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Backlinks: which links help, which hurt and how to earn them honestly

On-Page SEO & Yoast

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Backlinks: which links help, which hurt and how to earn them honestly

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A **backlink** is a link from another site to yours. Google treats them as a recommendation: if serious, related sites mention you, it is a sign yours deserves attention. But **quality and relevance** count, not quantity, and bought or manufactured links break Google's rules. The honest road is slow and starts with having something worth mentioning.

Which links help and which hurt

Type	Value
A site in your field, or a news story, mentioning you because the content is useful	Good: it is what Google looks for.
An association, chamber of commerce or partner that lists your business	Good and honest, and it gives visitors confidence.
A business entry in serious listings and directories	Useful, especially for a local business. Always write the name, address and phone the same way.
Comments and profiles where you drop the link in bulk	Almost no value, and can look like spam.
Bought links, large-scale arranged swaps, networks of sites built to link	Against Google's rules. They can make the site lose visibility.

How to earn them without schemes

1. **Create something worth mentioning.** A complete guide, a simple tool, your own data (a small study of your sector), a real case. Nobody links to a page identical to a thousand others.

2 **Appear where your field already talks.** A guest article in an industry publication, an interview, a partner who thanks you and points to you. Write for the reader, not for the link.

3 **Ask for the link from those who already mention you without linking.** If a partner, customer or news item already talks about you and left out the link, a simple, friendly request is usually enough.

4 **See what you already have.** In Search Console, the “Links” section shows the sites linking to you and your most linked pages. See **getting your site into Search Console**.

5 **Keep addresses alive.** If you change a page that receives links, set up a redirect; otherwise the link lands on a 404 and the value is lost. See **301 redirects**.

Link attributes

When your site links out for money or in exchange, Google’s rule is to mark the link with `rel="sponsored"`. Links from comments and user areas take `rel="ugc"`, and `nofollow` is for those you do not want to endorse. Anyone with a company blog should know this, because a paid link with no marking goes against the rules.

Distrust anyone selling “100 backlinks a week” or a “guaranteed rise”.
Nobody controls Google, and these links in series are the kind it ignores or punishes. Whoever promises first place is selling something else. If one day you get a manual action from Google (it shows in Search Console), respond to what it says.

Not every ugly link needs to be rejected.
Odd links point at any site. Google says the disavow tool is an advanced feature most sites do not need. Use it only if you have a manual action or paid links you cannot get removed.

NEED A HAND?

Was the site flagged as unsafe, or did it receive a warning after a campaign? Tell us the address and what Search Console shows.

Open a support ticket →

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301 redirects

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