Best Practices for Changing Post Categories

Table of Contents

Things you need to know about categories/tags

Here are a few things you need to know about categories in WordPress.

- A category will not appear in your category navigation unless there is a published post in it.
- Category names should be keyword specific not made-up or fun names. They are important navigation links so call them what they represent.
- Category names are generally one to four words.
- Posts can be in multiple categories.
- Categories can have subcategories.
- Out of the box, "mom" is your default category. You can change this in the Settings > Writing panel.
- By default, the WordPress permalink structure for categories includes the word "category" in the permalink such as http://example.com/category/parenting/.
- By default, the WordPress permalink structure for subcategories is http://example.com/category/parenting/parenting-tips/, featuring the parent category slug name first, followed by the subcategory slug.
- Categories have their own feeds. The link to the feed is in the structure of http://example.com/category/parenting/feed/ by default.
- Pages do not have categories, only posts.
- For every tag and category you create, there is an archive page created.
- Don't overdo tags.
- [Check out Kelli Biller's Tip on how to handle Categories and Tags](#).

Categories

Steps for Organizing Categories

Step 1 Review Categories

1. Go to Posts > **Categories**
2. Review the Categories listed
3. Decide what your default category will be. Meaning, if no category is selected for a post then it will end up in this category.
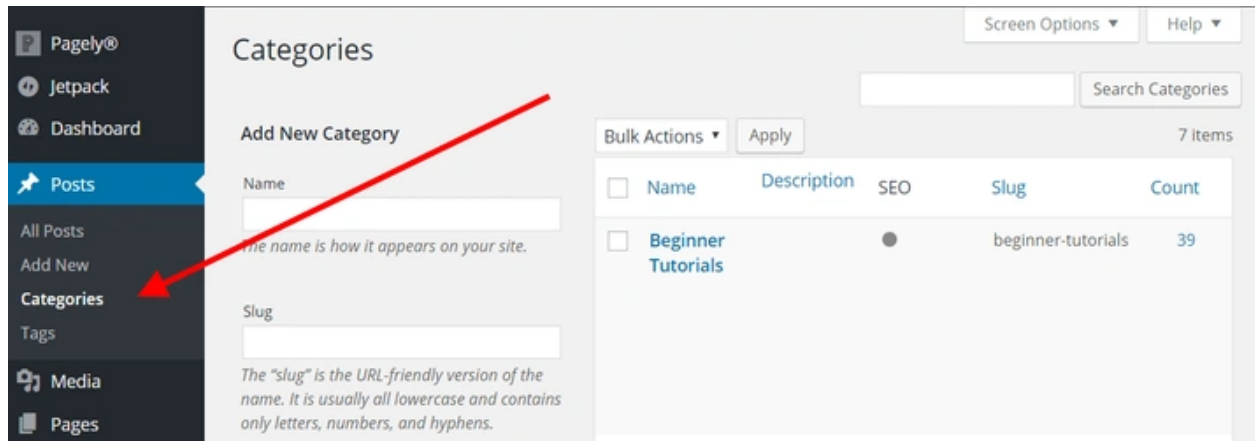
If there are any Categories with a **0 count**, delete those categories. *Keep a list of all deleted categories.* Review the number of posts in each category to help determine the usage. Also, review your Google Analytics search terms by your users. Some of your top search keywords may make good categories or tags.

It's recommended that you have between **10-15 categories**. Remove duplicates (keep a list to submit a tech ticket) where there is just a plural differentiation or combine ones that are similar enough. Here is a list of recommended categories. However, feel free to choose ones that best fit your content and audience.

Step 2 Determine your Categories

Develop your list of 10-15 categories. Now, if you currently have more than that, decide if you'll delete categories, rename categories, or change categories to tags. *Keep track of the names of your deleted categories and categories that you change to tags, you'll need submit tickets for those to create redirects.*

Step 3 Create Redirects for Deleted Categories

For deleted categories, you'll need to create a redirect to prevent errors on your category landing/archive pages. *There is no need to create redirects for renamed categories because the system automatically does that for you.*
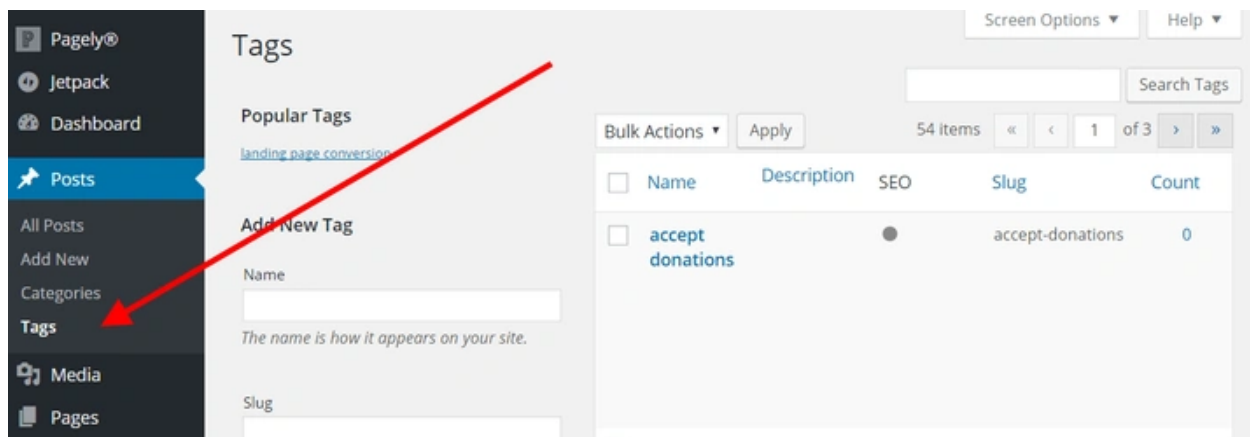
Step 4 Changing Categories to Tags

For categories that you don't want to delete, but want to convert to tags. Use the [Categories and Tags Converter plugin in WordPress](#).

Tags

Steps for Organizing Tags

Step 1 Review Tags

1. Go to Posts > **Tags**
2. Review the Tags listed

If there are any Tags with a **0 count**, [delete those tags](#). *There's no need to keep a list of all deleted tags, we do NOT need to create redirects for them because we don't give out those tag landing page links.* There's no minimum or maximum number of tags. However, remember every tag you create, creates a corresponding page on your site. Therefore, from a user experience perspective, if a user navigates to that page and there's only 1 post associated with that tag, that's not enough content to sustain that reader's attention.

Review the number of posts for each tag to help determine the usage. Also, review your Google Analytics search terms by your users. Some of your top search keywords may make good categories or tags.

Remove duplicates where there is just a plural differentiation or combine ones that are similar enough. There is no list of recommended tags. Feel free to choose ones that best fit your content and audience.

Step 2 Determine your Tags

Develop your list of tags. Decide if you'll [delete tags](#), [rename tags](#), or [change tags to categories](#).

Step 3 Create Redirects for Deleted Tags

For deleted tags, **IF** you provide links to tag landing pages to sponsors or external parties, you'll need to [submit a tech ticket](#) so we can [create a redirect](#) to prevent errors on your tag landing/archive pages. If you don't provide links to tags landing pages there's no need to create redirects. Just monitor your Google Analytics after deletion to see if there are any errors. *There is no need to create redirects for renamed tags because the system automatically does that for you.*

Step 4 Changing Tags to Categories

For tags that you don't want to delete, but want to convert to categories. Use the [Categories and Tags Converter](#) plugin in WordPress.

How to Organize Categories

Setting the Default Category in WordPress

By default, WordPress sets "mom" as the default category for your site. Having posts designated as simply "mom" is not specific enough.

The default category can not be deleted and some of the changes you may wish to make may be restricted. If you need to make changes, you need to set another category as the default.

To change the default category on WordPress:

1. Create a new category to be your new default, if you have not done so already.
2. Go to Settings > **Writing**.
3. Go to Default Post Category.
4. From the drop-down menu, select the category you wish to be the new default.

5. Click Save Changes.
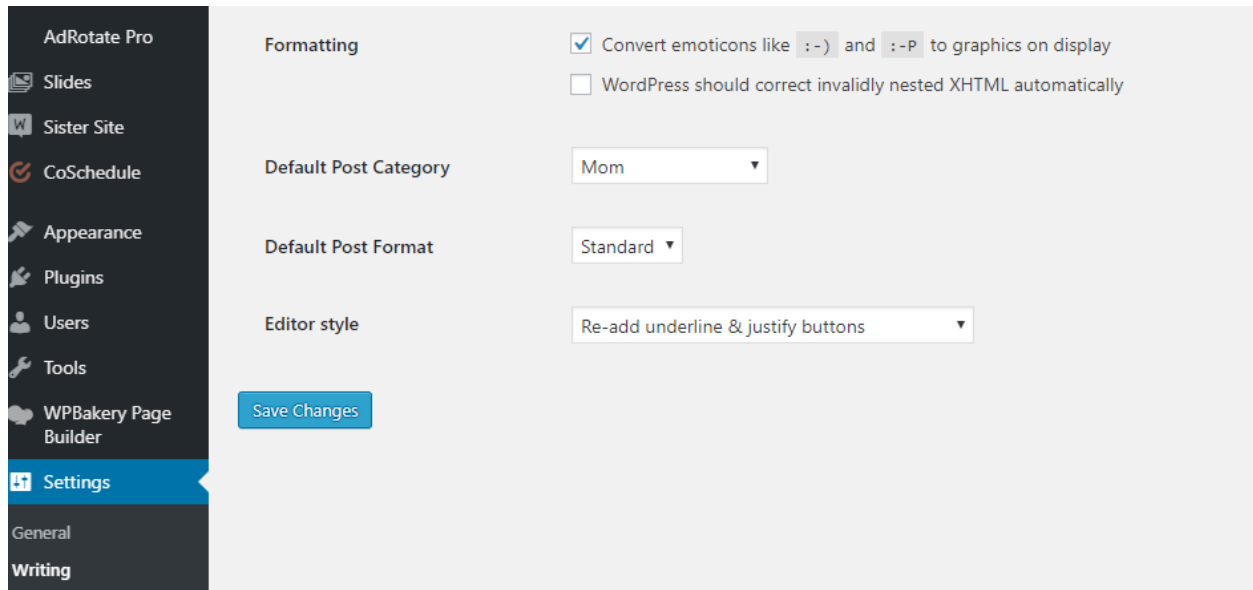
New posts published without selecting a category will be set in this new default category.

Now, you need to deal with the posts in "mom."

If you delete the "mom" category, posts within the deleted category *should* move automatically into the new default category, however, newer versions of WordPress leave the post in "mom".

To prevent searching for "mom" posts and manually adding them to the new default category, here are the steps to move posts to the new default category and delete the "mom" category.

1. On the **Posts** (All Posts) panel, filter the posts to show only the posts in the "mom" category.

2. Using the Bulk Edit feature of WordPress, select all the posts in the "mom" category, choose Bulk Edit (Apply), and add the new default category to all the selected posts. If you have more than one page of posts in that category, you may have to repeat this for each page of posts in the Post Panel until all from "mom" are in the new default category.
3. Go to Posts > **Categories**.
4. Hover over the "mom" category and select Delete. Accept any warnings.
5. All posts formerly in the "mom" category will have that category removed, leaving them in the new default category.

If you delete the "mom" category before moving them into the new category, go through your post list and select all posts without a category and use the Bulk Edit feature to add them to the right category. *Remember to [submit a tech ticket](#) telling us the "mom" or whatever your old default category was and give us the new category name so we can setup a redirect to avoid errors.*

Recommended Categories

Here's a [link to the list of categories](#) that CMBN recommends.

(Note: These should be used as a starting point and/or example as to how categories can be simplified. You may choose to use different categories and that is completely fine!)

Renaming a Category

To rename a category, you can create a new category and move posts into it, or change the category name.

1. Go to Posts > **Categories**.
2. Find the **category** name you wish to change and click Edit.
3. Change the **category** name.
4. Change the **category** Slug, the permalink "nice" name for the **category**.
5. Add or change the **category** description.
6. Click Update.

Changing the order or name of the category should not result in a page-not-found error. WordPress should automatically redirect the visitor to the right page as it preserves the same category ID number.

Deleting a Category

If you find a category isn't working for you, but you wish to keep the posts within that content, you can delete the category.

To delete a category, go to

1. Posts > **Categories**
2. Select Delete – but stop. Maybe you should consider this step first.

What happens when you delete a category in WordPress?

WordPress will automatically move the posts into the default category as set in the Settings > Writing panel.

If you do not wish to have the posts moved into the default category, you have some options.

The [Bulk Edit feature](#) will **not remove posts** from categories, **only add**. WordPress users can edit posts individually to add them to the category of their choice and remove them from the category they will later delete.

Once the posts have been moved into the appropriate category, go to the Posts > Categories panel and find the category you wish to delete. Click Delete.

Remember this is final. You may add the category later, but it will feature the number -2 in the category name unless you modify the WordPress database (which requires entering a tech ticket).

*Also remember that you need to [submit a tech ticket](#) with your exact wording for the deleted category. This will allow us to create a redirect so that users going to the old category won't see an error page.

Category to Tag Converter

If you've decided that you'd like to convert a category to tag then you'll need to install the Category to Tag Converter plugin. Please enter a tech ticket to do this.

Here are *some* examples of when it makes sense to move a category to a tag. Think is something that is more a keyword rather than a larger category. Also, check out Kelli's [explanation of categories vs. tags in this video](#).

{Sleep training} may make a better tag (keyword) rather than a full category. A category for this could simply be {Ages & Stages}

{Finding the right school} may make a better tag rather than a full category. Especially adding your city to the end of the phrase. A category for this could simply be school years.

{Things to do around INSERT CITY} may make a better tag rather than a full category. A category for this could be {In and Around INSERT CITY} with a subcategory of Things to do.

{INSERT NAME MOMS BLOG} may make a better tag rather than a full category with no need for a category.

After installation, you can convert tags into categories and categories into tags.

If you have posts with a single category and you convert that category to a tag, it will leave your post with NO CATEGORY or put it into the default category depending on how your site was set up. Therefore, you may want to review your posts with the single category (you're looking to convert) and assign them a different category BEFORE converting that category to a tag. The [Bulk Edit option](#) is a good solution for this.
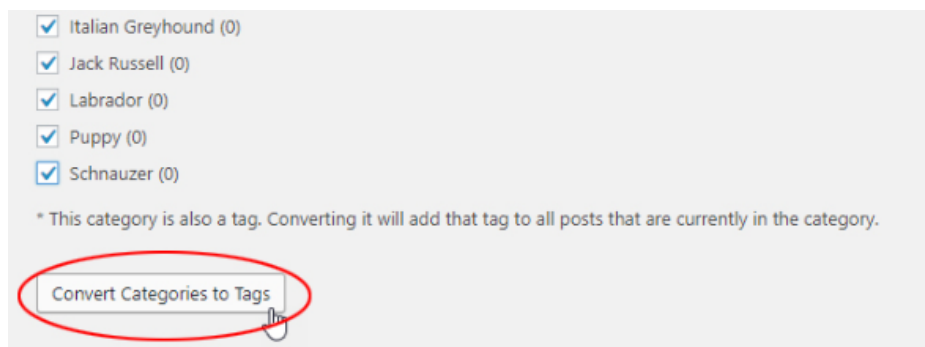
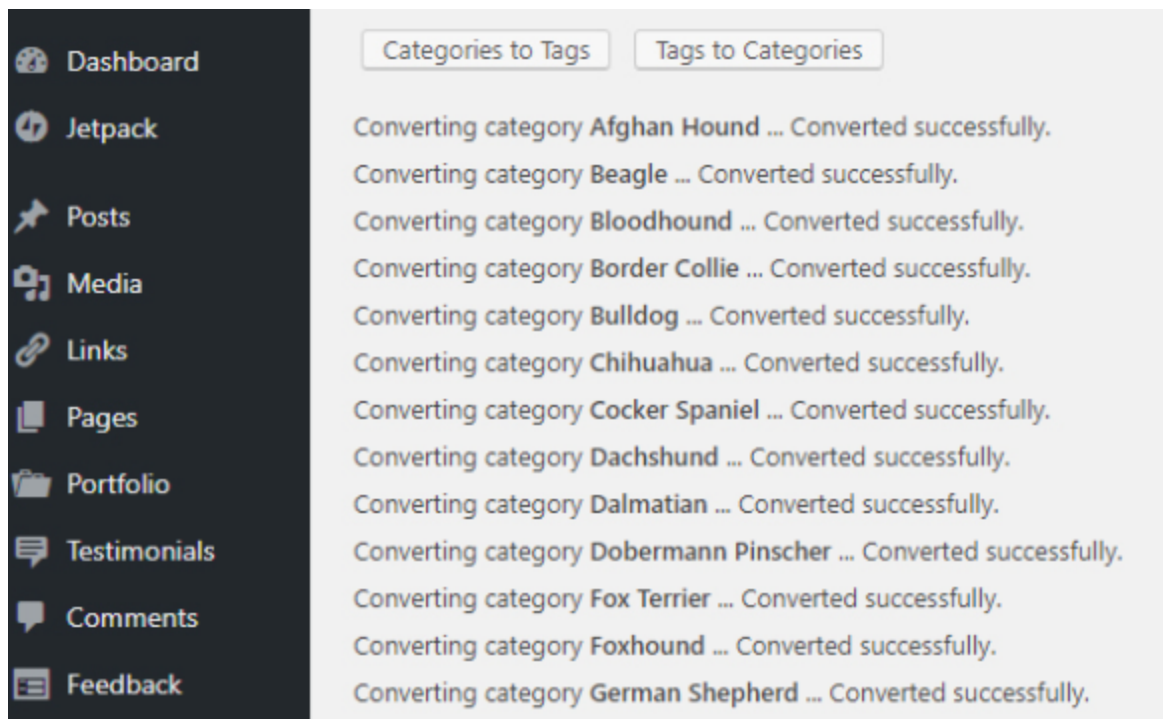To convert post categories into tags, click on the Categories to Tags button.
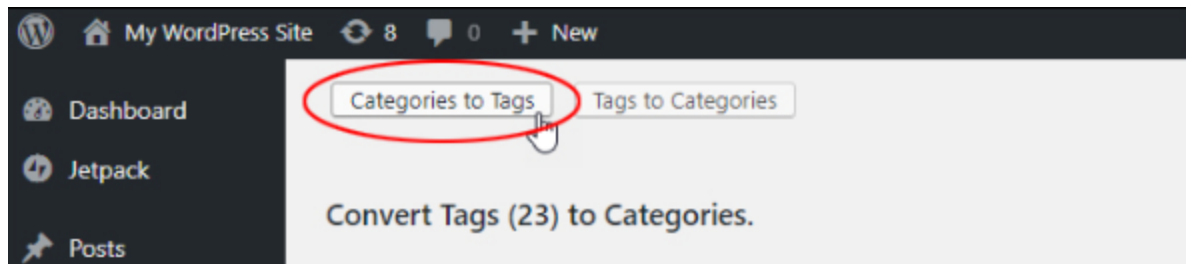
Select all of the categories to convert into tags.
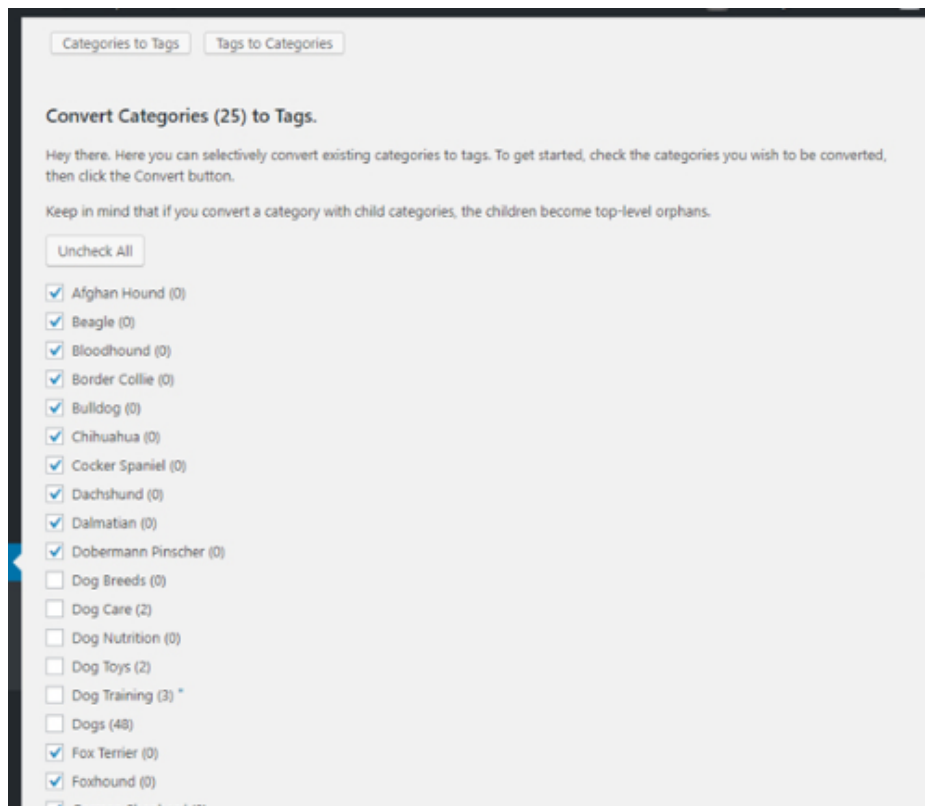
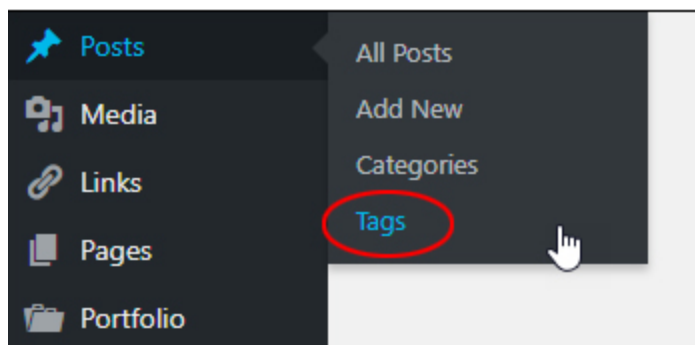Click the convert categories to tags button.
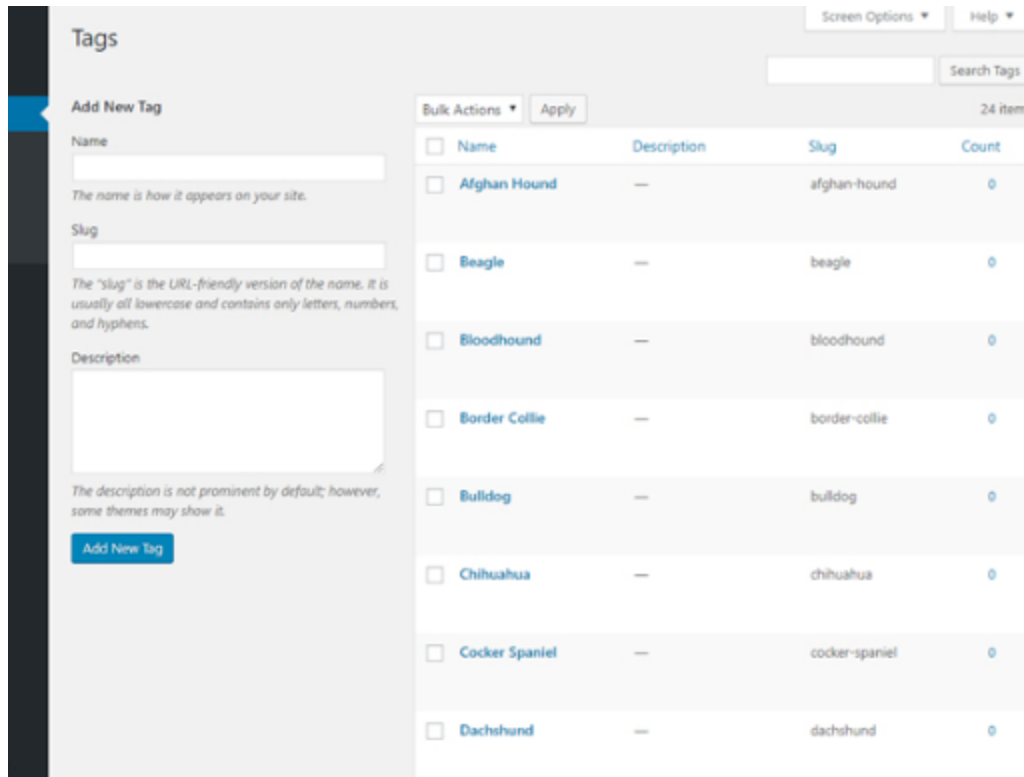
Wordpress will process the request.

All posts assigned to the category being converted into a tag will have that tag added to the post.

To confirm that the conversion process has been completed successfully, select Posts>**Tags** in the main Wordpress menu.


The tags screen should display all of the categories that you have converted into tags.

Changing Categories for Posts (Bulk Edit)

1. Go to Posts > All Posts
2. Select the Category of posts you are looking to edit
3. Select Filter on the right-hand side
4. This will sort your posts by that category, narrowing down the number of posts to fix.
5. On the left side of every post on the list is a checkbox. To select them all, click the checkbox next to Title on the top row of the table of posts. If you would like to narrow down the checked posts, either check them manually or check them all and then uncheck the ones you do not wish to change using the bulk edit feature.
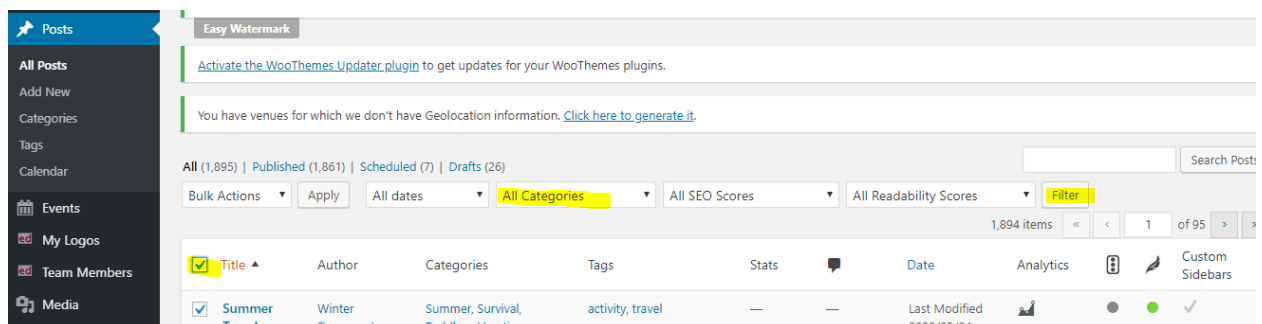
6. From the options bar, choose Edit from the Bulk Actions drop-down menu. Click Apply.
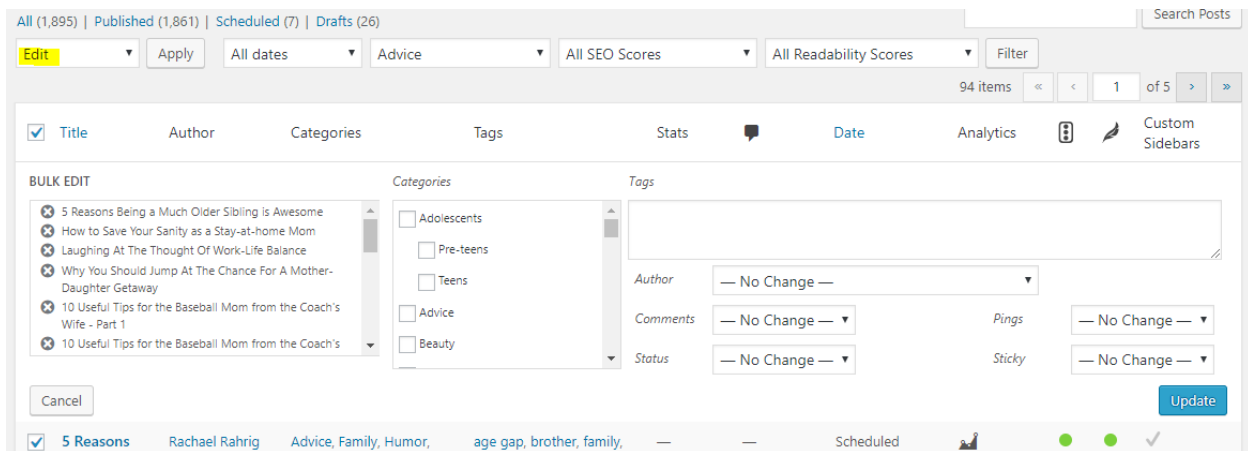
7. Starting with the left side, you can click X to remove any post you do not wish to change. Next, to that are the categories to choose from. Next, are the rest, including post tags, author, comments, etc.

8. This is also where you encounter your first set of limitations.If you choose to add a category, click the checkbox for the category you want all the selected posts to be in. Be very certain about this as it will add the posts to that category, but not change any of the existing categories.

There is currently no way to use the Bulk Edit feature to <u>remove</u> a post from a category, only to <u>add</u> categories.

If you choose to add tags, type the words and phrases with a comma between them in the post tags box. Once you hit Update, the tags will be added to the post *and the existing tags*. Existing tags will not be changed and cannot be removed through Bulk Edit.

If you put the posts in a category or add a tag by mistake, you will have to manually go through and change each individual post using the Quick Edit or full Edit options. Make your changes and click Update.

Another limitation to the Bulk Edit is the number of posts you can change at any one time is 20.

I Cannot Change or Edit a Category

If you cannot make changes to a category, it is likely it is set as the default category. It usually appears without a checkbox next to it in the Category panel list.

See the instructions on [changing the default category](#) in WordPress.

Do I need to worry about errors when changing categories?

If your permalinks include categories the system automatically create redirects for individual post pages.

However, we will need to create a redirect for the category landing/archive pages if you **delete a category**. You need to [submit a tech ticket](#) when you delete a category. You need to tell us the name of the deleted category and the new name you want people redirected to. If you simply rename a category the system will automatically create a redirect for you.

Setting up Redirects After Changing/Deleting/Converting a Category

If you are changing categories on a new website with no content, then you don't need to do anything. However, if you are doing this on an existing website, then users visiting the old category page will see a 404 error page.

To fix this, we will need to set up redirects to make sure both search engines and regular visitors are properly redirected to the correct category page on your site. [Submit a tech ticket](#) with the Deleted/Changed/Converted category and the new category name you want people directed to.

How to Organize Tags

Recommended Tags

If you're looking for recommendations on how to organize your tags, [check out this Tech Tip from Kelli.](#)

Renaming a Tag

To rename a tag, you can create a new tag and move posts into it, or change the tag name.

1. Go to Posts > **Tags**.

2. Find the **tag** name you wish to change and click Edit.
3. Change the **tag** name.
4. Change the **tag** Slug, the permalink "nice" name for the **tag**.
5. Add or change the **tag** description.
6. Click Update.

Changing the order or name of the tag should not result in a page-not-found error. WordPress <u>should</u> automatically redirect the visitor to the right page as it preserves the same tag ID number.

Deleting a Tag

If you find a tag isn't working for you, but you wish to keep the posts within that content, you can delete the tag.

To delete a category, go to

1. Posts > **Tags**
2. Select Delete – but stop. Maybe you should consider this step first.

What happens when you delete a tag in WordPress?

WordPress will delete the tag from each post that includes the tag. So make sure to add your new tag first, then go to

1. Select All Posts with the soon to be deleted tag and assign them to the new one first.
2. Once the posts have been moved into the appropriate category, go to the Posts > Tags panel and find the tag you wish to delete. Click Delete.

Remember this is final.

Tag to Category Converter

If you've decided that you'd like to convert a tag to category then you'll need to install the Category to Tag Converter plugin. Please enter a tech ticket to do this.

Here are *some* examples of when it makes sense to move a tag to a category. Think of it as is tag something that is more a keyword (which would indicate a tag) or is something that is larger maybe a [recommended category](#).

{Ages & Stages} may make a better category (broader option) rather than a short phrase/keyword. An example tag for this could simply be {Sleep training}, {how to handle toddler tantrums}.

{School years} may make a better category rather than a tag. An example of a tag in this category is {Finding the right school in INSERT CITY}

{In and Around INSERT CITY} may make a better category option as it is broad. Something like {Things to do around INSERT CITY} could make a good tag as it's something people may enter as a search term.

{INSERT NAME MOMS BLOG} may make a better tag rather than a full category with no need for a category.

After installation, you can convert tags into categories and categories into tags.*Keep track of all of the categories you are converting to tags because we will need to create redirects so there aren't page not found errors. Submit these in a tech ticket.*

To convert post tags into categories, click on the Tags to Categories button.
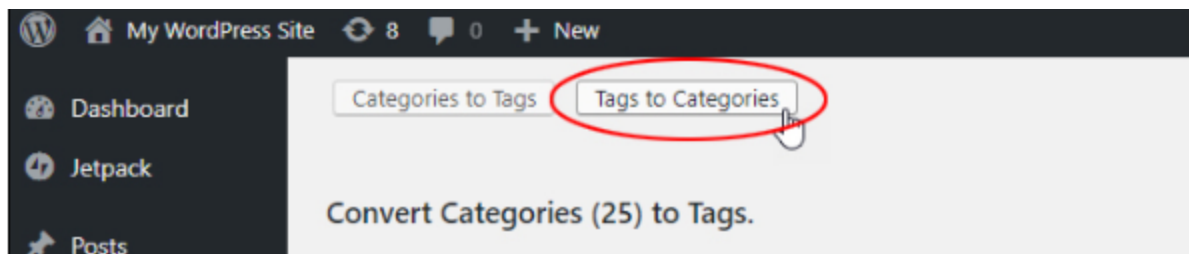
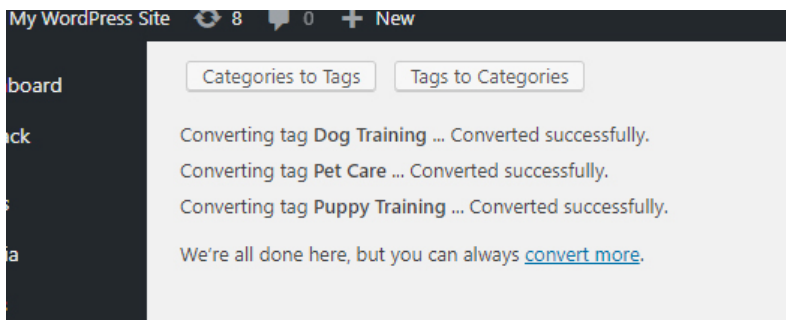Select all of the tags to convert into categories.
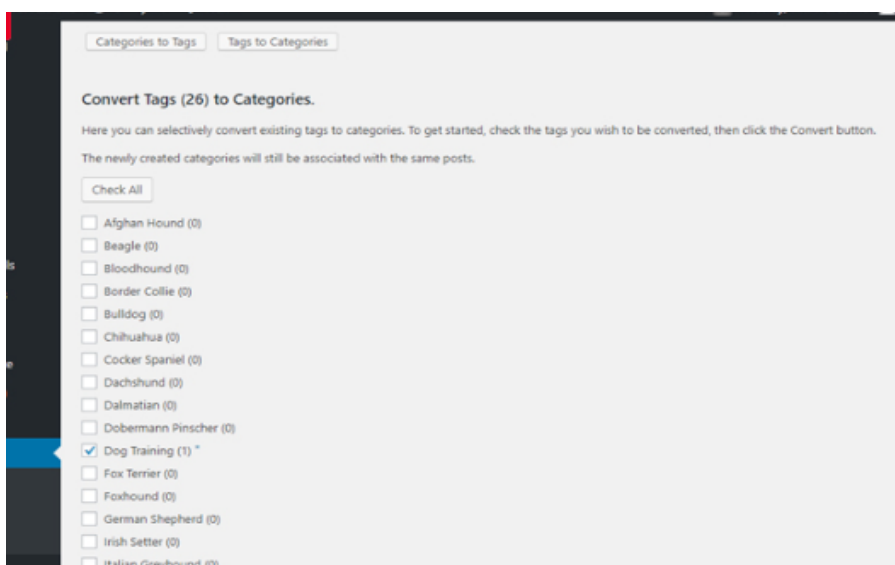
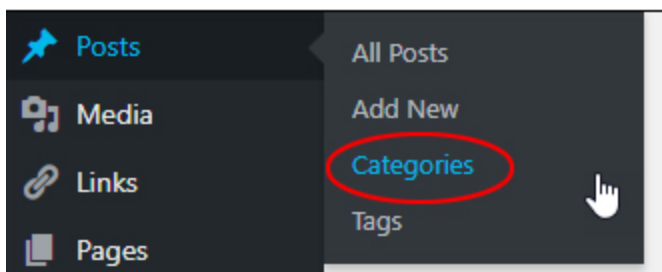Click the convert tags to categories button.

Wordpress will process the request.

All posts assigned to the tags being converted into a category will have that category added to the post.

To confirm that the conversion process has been completed successfully, select Posts>**Categories** in the main Wordpress menu.

The Categories screen should display all of the tags that you have converted into categories.

Where is the Bulk Edit option for changing tags on posts?

There is currently no option to bulk edit tags on posts. Instead, you'll need to go to the tags page and edit individually.