

**2020  
Revised  
Edition**

**The Ultimate**

**YouTube**

**SEO CHEAT-SHEET**

**How to Make Your Videos High-Ranking  
Traffic-Pumping Machines**

# READ THIS FIRST...

## DID YOU KNOW...

- Over 70% of ALL web traffic now comes from video
- Videos posted in Facebook are shared TWICE as often as written or image based content
- And YouTube now reaches more US adults ages 18-34 than ANY cable network and it's accelerating fast...

In fact, the search engines are already favouring video in their search results even if it's newer and has less authority than the equivalent content in written form.

This means you no longer have a choice whether or not to deliver your content through video.

VIDEO is now the primary way people want to learn, shop, and interact online.

This YouTube SEO cheat sheet gives you 22 simple and actionable tricks our in-house team here at Vidnami use to consistently win traffic-pumping No.1 rankings with video...

It's a quick and easy read (only about 5 minutes), so go ahead, read it now, and start applying these tricks to your videos to get them ranking higher and generating a ton more traffic from both YouTube and Google today.



## 1. HAVE AN AWESOME TITLE - YOUR FIRST IMPRESSION MATTERS

As the saying goes you only get one chance to make a first impression, and this is especially true with your videos. Before anyone watches your video, they'll make a judgement on whether it's worth their time based on your video title. This is your first (and often the last) interaction a viewer will have with your video, so make it count.

While there are many formulas for creating click worthy titles, here are some good rules of thumb

- **Keep them short and to the point - Less than 10 words is ideal:**

e.g. How To Be A Social Media Expert.

- **Use numbers if you can:**

e.g. 6 Ways To Become A Social Media Expert

- **Include a specific benefit:**

e.g. Triple Your Sales With These Simple Social Media Hacks

- **Add your keyword:**

Putting your keyword in the title is a great thing to do and can help a lot, however contrary to common belief it isn't critical.

Remember optimizing for your viewer's interest is your primary goal here, so if you have a killer title that doesn't work with your keyword, don't include it, there are some other places where you can work your keywords in.

That said if you can work your main keyword in without detracting from the message, definitely do it.

- **Don't be clever about it:**

Simple headlines beat clever ones every time. [This tool](#) is a quick way to check if you're being too clever. Just copy and paste your headline and it will tell you what reading level your headline is. You should aim to keep it under 8th grade.



## 2. WRITE A KILLER DESCRIPTION - SELL THE CLICK

YouTube factors your video description into its ranking algorithm, viewer's use it to find out more about you, and Google displays it in their search results. So PLEASE spend the time to write a good one, it makes a massive difference. Here's a good format for a great video description.

1. **Ideally it should be at least 150** words in length and have your target keyword worked naturally into it.
2. **The first two sentences are the most important** of the whole description so brevity here is key. This is what gets shown below your video and in the video search results. Describe what you cover in the video or what makes it different to everything else. It's also a good idea to have a call to action in here to.
3. **Add your primary call to action** with a URL.
4. **Follow this with additional information** or links you mention in the video.
5. **And lastly add any other social media or website links** for people to get in contact with you.

### Here's an example:

*A simple, effective, cheap raised garden bed project for growing vegetables at home. CLICK Here for more info: [Link]*

*Growing vegetables at home can have a ton of benefits. It can be a therapeutic outlet to help you unplug from our hyperconnected world, it can be a great way to have fun with your kids and enjoy the outdoors, and the health benefits of growing your own organic produce are virtually endless.*

*However, what I've found is that the reason most people don't grow their own vegetables is not because they don't have the time, nor is it because they don't want to, it's just because they don't know 'where' to start. So in this video I walk you through the first step which is making a garden bed.*

*I'll walk you through the exact tools and materials you'll need as well as how to put it all together, and you'll be a regular green thumb before you know it.*

----

*Tools and Materials Used In This Video*

----

*Tool #1*

*Material #1*

----

*Also Check out:*

----

*Resource #1: [LINK]*

*Resource #2: [LINK]*

----

*And Follow Us At:*

----

*Website: [LINK]*

*Twitter: [LINK]*

*Facebook: [LINK]*



### 3. TAG IT PROPERLY - OR NO ONE WILL FIND IT

Your tags are absolutely critical for the discoverability and rank-ability of your video. If you don't have good tags, your videos growth potential will be severely handicapped.

You absolutely must spend the time to do your keyword research to ensure your tags match what people are actually searching for.

Make sure you have these three tag categories covered.

- **Specific tags:**  
These are specific keywords that someone would type in as a search query like "trout fishing lures". Market Samurai is an excellent tool for uncovering these keywords.
- **Contextual single word tags:**  
These are keywords that describe your videos general field of interest, such as "fishing", "survival" or "camping".
- **Generic tags:**  
These tags are simply general words that describe your video, such as "DIY", "hints".

But remember to choose and prioritise them wisely because the tag field has a limit. YouTube only allows 500 characters for tags.



### 4. MAKE YOUR THUMBNAIL POP - LOOKS DO MATTER

Don't judge a book by its cover. That's what your parents probably told you as a child right...?

Well, the sad fact is that people WILL judge your video at first sight. And that usually means your video thumbnail. So don't leave it to chance.

Your thumbnail will most often determine the success or failure of your video before anyone has ever watched it. So under no circumstances leave your thumbnail in the hands of YouTube's automatic thumbnail generator. Make your own, and make it good.

Here are some general guidelines for creating irresistible thumbnails:

- **Make it stand out**  
Your video is competing for people's attention and there is a lot of noise out there. Make them interesting, use bright vibrant colours, make the foreground high-contrast to the background, include close-ups of faces if possible (or other visually compelling imagery) and above all make sure it's clear and in-focus. Canva is a great tool that

makes creating eye-popping thumbnails drag and drop easy.

Here are some examples:



- **Include Text**

Remember, as time goes by your video will get shared and embedded more and more around the internet (well that's the goal at least). However, many of the places it will end up won't display the video title in the post.

In this case your thumbnail will need to pick up the slack. So it's a good idea to add some text when appropriate to your thumbnail to summarise your videos primary benefit and further entice the click. Aim for less than 4 words.



- **Review you thumbnail and small scale**

Before you upload your custom thumb it's a good idea to check how it looks shrunk down to 120 x 68 pixels. This is the size it will appear in the related videos sidebar, so if you can't make out what it's supposed to be or clearly read the text at that size, it's worth working on until you can.



- **DON'T Bait and Switch** This one should go without saying, but I'll say it anyway, you should use graphics or screenshots from within your video or at least something close. Remember your viewer's probably clicked to watch your video because of your thumbnail, so if they don't see any content that resembles it, you'll just make them mad.

For a more in depth look into creating irresistible thumbnails check out [this post](#).

Note: in order to be able to change your thumbnails you'll need to have verified your YouTube account. You can [do that here](#).



## **5. UPLOAD IN HIGH DEFINITION**

Another great thing to do is to always upload high definition videos and not standard definition videos. Remember that YouTube always wants to create the best possible experience for its end users. Anything you can do to help them achieve that end will help with the ranking of your video.



## **6. TRANSCRIBE IT PROPERLY**

Yes, YouTube will automatically transcribe your video for you... BUT, it does a horrible job of it.

Make sure you get your video transcribed properly. There are many online services that will do this for you quite cheaply, or take a few minutes to do it yourself.

There are two main reasons to get your video transcribed. The first is so that you can include the video transcript in the closed captions. This allows YouTube to effectively present subtitles for your video as it's being played, which helps with engagement.

And even more importantly, YouTube will index your transcription and use it as part of its ranking algorithm.



## **7. VIDEO LENGTH: 5-10 MINUTES IS ABOUT THE SWEET SPOT**

Keeping your audience entertained and glued to the YouTube platform is a key component in the growth of your channel, and your overall traffic strategy. Videos that are 5-10 minutes in duration seem to be the sweet spot. Long enough to please YouTube's engagement algorithm, but not too long to fatigue your viewer's attention. If you're struggling to keep your videos interesting for that length of time, opening loops is a great way to keep toying viewer's through till the end.



## 8. USE "OPEN LOOPS" TO HOOK THEM IN

How long people spend watching your video is a critical ranking factor in YouTube.

It's referred to as "Audience Retention" and you can see how your video stacks up in your YouTube Analytics.

Simply put, if you keep people glued to the screen, you'll rank better.

One of the easiest ways to do this is to just outline your content, learning outcomes and any benefits of your video up front in the first few seconds.

This is called "opening a loop" and it's a very powerful psychological trigger that works by tapping into the brains compulsive need to finish things.

Here are some examples of how you can open a loop at the beginning of your video.

*"In this video we'll take a look at how to do A, B and C"*

*"Today we'll be talking about A, B and C"*

*"Over the next few minutes you'll discover A, B and C"*



## 9. ADD MOTION TO CREATE A FEAST FOR THE EYES

Your eyes are especially sensitive to movement. This is why TV shows and movies execute camera angle or scene changes every few seconds. It keeps your eyes occupied. You should aim to the same and to have something change on the screen every 3-10 seconds.

There's no need to go overboard with crazy animations, some simple stock footage or zooming and panning of images can often be enough to keep your viewer's glued to the screen. This is a guaranteed way to boost audience retention.



## 10. ADD MUSIC TO BOOST THE EMOTIONAL IMPACT

All hollywood movies, tv shows, and advertisements include music, because it's the most effective way to ramp up the emotional impact of a video with so little effort. Simply adding a music track to a seemingly boring video will give it an instant energy boost that's guaranteed to keep your viewer's engaged longer.





## **11. LINK TO YOUR OTHER VIDEOS AT THE END USING 'END SCREENS'**

Every business owner knows that it's a lot easier to sell to an existing customer than it is to gain a new one, and this principle applies to your videos too. If someone has watched one of your videos they're significantly more likely to watch your other ones. So make it easy for them by providing a link at the end of your video.

This is incredibly simple with YouTube's inbuilt 'End Screens' functionality. All you have to do is select a related video from your channel, and YouTube will add a thumbnail of it at the end of your video, making it super easy for your viewer's to continue watching.

The great thing about End Screens is that they work on mobile devices too. With mobile views accounting for HALF of all YouTube's views this instantly doubles the potential exposure of your videos.

This can have a compounding side effect on your videos ranking potential as well. The more of your videos that people watch, the more opportunities they have to watch your other videos, which boosts your channel retention rate. This will help to grow the authority of your YouTube channel, which in turn helps your new videos to rank faster and higher when you release them.

Think of it like being rewarded for being popular.



## **12. SKYROCKET YOUR VIDEO VIEWS AND WATCH TIME WITH PLAYLISTS**

As you're no doubt catching on, the key to winning the YouTube ranking game is keeping viewer's on the YouTube platform for as long as possible. And one of the quickest and most effective tricks to do this is by taking advantage of playlists.

In simple terms a playlist is a collection of similar videos that you group together that can be played one after the other automatically.

By grouping similar videos together in sequence, you're essentially making it easy for your viewer's to binge watch your videos, just like a tv series on Netflix. So instead of watching just one video, they could end up watching 5 in a row.

This can skyrocket your 'overall minutes watched' and the authority of your channel very quickly, boosting the ranking and exposure of each video in your playlist.

We recommend ordering your videos from highest traffic to lowest.



## **13. TELL THEM WHAT TO DO NEXT WITH A 'CALL TO ACTION'**

The more people who like, share and comment on your video or subscribe to your channel the better your video will perform in the rankings. This again is a measure of engagement and so it's a good idea to get the ball rolling with a gentle push by having a call to action at the end.

You don't need to go overboard, something simple like this can make a big difference:

*"If you liked this video share the love and give it a thumbs up."*

*"Thanks for watching, why not leave a comment below and let me know what you think."*

*"If you liked this video, hit the subscribe button to receive more like it in the future."*



## **14. VIDEOS WITH MONETISATION ENABLED GO VIRAL**

It shouldn't come as a surprise that YouTube's primary objective is to make money, and they achieve this by placing advertisements before and during videos. So when it comes to YouTube's ranking and promotion algorithm, you can bet your boots that videos with monetisation enabled are going to take priority over videos that don't.

So if the purpose of your video is to generate traffic and reach as many people as possible, you need to align your motives with YouTube's hip pocket by making sure that ads are enabled on your videos.

In short, if you want to give your video the best chance to go viral, enable ads.



## **15. GIVE YOUR VIDEO A JUMP-START WITH STRATEGIC LINK-BUILDING**

Ok, if you've followed the previous steps correctly you should have an amazing video that people genuinely want to watch, and this is going to make the final phase much easier.

It's now time to publish your video and give it a jumpstart with a flurry of link-building and engagement activity.

A great way to think of this phase is like using a defibrillator (those electrode pads paramedics use to start your heart beating). You see your heart knows how to beat, sometimes it just needs a jumpstart, after which it should tick along nicely by itself.

Your videos should behave in a similar way. If you've created awesome, engaging content it's going to acquire inbound links and grow in authority naturally, all by itself. But it's very important to give it a helping hand at the beginning. And the first week is crucial.

Typically in the first week of a video being uploaded, YouTube will send an elevated amount of traffic to it. They want to find out quickly how engaging it is, how high the audience retention is, how much discussion and social activity it generates, and so on, so they can optimize their results with the most engaging content.

This is your window of opportunity, so make it count. It's a good idea to have a plan of what you're going to do before publishing your video. Here are some simple things you can do to give your video a jumpstart.

- Post and embed it in on your Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and any Social platform you can
- Email it to your customer or subscriber base
- Email it to your friends and family
- Post/embed it in topical forums
- Embed it in a blog post on your site
- Encourage/ask for video responses from friends
- And if you still need more link building options, you can find videos similar to yours, copy the URL and paste it into Majestic's site explorer. This will help you discover other potential inbound linking opportunities. You can then go about re-creating those links to your video.

But remember don't go overboard. Your videos ongoing traffic potential will have a much better chance to stand the test of time if you keep it "Natural". Don't just go after high pagerank links. A healthy combination of high page rank, low pagerank, shares, thumbs ups, favourites, video embeds and yes nofollow links all have value.



## 16. PIGGYBACK TRENDS TO FAST TRACK GROWTH

One of the best ways to get discovered on YouTube is to tap into trends such as trending topics, videos, seasonal trends, or even trending influencers, and ride the growth of the trend all the way to the top.

Types of trends you can piggyback include:

- Seasonal Content
- News and Events
- Trending Influencers Controversial
- Topics In Your Niche
- Events In your industry
- And more..

The trick here is two-fold:

First it starts with the headline and the video content. For this to work effectively you need to make sure that you reference the trend in both the title of your video and at the beginning of the video.

First impressions matter and you want to make sure that your video does relate to the trend, but then you can add your own unique thoughts, ideas and input.

The second stage is to piggy back the metadata of trending videos. Look into the metadata of trending influencers, trending videos and trending channels etc (tools like [VidIQ](#) are great for this), to see what tags and descriptions, titles and thumbnails they are using, and then model yours on theirs.

This will indicate to YouTube that your video might be a good suggestion for viewer's to watch next, allowing you to piggyback the success of trending videos all the way to the top.



## **17. BOOST "WATCH TIME MINUTES" TO FAST TRACK GROWTH**

As we talked about briefly in the "open loops" section, audience retention is a key driving metric for the growth of your content, your channel and your business.

However, it's important to note that while the percentage duration of your content gives you a good insight into how much viewer's like your content. The percentage itself is not what YouTube really cares about. What they want to see is large numbers of total "watch time minutes".

For example, a 60 minute video that has a 10% retention rate will receive an average of 6 watch time minutes. Whereas a 6 minute video that has a 50% retention rate will only get an average of 3 watch time minutes.

Therefore (all thing being equal) the longer video with the lower retention rate will be more favourable in the distribution algorithm, simply because it keeps viewer's glued to the platform longer.

Think about it from YouTube's perspective, if their goal is to make money by showing more ads on your content, which video is going to give them more opportunities to show ads? That's right - the longer one!

So you need to optimise your content to maximise your total watch time minutes.



## **18. SCHEDULE IT TO MAXIMISE SUBSCRIBER VIEWS**

If you're getting started and you only have a few subscribers just publish your videos at the time that suits you best.

At this point it's more about consistency and conditioning your viewer's habits to expect your content at a particular time.

If you've ever been hooked on a TV show and you've organized your personal schedule around the airing of the latest episode you'll know exactly why this works.

However, if your channel does have a lot of subscribers and traffic, you'll be gathering accurate real time data in your Analytics that'll enable you to make better decisions about the best time to publish for your channel.

What you want to do is publish 3 hours before your peak time. Doing so will allow you to capture the largest portion of your subscribers at the beginning of their viewing session, boosting the likelihood that they'll watch your content before someone else's.

The great news is YouTube makes this super easy with their scheduling feature on the upload screen. All you have to do is select “Schedule” instead of “Public”, select the time that suits you and you’re good to go.



## 19. MAKE YOUR CHANNEL LOOK PROFESSIONAL

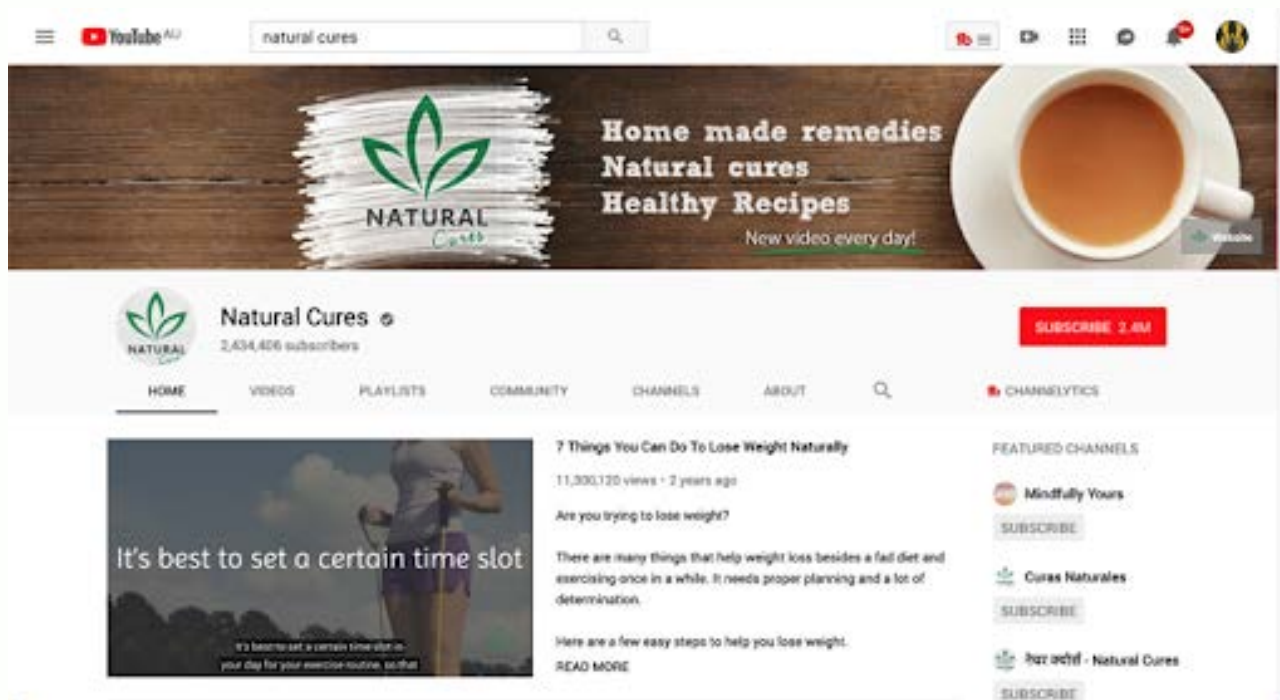
Remember what we said earlier - you never get a second chance to make a first impression!

When people visit your channel for the first time, they immediately formulate an idea of what you and your channel are all about.

In order to make a good first impression you should make sure you:

- Upload a great Channel Thumbnail
- Upload professional Channel Art
- Include links to your website & social media profiles

Here’s a good example:



If you’re not sure where to start, check out the Channel Art and Channel Thumbnail templates available at [canva.com](https://canva.com).



## 20. GET A CUSTOM URL FOR YOUR CHANNEL

Give your fans an easy-to-remember web address, called a custom URL, for your YouTube channel.

A custom URL looks like `youtube.com/yourcustomname` OR `youtube.com/c/yourcustomname`.

You can choose a custom URL based on things like your display name, your YouTube username, any current vanity URLs that you have, or the name of your linked website (all subject to availability).

To be eligible for a custom URL for your channel, your account needs to:

- Have 100 or more subscribers
- Be at least 30 days old
- Have an uploaded photo as channel icon
- Have uploaded channel art



## 21. SHARE SUBSCRIBE LINKS

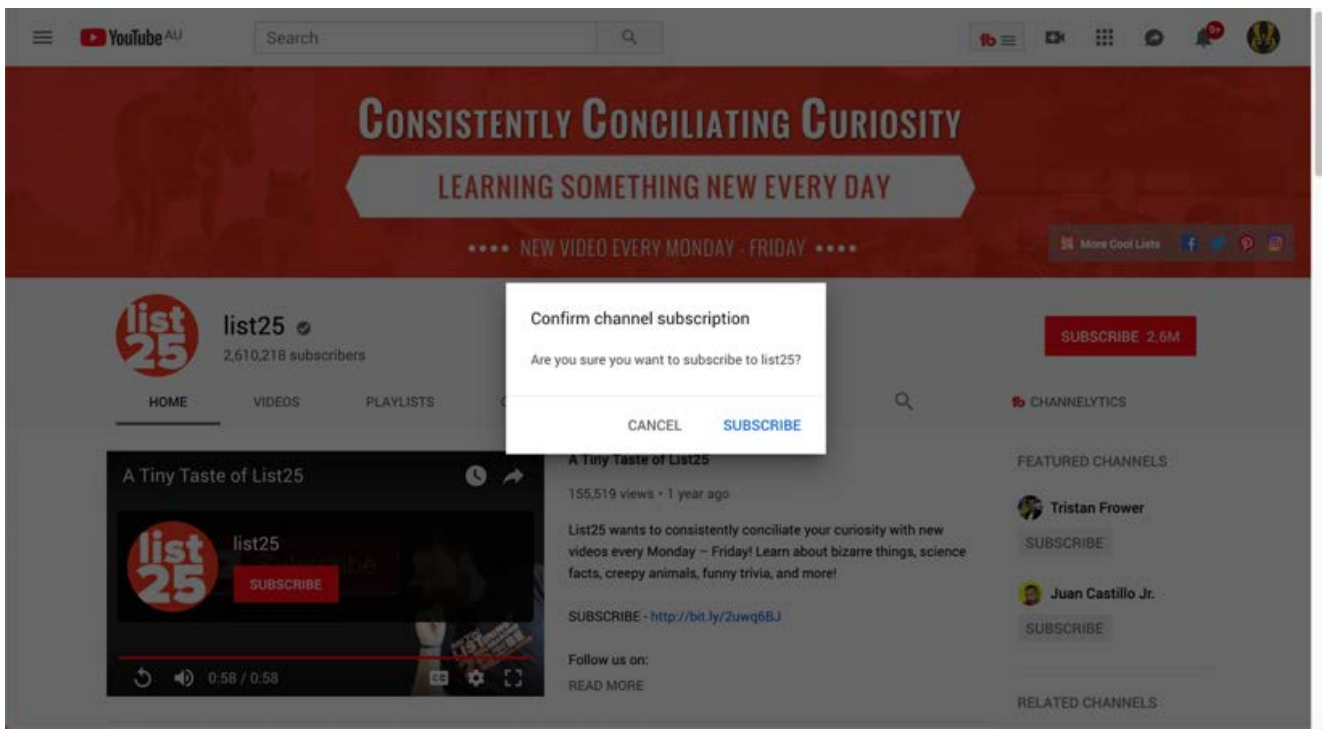
You can increase the number of people subscribing to your channel by automatically prompting them to subscribe when they click through to your channel.

To do this, all you need to do is add **?sub\_confirmation=1** to the end of your YouTube channel URL when you share it.

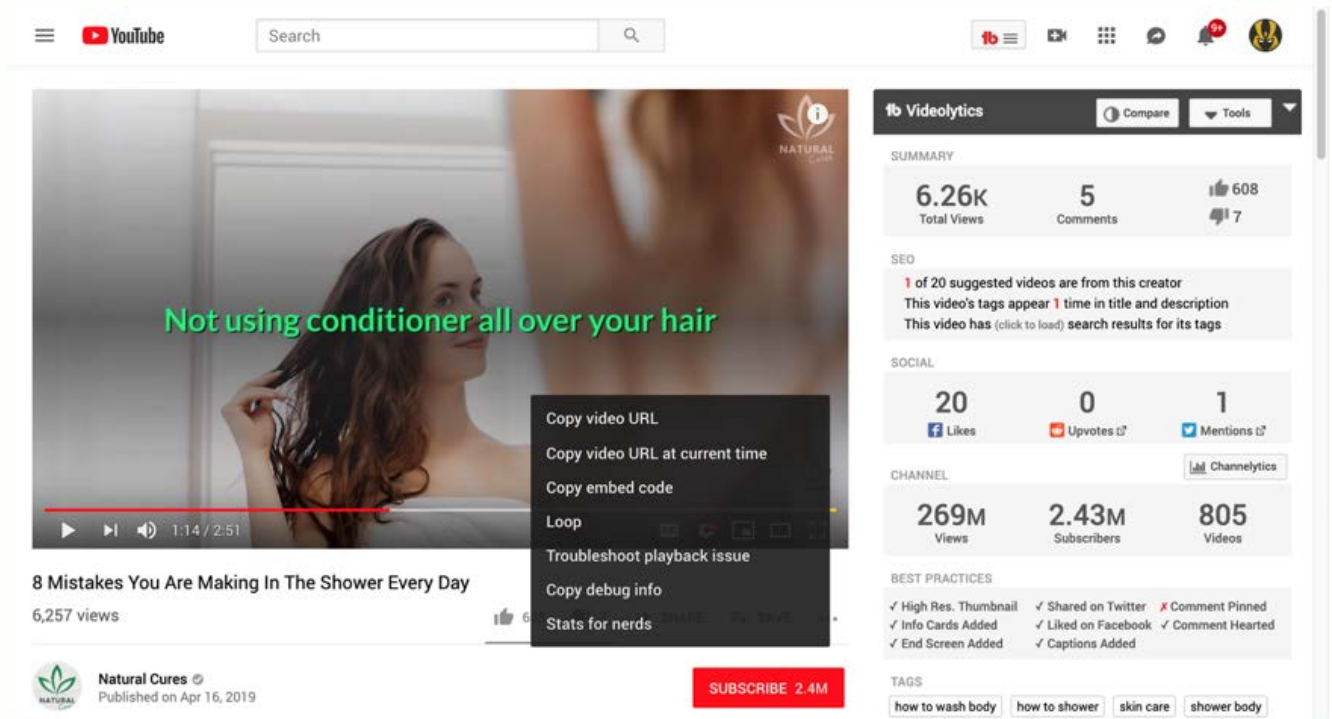
Here's what the full link would look like:

[https://www.youtube.com/user/list25?sub\\_confirmation=1](https://www.youtube.com/user/list25?sub_confirmation=1)

When people click that link, they'll be asked to confirm their subscription to your channel before they can view anything else which can be a great way to build your subscriber count.



## 22. SHARE TIMED LINKS



If you create longer videos that answer a range of questions, one great tip is to share links that will allow your viewers to jump straight to the section of the video that is most relevant to them.



The way to do this is to include an extra time parameter in the web address that points to your video.

For example:

<https://youtu.be/SkQ32LAIR-4> will start the video at the beginning

<https://youtu.be/SkQ32LAIR-4?t=74> will start playing at 74 seconds into the video

As you can see, the only difference is that the second link includes ?t=74 at the end of the web address.

By directing people to the section of your video that is most relevant to them you will save them time and give them the information they need as quickly as possible.



## CONCLUSION

The competition for rankings online is fierce and it's growing rapidly. However, by harnessing the power of VIDEO you now have an incredible new tool for generating views, shares, traffic and ultimately sales in your business.

This YouTube SEO Cheat-Sheet is your secret weapon, so print out the following checklist, keep it next to your computer and use it every time you create a video.



## WHAT TO DO NEXT...

If you've been looking for a quick and easy way to create high-quality YouTube videos, you owe it to yourself, and your business to grab your free trial of [Vidnami...](#)

Vidnami gives you everything you need to create Professional YouTube Videos:

- Over 20 Influencer Video Templates
- 100+ Content Templates
- 790,000+ Storyblocks Video Clips
- 30,000+ Royalty Free Music Tracks
- Flexible Voice Options (Record, Upload, Text-To-Speech)
- PLUS the power of Artificial Intelligence!

Try Vidnami now for FREE and create unlimited videos during your trial (with no annoying watermarks!) Grab your free trial here: [www.vidnami.com](http://www.vidnami.com)

# CHEAT-SHEET AT A GLANCE

- Have An Awesome Title - Your First Impression Matters
- Write A Killer Description - Sell The Click
- Tag it Properly - Or No One Will Find It
- Make Your Thumbnail Pop - Looks DO Matter
- Upload In High Definition
- Transcribe It Properly
- Video Length: 5-10 Minutes Is The Sweet Spot
- Use "Open Loops" To Hook Them in
- Add Motion To Create A Feast For The Eyes
- Add Music To Boost The Emotional Impact
- Link To Your Other Videos At The End Using 'End Screens'
- Skyrocket Your Video Views and Watch Time With
- Playlists Tell Them What To Do Next With A 'Call To Action'
- Videos With Monetisation Enabled Go Viral
- Give Your Video A Jump-Start With Strategic Link-Building
- Piggyback Trends To Fast Track Growth
- Boost "Watch Time Minutes" To Fast Track Growth
- Schedule It To Maximise Subscriber Views
- Make Your Channel Look Professional
- Get A Custom URL For Your Channel
- Share Subscribe Links
- Share Timed Links