



The Handbook

Codex

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Good Navigation Links

It helps people move around your site when you have a clean navigation menu in the sidebar and/or the footer. It helps people find the posts and articles you want them to find. There are a variety of methods for user friendly site navigation on your WordPress site.

Helping the user use your site means putting things where they can find them. Following the newsletter formats from the days of print, most website users are used to looking for intra-site links on the *sides* and *bottom* of a web page. As a designer, you can put them anywhere you want, but let's stick with the conventional placement for now. After all, we want our WordPress sites to be user-friendly, right?

In the two [WordPress Themes](#) that come with your WordPress installation, both use a **sidebar** to hold most of the site's navigation links. Other Themes may use navigational aids in the [header](#) and footer. While these navigation links can be displayed in any [template file](#), typically, the navigation links include:

- [Pages](#)
- [Categories](#)
- [Archives](#) (by month)
- [Links](#)
- [Admin or Meta](#)

The [template tags](#) associated with generating this list of navigation links are found in the default WordPress Themes's sidebar inside of a [nested list](#). Let's look at each of these tags individually and then look how to expand the use of navigational aids on your WordPress site.

Pages

With the introduction of WordPress v1.5, [Pages](#) were available to help the administrator create individual Pages outside of the [WordPress Loop](#) such as **Contact Us**, **About Us**, and **What's New**. The [template tags](#) used to display the list of individual Pages is [wp_list_pages\(\)](#).

```
<?php wp_list_pages(); ?>
```

There are many ways of customizing the `wp_list_pages()` tag to be more useful to your users. A long list of Pages and sub-Pages can go on for quite a while, so you might want to only feature the most important Pages in your sidebar.

To exclude some Pages from your list, you can set the parameters for **exclude**. The following example excludes Pages with the Page-ID numbers of 17 and 38.

```
<ul>
<?php wp_list_pages('exclude=17,38' ); ?>
</ul>
```

To learn more about customizing the `wp_list_pages()` template tag, visit the Template Tag page for [wp_list_pages\(\)](#).

Categories

There are two template tags which create the category list in your navigation menu: [wp_list_cats\(\)](#) and [list_cats\(\)](#). Both work basically the same but the first one uses [boolean parameters](#) and the second one uses [strings](#). Which you use is up to you.

The default usage of the category list tags are:

```
<?php wp_list_cats(); ?>
```

```
<?php list_cats(); ?>
```

Again, like the [Pages template tag](#), you can use **exclude** to limit the categories you want listed, making it easier for the user to pick from only a few instead of twenty or thirty categories. The following example excludes category-IDs 10 and 15.

```
<ul>
<?php wp_list_cats('exclude=10, 15'); ?>
</ul>
```

If you would like only to feature the **children** or *sub-categories* of one or more categories in your category list, you can use the **child_of** parameter.

```
<ul>
<?php wp_list_cats('child_of=8, 14'); ?>
</ul>
```

To learn more about customizing these template tags, visit the Template Tag page for [wp_list_cats\(\)](#) and [list_cats\(\)](#).

Archives

Like the [categories](#) template tags, there are two tags which produce the Archives date-based list of links: [wp_get_archives\(\)](#) and [get_archives\(\)](#). Both work basically the same but the first one uses [boolean parameters](#) and the second one uses [strings](#).

The Archive template tags are the only way to list posts in WordPress without a [plugin](#). You can limit the number of posts to show in your Archives template tags, but you can't show *all* of them, only a limited number. The tag, however, will allow you to show the most recent by month, week, day, or the most recent posts.

The default usage of the archives list tags are:

```
<?php wp_get_archives(); ?>
```

```
<?php get_archives(); ?>
```

To show the most recent three months of posts by month, you would use the following:

```
<ul>
<?php get_archives('monthly','3'); ?>
</ul>
```

Displaying the archives by date, you can show the most recent 15 days worth of posts:

```
<ul>
<?php wp_get_archives('type=daily&limit=15'); ?>
</ul>
```

If you would like to show the actual posts, you can use the parameter **postbypost** which

displays the most recent posts, with the number set by the **limit** parameter. To show the last 25 posts by post title:

```
<ul>
<?php wp_get_archives('type=postbypost&limit=25'); ?>
</ul>
```

To learn more about customizing these template tags, visit the Template Tag page for [get_archives\(\)](#) and [wp_get_archives\(\)](#).

Links

The Links list of links come from WordPress' [Links Manager](#) feature which allows displaying of external links, such as a blogroll, the user would like to feature on his or her site. These links are generated by several different template tags:

- [get_links_list](#): Displays a nested HTML unordered list of all links as defined in the Links Manager, sorted under link category headings.
- [wp_get_links](#): Displays links associated with a numeric link category ID.
- [get_links](#): Like `wp_get_links()`, this tag allows the user to control how the links are displayed by tag parameters, not through the [Administration](#) > [Links](#) Page (useful when displaying links on more than one template).
- [wp_get_linksbyname](#): Displays links associated with the named link category
- [get_linksbyname](#): Like `wp_get_linksbyname()`, this tag displays links by category, but allows the user to control how they are displayed by tag parameters.

For examples and more information on the specific use of each of these different template tags, click on the tag name above.

Admin or Meta

The Admin or Meta list of links in the WordPress sidebar are the links which are used by the Administrator, if logged in, to access the [administration panels](#) of the site. They may also feature [RSS](#) Feeds and other information related to the administration or use of the site. Check the following tags for more information on which ones you might want on your site to assist yourself and other registered users:

- [wp_register\(\)](#) - Registering on your site for comments and other administrative purposes
- [wp_loginout\(\)](#) - Logging in and out of your site's administration panel with a password
- [bloginfo\(\)](#) - Various parameters available for setting the RSS/Atomz/RDF feeds for the site and comments
- [Template Tags](#) - For more information on various template tags to use on your site

Other Navigation Locations

In addition to the sidebar, you can help your users navigate through your site with navigation tags used elsewhere, such as in the *header* and *footer* of your site. Using the

above template tags for navigation links, you can style the link lists as [horizontal menus](#) instead of vertical lists.

Link to Posts and Pages

Often in these narrow areas, you may want to only highlight specific posts or [Pages](#) to save space and direct the user to specific areas to continue their browsing. To include a specific link to a post or Page, you can use the [get_permalink\(\)](#) template tag.

The following example presents links to post-ID numbers 1 and 10 and lists the categories on the site, excluding category-ID 2 and 4.

```
<li><a href="<?php echo get_permalink(1); ?>">About My Blog</a></li>
<li><a href="<?php echo get_permalink(10); ?>">About Me</a></li>
<?php wp_list_cats('exclude=2, 4'); ?>
```

The list might look like this:

- [About My Blog](#)
- [About Me](#)
- [My Stories](#)
- [My Travels](#)
- [My Friends](#)

Next and Previous Posts

There are two other sets of navigational aids to consider as you design your site. Both of these sets involve moving a user through your site from one post to another.

The first set is featured only on the non-single/non-permalink web pages and is the template tag [posts_nav_link\(\)](#). This tag creates two links at the bottom of the page within the [WordPress Loop](#) to display the **next** and **previous** pages of the index, archives, searches, and categories.

By default, the `posts_nav_link` looks like this:

[« Previous Page](#) — [Next Page »](#)

To learn more about changing the look of this link, visit the Template Tag page for [posts_nav_link\(\)](#).

The other set of navigational aids for moving through your site control the **next post** and **previous post** links typically found at the bottom of your single/permalink post. These direct the user to move to the next chronologically created post or the previous.

The template tags are [previous_post\(\)](#) and [next_post\(\)](#). These can be styled in several different ways, using the **next post** and **previous post** titles or using the actual titles of the next and previous posts.

The following example displays the next and previous post titles with arrows to emphasize the direction the user may choose.

```
<?php previous_post('&laquo; &laquo; %', '', 'yes'); ?>
| <?php next_post('% &raquo; &raquo; ', '', 'yes'); ?>
```

[« « Previous Post Title](#) | [Next Post Title » »](#)

To learn more about changing the look of these links, visit the Template Tag page for [previous_post\(\)](#) and [next_post\(\)](#).

Styling Your Navigation Links

As you have seen, there are a lot of ways WordPress uses to help the user move through a WordPress Site. We've shown you some of the WordPress template tags, but there are also many [Plugins](#) available which also assist with site navigation such as providing *related posts*, *customized post lists*, and more to customize your site's navigation.

The following are some of the resources that may help you in stylizing and customizing your navigation lists.

- [Next and Previous Links](#)
- [Styling Lists with CSS](#)
- [Creating Horizontal Menus](#)
- [Dynamic Menu Highlighting](#)
- [Navigation Plugins](#)