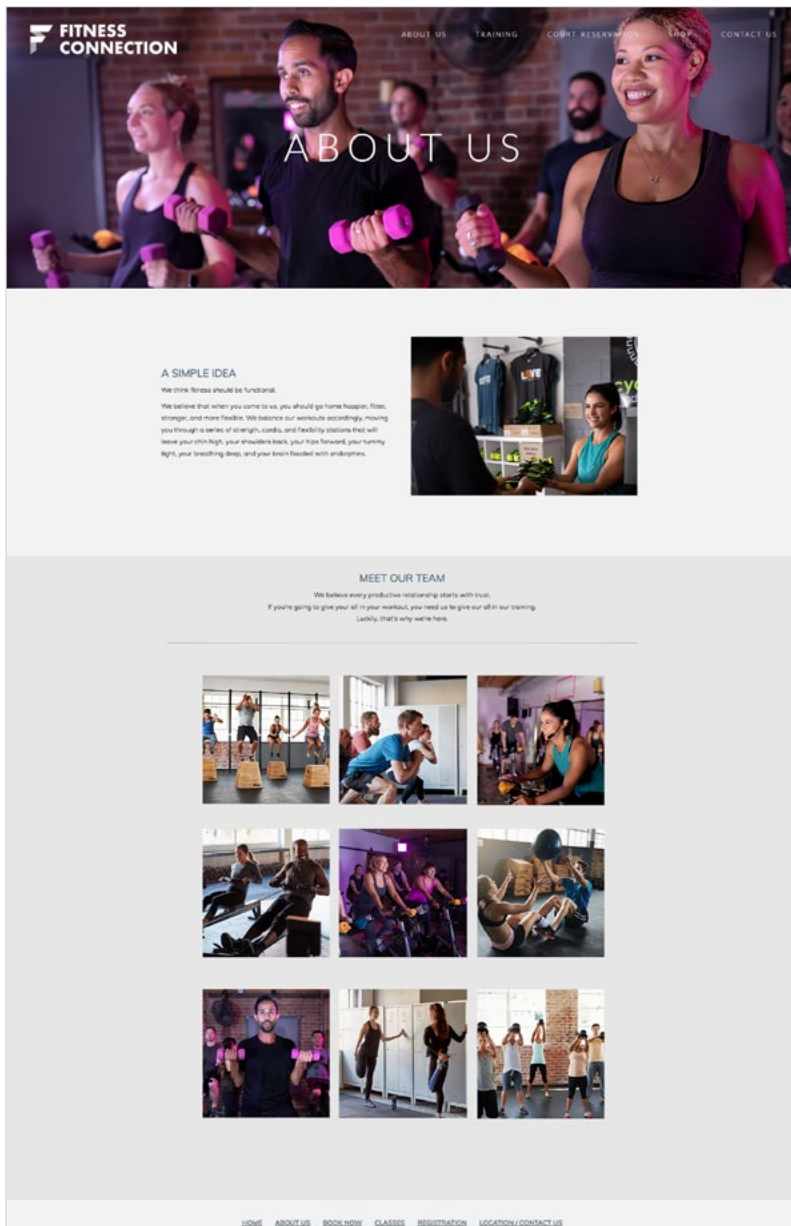
- **Who you are:** Your business name, which is usually in your logo and/or header
- **What you offer:** A straightforward list of your offerings, like hair services or barre classes
- **Where you're located:** Your city (and maybe a map elsewhere)
- **How they can get started:** For example, a short summary of your intro offer with a button to buy it

Once you have those essential elements in place at the top of the page, you can then go into greater detail about your various services and what makes you stand out from the competition.

Pro Tip:

The homepage is essential to your visibility in search results like Google. Including your what and where in the homepage title, as well as your page headline, will help send a strong signal to search engines.





Choose your imagery

In a world where first impressions are made online, your website's appearance can mean the difference between customers choosing you over a competitor. [Research](#) shows that the average person spends less than 15 seconds on a website before leaving, so it's important to capture their attention immediately.

Real photos are a powerful way to convey, at a glance, the atmosphere and values of your business. This makes high-quality photography one of the most important elements of your website. Whether you hire a local photographer or [take photos yourself](#), strive for good natural light and show your real clients and staff in action.

Don't have high-quality imagery just yet? Make sure any stock photos you use are representative of your target customer and align with your [visual brand](#).

Pro Tip:

Make sure you have a photo release from any clients who will appear in your brand photos. Offering a discount or merchandise is a great way to reward participants!

Build your site pages

In addition to your homepage, here are other key pages to consider for your business (and some tips specifically for MINDBODY businesses):

About

Your About page should focus on how your business helps your clients change their lives for the better. You can do this by briefly telling the story of why your business was founded or sharing testimonials from happy clients. If you're a MINDBODY customer, consider also adding a [Staff List widget](#) to share photos and bios of your team.

Pro Tip:

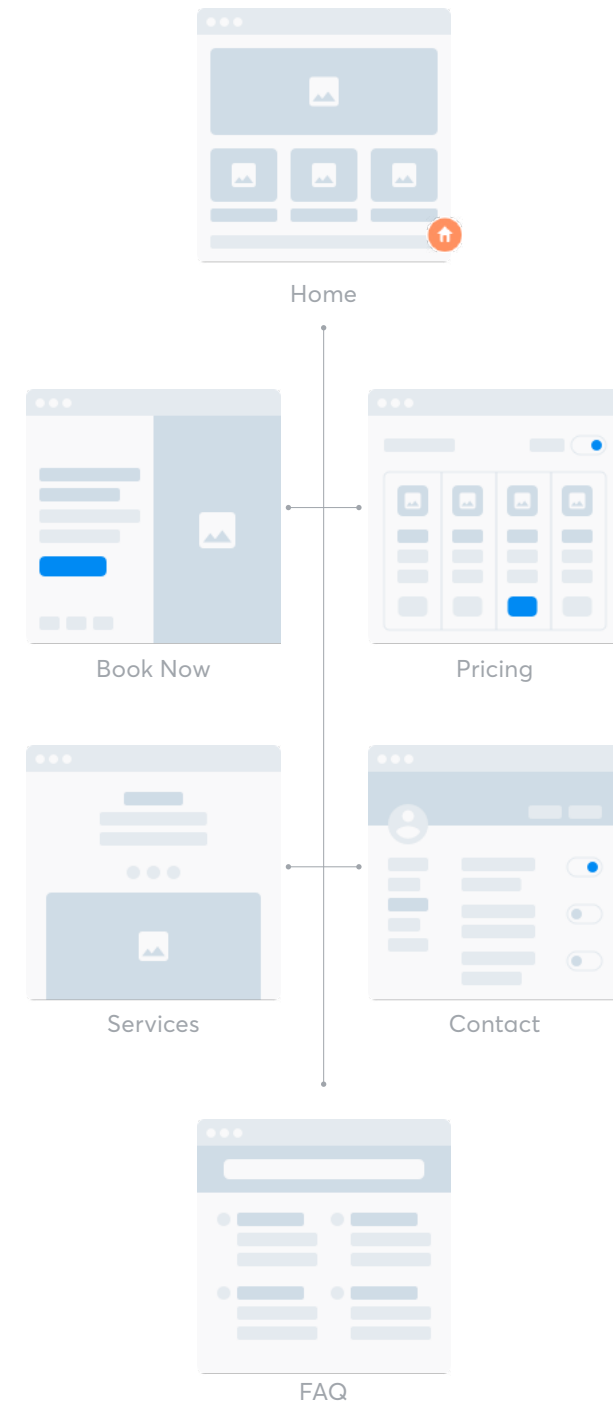
New to using widgets on your website? A widget is a powerful piece of code you can copy and paste that will bring key functionality from your scheduling system onto your website. It lets your clients purchase and book without ever leaving your site. MINDBODY's system of widgets (Branded Web) is available with all subscription levels. You can learn more about getting started with Branded Web [here](#).

Pricing or Rates

As one of the core action pages on your website, this should give an overview of pricing options. If you're a MINDBODY customer, use Branded Web links to add ['Buy Now' buttons](#) and let customers purchase right from your website.

Pro Tip:

Make your [intro offer](#) or new client discounts impossible to miss on your pricing page. It should be at the very top, and clearly indicate that it's the best way to get started at your business.



Schedule or Timetables (if class-based)

If you're a MINDBODY customer, embed your [Branded Web Schedule widget](#) to maintain an up-to-date schedule of classes and allow clients to browse and book without leaving your website.

Classes (if class-based)

Describe your class types and be sure to identify which classes are suitable for beginners. If your class types change often, consider using the [Branded Web Class widget](#) to automatically keep your class descriptions up to date.

Book Now (if appointment-based)

List your operating hours and, if you're a MINDBODY customer, embed the [Branded Web Appointment widget](#) to let clients choose their desired service, staff member, and date and time of their next appointment.

Services (if appointment-based)

Describe your services and list their corresponding prices. Include a prominent link to your Booking page, or embed the [Branded Web Appointment widget](#).

FAQ

This is a great way to explain your policies in more detail, address common concerns new clients have, and show that your business cares about the happiness and comfort of clients.

Contact

List your business name, address, phone number, and map, along with any specific transportation or parking directions. Be sure to include as a contact form for general inquiries as well. This is also a great spot to link to an FAQ page and add any social media icons.

Footer

Although not a page itself, the footer of your website holds some essential information about your business and will be seen at the bottom of each page. Make sure to include:

- Your business name, address, and phone number
- A link to your Terms and Conditions page
- A link to your Privacy Policy page
- Social media links

Pro Tip:

Ensure your business name, address, and phone number are identical everywhere you list them online. This makes it easier for search engines to understand your business and connect the dots across your entire online presence—from your Google listings and social media accounts to your website.



Connie Holen is a digital strategist, designer, and Certified MINDBODY Business Consultant. She specializes in helping fitness and wellness studios make a name for themselves online by creating easy-to-manage websites, effortless email marketing systems and profitable new client ad funnels. You can connect with Connie in the [MINDBODY One](#) community or find her in the [Consultant Marketplace](#).



To learn first-hand how MINDBODY can position your business for success, [schedule a guided tour today](#).