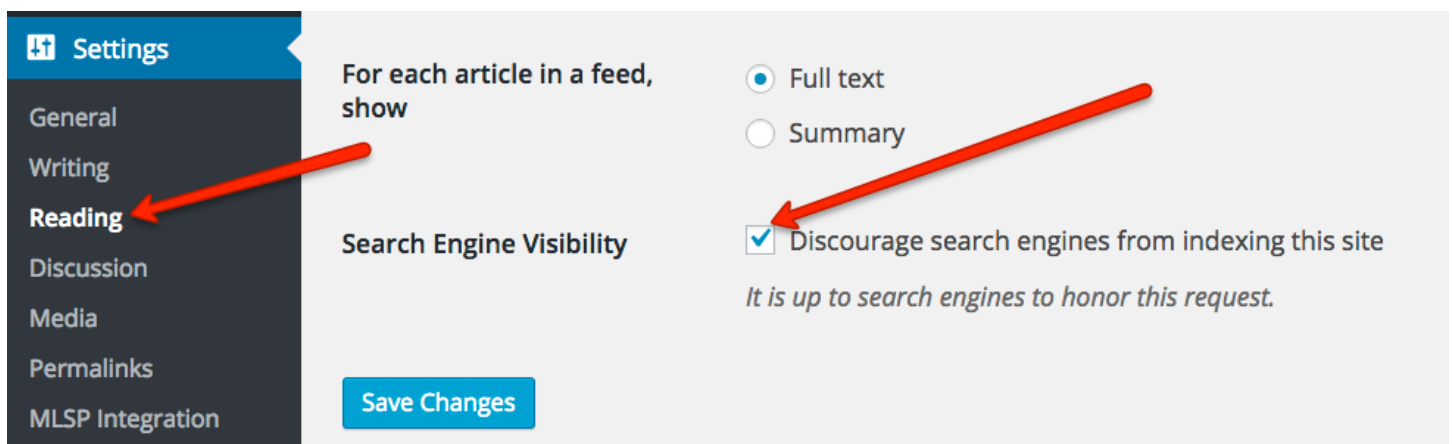**MLSP**®sites

GETTING STARTED WITH MLSP SITES

We're extremely excited to offer you MLSP sites. Below is a getting started checklist that you will want to go through to make sure you start off on the right foot! We recommend you print this out so you can check off each action step as you go!

NOTE: If you have NEVER used wordpress before, before you proceed to the checklist below, YOU MUST WATCH THE "WORDPRESS FOR BEGINNERS" Training Videos located in your Sites training portal - Watching these short 2 to 3 minute videos will give you a MUCH BETTER user experience. Wordpress is extremely powerful, but only if you know how to use it!

① HIDE FROM THE SEARCH ENGINES UNTIL YOU ARE READY!

When you are first getting started with your blog, it's important that you hide from those search engines. Why? Well if they send their spider minions to look at your site and there is either no content, or isn't ready, they could "sandbox" you - meaning they may not come back form months! (They are fickle beasts) So, it's best to hide from them until you have some content on there, you have your design ready, and if you choose to use Domain Mapping, until you have that set up.

- **In your Wordpress Dashboard, navigate to Settings -> Reading**

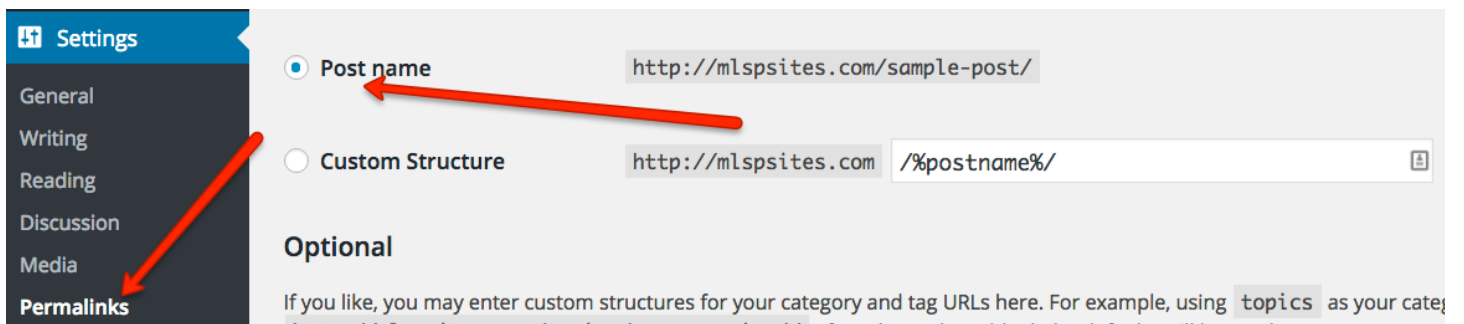- **Check the box that says "Discourage search engines from indexing this site"**

- **Click Save Changes**

NOTE: You will want to make sure you go back and "uncheck" this box when you are ready for the world to see your blog! (It doesn't have to be perfect)

② SET YOUR PERMALINKS (WHAT'S THAT!?)

The URLs of the content you publish on your WordPress website are known as permalinks. Permalinks are what people enter into their browser address bar to view one of your pages. They are also what search engines and other websites use to link to your website. Due to this, they are very important.

- **In your Wordpress Dashboard, navigate to Settings -> Permalinks**
- **For SEO purposes, we highly recommend you select "Post name" as the setting - this will remove any unecessary junk in your URLs**

Settings	
General	● Post name — http://mlspsites.com/sample-post/
Writing	
Reading	○ Custom Structure — http://mlspsites.com /%postname%/
Discussion	
Media	**Optional**
Permalinks	If you like, you may enter custom structures for your category and tag URLs here. For example, using `topics` as your categ...

- **Click Save Changes**

③ OPTIMIZE YOUR BLOG FOR SEARCH ENGINES USING YOAST SEO

This next step is very important, and because of our resident SEO expert Rob Fore, very easy to set up. By default, your blog comes the the best SEO plugin available in Yoast SEO, and the beauty of it is, when you created your blog, we imported Rob Fore's exact settings for you!

- **Navigate to your Sites Training portal, and under Plugins, watch the Yoast SEO training video, or visit http://mlspsites.com/go/seo to go directly to the training!**
  This will show you some of the steps you can take to customize your settings and set up your webmaster tools
- **Marvel at how easy that was to set up your SEO settings like a professional!**

(4) DOMAIN MAPPING (OPTIONAL)

Domain mapping is a super powerful feature of MLSP sites. It allows you to use a custom domain for your blog, rather than the mlspsites.com one provided to you. It's also very easy to do, but you'll want to do a couple of things after the domain is mapped. So lets get the domain mapped first:

- Head over to the Sites Training Portal and go down to Plugins -> Domain Mapping. Watch the quick 2 minute video to show you how to map your domain
  Or go to http://mlspsites.com/go/domains to watch the video directly.

- Now for some housekeeping. If you followed the steps before, you will want to make sure that your sitemap and permalinks reflect your new domain.

- First, navigate to Settings -> Permalinks - and even if it looks right, just click the save changes button to force it to update. (Better safe than sorry right?)

- Now navigate to the Sitemap settings under SEO -> XML Sitemaps. When you get there at the very top you should see a button to view your sitemap. Take a look!

XML Sitemap

Generated by **YoastSEO**, this is an XML Sitemap, meant for consumption by search engines.

You can find more information about XML sitemaps on **sitemaps.org**.

This XML Sitemap Index file contains 4 sitemaps.

Sitemap	Last Modified
http://www.YOURNEWDOMAIN.com/post-sitemap.xml	2015-11-03 13:48
http://www.YOURNEWDOMAIN.com/page-sitemap.xml	2015-11-03 02:40
http://www.YOURNEWDOMAIN.com/category-sitemap.xml	2015-11-03 13:48
http://www.YOURNEWDOMAIN.com/post_tag-sitemap.xml	2015-11-03 13:48

Just make sure you see your mapped domain where it says YOURNEWDOMAIN!
(This sitemap may look weird, trust us, it's the way Google likes it)

NOTE: If you are tranferring an existing blog to MLSP sites, Domain mapping should be the LAST THING YOU DO. Make sure all of your content is imported and correct before doing this! Those of you just starting a new blog can ignore this warning :)

CONGRATULATIONS! YOUR NEXT STEPS:

You are well on your way to having your own blog set up like professionals who have been around for years. All that's left now is the fun stuff! Design, Plugins, and get that content created! So what to do next:

- Navigate to the Training Portal and watch the training on Plugins and Themes. ou may find it very helpful to go through one of the Design Walkthroughs to get your blog set up like one of our demos - These walkthroughs also go in to detail about some of our favorite plugins you may want to use.

- Enjoy your new blog!