20 Google Search Tips to Use Google More Efficiently – From lifehack.com

1. Use the tabs

The first tip is to use the tabs in Google search. On the top of every search are several tabs. Usually you will see *Web*, *Image*, *News*, and *More*. Using these tabs, you can help define what kind of search you need to do.

If you need images, use the *Image* tab. If you are looking for a recent news article, use the *News* tab.

It's rudimentary and most people use the tabs already. If you are not, then it's highly recommended to get associated with them. They can cut search times dramatically if utilized properly.

2. Use quotes

When searching for something specific, try using quotes to minimize the guesswork for Google search. When you put your search parameters in quotes, it tells the search engine to search for the whole phrase.

For instance, if you search for *Puppy Dog Sweaters*, the engine will search for content that contains those three words in any order.

However, if you search *"Puppy Dog Sweaters"*, it will search for that phrase exactly as you typed it. This can help locate specific information that may be buried under other content if not sorted out correctly.

3. Use a hyphen to exclude words

Sometimes you may find yourself searching for a word with an ambiguous meaning. An example is *Mustang*. When you Google search for *Mustang*, you may get results for both the car made by Ford or the horse. If you want to cut one out, use the hyphen to tell the engine to ignore content with one of the other. See the example below.

- Mustang -cars

This tells the search engine to search for mustangs but to remove any results that have the word "car" in it. It can be **wildly helpful when finding information about something without getting information about something else.**

4. Use a colon to search specific sites

There may be an instance where you need to Google search for articles or content on a certain website. The syntax is very simple, and we will show you below.

- Sidney Crosby site:nhl.com

This will search for all content about famous hockey player Sidney Crosby, but only on NHL.com. All other search results will be removed. If you need to find specific content on a particular site, this is the shortcut you can use.

5. Find a page that links to another page

This Google search tip is a little obscure. Instead of searching for a specific page, you're searching for a page that links to a specific page.

Think about it this way. If you want to see who cited a New York Times article on their site, you will use this trick to find all the sites that link to it. The syntax is below:

- link:nytimes.com

That will return all pages that link to the New York Times official website. The URL on the right side can be practically anything.

Be aware, though, that the more specific it is, the fewer results you will get. We know not a lot of people will likely use this Google search trick, but it could be very useful for some.

6. Use the asterisk wildcard

The asterisk wildcard is one of the most useful ones on the list. Here's how it works.

When you use an asterisk in a search term on Google search, it will leave a placeholder that may be automatically filled by the search engine later. This is a brilliant way to find song lyrics if you do not know all the words. Let us look at the syntax:

- "Come * right now * me"

To you or me, that may look like nonsense. However, Google search will search for that phrase knowing that the asterisks can be any word.

Often, you'll find they are lyrics to The Beatles song "Come Together" and that's what the search will tell you.

7. Find sites that are similar to other sites

This is a unique one that could be used by practically everyone if they knew it existed.

Let's say you have a favorite website. It can be anything. However, that website is getting a little bit boring and you want to find other websites like it. You would use this trick. Below is the syntax:

- related:amazon.com

If you search that above, you will not find a link to Amazon. Instead, you will find links to online stores like Amazon. Sites like Barnes & Noble, Best Buy, and others that sell physical items online. It's a powerful Google search tool that can help you find new sites to browse.

8. Use Google search to do math

Google search can do math for you. This is a rather complex one to describe because it can be used in so many ways. You can ask it basic questions or some more difficult ones.

It is important to note that it will not solve all math problems, but it will solve a good number of them. Here are a couple of examples of the syntax:

- 8 * 5 + 5
- Planck's Constant

If you search the first one, it will return 45. It will also show a calculator that you can use to find answers to more questions.

This is handy if you need to do some quick math but do not want to do it in your head. If you search the second term, it will return the number value of Planck's Constant.

So, it can do math, but it can also help you solve math problems by showing values for known mathematical terms.

9. Search for multiple words at once

Google search is flexible. It knows you may not find what you want by searching only a single word or phrase. Thus, it lets you search for multiples.

By using this trick, you can search for one word or phrase along with a second word or phrase. This can help narrow down your search to help you find exactly what you are looking for. Here is the syntax:

- "Best ways to prepare for a job interview" OR "How to prepare for a job interview"

By searching that, you will search both phrases. Remember the quotes tip above? It is being used here as well. In this instance, these two exact phrases will be searched. It can be done by word too, like the example below:

- chocolate OR white chocolate

This will search for pages that have either chocolate or white chocolate!

10. Search a range of numbers

Searching for a range of numbers is another tip we do not anticipate a lot of people using. The people that do use it, though, will probably use it quite a bit.

People interested in money or statistics will find this tip particularly useful. Essentially, you use two dots and a number to let Google search know you are looking for a specific range of numbers. Like the syntax below:

- What teams have won the Stanley Cup ..2004

- 41..43

In the first instance, the search will toss back the team that won the Stanley Cup in 2004. The two dots with only one number will tell the search that you do not need anything before or after 2004. This can help narrow down searches to a specific number to improve search results.

In the second, Google will search for the numbers 41, 42, and 43. It is obscure, but wildly useful if you happen to need to search for numbers like this.

11. Keep it simple

Now we are getting into the general tips. Google search knows how to search for a lot of things. What this means is you don't need to be too specific. If you need a pizza place nearby, use this to search.

- Pizza places nearby

Google search will grab your location and deliver a variety of results about pizza places that are near you.

12. Gradually add search terms

There will come a time when Google search does not shovel out the results you expect. In this instance, keeping it simple may not be the best option.

As Google itself suggests, the best method is to start with something simple then gradually get more complicated. See the example below:

- First try: job interviews

- Second try: prepare for job interviews

- Third try: how to prepare for a job interview

This will gradually refine the search to bring you fewer, more targeted terms. The reason you don't go straight from the first try to the third try is because you may miss what you're looking for by skipping the second step.

Millions of websites phrase the same information in several different ways; using this technique lets you search as many of them as possible to find the best info.

13. Use words that websites would use

This is a very important one. When people use Google search to hunt the web, they generally search for things using the same language that they would use for speaking.

Unfortunately, websites do not say things the way people do; instead, they try to use language that sounds professional. Let us look at some examples:

- "I have a flat tire" could be replaced by "repair a flat tire."

- "My head hurts" could be replaced by "headache relief."

The list goes on and on. When searching, try to use terminology you would find on a professional website. This will help you get more reliable results.

14. Use important words only

The way Google search works is to take what you search for and match it with keywords in online content.

When you search for too many words, it may limit your results. That means it may actually take you longer to find what you're looking for. Thus, it is apropos to use only the important words when searching for something. Let's see an example:

- Do not use: Where can I find a Chinese restaurant that delivers.

- Instead try: Chinese restaurants nearby.

- Or: Chinese restaurants near me.

Doing this can help Google find what you need without all the clutter. So, remember, keep it simple and use important words only.

15. Google search has shortcuts

Several commands can be entered to give you instantaneous results.

Like the math example above, Google can immediately give you the information you need that is displayed right at the top of the search results. This can save time and effort, so you do not have to click a bunch of bothersome links.

Here are a few examples of some commands you can enter into Google:

- **Weather *zip code*** – This will show you the weather in the given zip code. You can also use town and city names instead of area codes, but it may not be as accurate if there are multiple area codes in the city.

- **What is *celebrity name* Bacon Number** – This is a fun little one that will tell you how many connections any given celebrity has to famed actor Kevin Bacon. The popular joke, Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon, is that no actor is more than 6 connections away from Kevin Bacon. Mark Zuckerberg has a Bacon Number of 3.

- **The math example** posted above is another one.

- **What is the definition of *word*** *or* **Define: *word*** – This will display the definition of a word.

- **Time *place*** – This will display the time in whatever place you type in.

- You can **check any stock by typing its ticker name** into Google. If you search for *GOOG*, it will check the stock prices for Google.

These quick commands can take a web search that is usually multiple clicks and condense it into a single search. This is very helpful for information you need repeatedly.

16. Spelling does not necessarily matter

Google search has gotten a lot smarter over the years. These days, you don't even need to spell words correctly.

As long as it's pretty close, Google can usually figure out what it means. Here are some examples:

- If you search "Nver Gna Gve Yo Up" Google will automatically assume you mean to search for "Never Gonna Give You Up." If by chance your misspelling was intentional, Google gives you the option to search for the misspelled term instead.

This trick is great if you happen to forget how to spell something or are not altogether sure how something is spelled.

It can also be helpful when searching for obscure words. This applies to capitalization and grammar as well.

17. Use descriptive words

Pretty much everything can be described in multiple ways. Take our namesake, the "life hack." The terminology "hack" refers to a computer programmer breaking security on a network or system. However, when used in conjunction with the word "life", it alters the meaning to tips and tricks people can use to improve their lives.

If you have trouble finding what you are searching for, keep in mind that people may search or define what you need in a different way than you do.

- You may search "How to install drivers in Ubunut?"

- When you really mean "Troubleshoot driver problems Ubuntu."

There really isn't a good specific example for this one. If you search for something and you can't find an answer, try asking the same question using different words and see if that helps the results.

18. Find a specific file

An often-forgotten feature of Google search is the ability to search for a specific file or file type. This can be infinitely useful if you need a specific PDF or PowerPoint file that you previously viewed or need to use for another project. The syntax is quite simple:

- *Search term here* filetype:pdf

In the above example, you simply replace the search term with whatever you are searching for. Then use the filetype command and enter the extension of any file type you can think of.

This can mostly be useful for scholarly purposes, but business presentations and other assorted presentations can benefit from this kind of search as well.

19. Money and unit conversions

Google search can quickly and accurately convert both measurement units and currency value. There are a variety of uses for this, like checking to see the conversion rate between two currencies.

If you happen to be a math student, you can use it to convert from feet to meters or from ounces to liters. Here's how to do it:

- miles to km – This will convert miles to kilometers. You can put numbers in front to convert a certain number. Like "10 miles to km" will show you how many kilometers are in 10 miles.

- USD to British Pound Sterling – This will convert a US dollar to British pounds. Like the measurements above, you can add numbers to find exact conversions for a certain amount of money.

It is true that this tip is geared toward math students and international businesspeople. However, you would be surprised how often these tips are used by regular people.

20. Track your packages

Our last trick is to use Google search to find out where your packages are. You can enter any UPS, USPS, or FedEx tracking number directly into the Google search bar, and it'll show you the tracking information about your package.

This is much easier than going to the specific sites, waiting for them to load, then searching for your packages there.

No examples are really needed for this one. Just type your tracking number in and see where your package is.