

# Squarespace for Creative & Service Businesses — Workbook

This workbook turns the course into a finished, published Squarespace 7.1 site that takes bookings and payments. Each section maps to a course module and combines hands-on exercises, fill-in worksheets, and verification checklists. Work through it with your Squarespace editor and Acuity Scheduling open in another tab, and by the end you will have a live, bookable website on a custom domain with a portfolio, online scheduling, and paid services.

## Plan and Set Up Your Squarespace Site

Lock your version, template, page map, and navigation before designing a single page.

### Worksheet: Site Goal and Audience Brief

Fill in each field to define what this site must achieve. Keep answers concrete; this brief drives every later choice, from template to call to action.

Type of business (photographer, coach, consultant, salon, therapist, other)

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One-sentence description of who you help and how

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Primary target client (who they are and what they want)

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The single most important action a visitor should take (your primary CTA, e.g. Book a Call)

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Do you take bookings? (Yes/No) and which services

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Do you sell online? (services, packages, gift cards, digital downloads)

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Three competitor or inspiration sites and what you admire about each

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### Exercise: Map Your Sitemap and Navigation

On paper or a whiteboard, draw a tree of your pages before opening the editor, then recreate it in the Squarespace Pages panel.

- List your five to seven core pages and the single visitor intent each one serves.
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- Mark which pages are top-level menu items and which sit inside a Folder as a dropdown.
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- Decide your one primary call-to-action button and where it will live in the header.
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- Note any pages you want live but hidden, such as a thank-you page, to place in Not Linked.
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## Worksheet: Plan and Cost Decision

Choose the lowest plan that covers how you actually sell, and account for Acuity separately. Confirm during your free trial before paying.

Will you sell online at any volume? (Yes/No)

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Chosen website plan (Personal / Business / Commerce Basic / Commerce Advanced) and why

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Billing choice (annual for the lower rate and first-year free domain, or monthly)

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Do you need fee-free checkout, subscriptions, or abandoned-cart recovery? (which Commerce feature)

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Will you use Acuity Scheduling? (Yes/No) and its separate monthly cost

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Target launch date

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## Checklist: Foundation Setup Complete

- New site started on Squarespace 7.1 (not 7.0)
- Free trial active; no payment made until the site is ready
- Template chosen by structure match, not demo colors
- Core pages created and clearly named in the Pages panel
- Folders used for dropdowns; thank-you and private pages moved to Not Linked
- Primary navigation ordered with the most important pages first
- Footer added with privacy, contact, and social links
- Primary CTA decided and placed in the header

## Design Pages with Fluid Engine and a Brand Kit

Set a consistent brand system, build clean sections, present a portfolio that converts, and tune the mobile view.

## Worksheet: Brand Style Kit

Lock in your visual system once, then set these exact values in Squarespace Site Styles so every page stays consistent.

Heading font name

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Body font name and base size (target at least 16px)

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Primary brand color (hex code)

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Secondary color (hex code)

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Accent color for buttons and CTAs (hex code)

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Two neutral colors for text and backgrounds (hex codes)

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Primary button style (used only for your main CTA)

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Secondary and tertiary button styles

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### Exercise: Build and Optimize a Hero Section

Construct the top section of your homepage in Fluid Engine and prepare its media correctly. Apply section themes rather than one-off colors.

- Add a hero section with a headline naming who you help, one supporting sentence, and your primary CTA button.
  - Before uploading the hero image, resize the long edge to about 1500 to 2500px and compress it with TinyPNG or Squoosh to under about 500KB.
  - Rename the file descriptively and add concise alt text.
  - Apply a section theme from your palette and confirm blocks align to the Fluid Engine grid.
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### Exercise: Build a Portfolio That Sells

Create a Portfolio page or Gallery section that presents your best work with context, not just images.

- Choose a Portfolio page (each project gets its own page) or a Gallery section (a clean grid) based on your work.
  - Curate to about ten of your strongest images per project; cut the rest.
  - Add a one-line caption to each project covering the goal, your role, and the result.
  - Optimize and alt-text every image, then check the layout in the mobile view.
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### Checklist: Design and Mobile Quality Pass

- Two fonts and about five colors set in Site Styles and applied everywhere
- Three button styles defined; primary used only for the main CTA
- Every page built from clean, single-purpose sections with generous spacing
- All images resized, compressed, descriptively named, and alt-texted
- Portfolio curated to best work with context captions
- Mobile view reviewed section by section and repositioned where needed
- Tap targets at least about 44 by 44 pixels and text contrast at least 4.5 to 1
- One H1 per page with a logical H2 and H3 order
- Live site walked on a real phone over cellular data

## SEO and Site Findability

Make the site rank for the right local and service searches and connect the tools that measure it.

### Worksheet: Per-Page SEO Plan

Complete one row of fields for each main page, then copy the values into each page's SEO Appearance panel in Squarespace.

Page name

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Primary target keyword (include location for local intent, e.g. portrait photographer Austin)

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SEO Title (under 60 characters, keyword first, brand at end, unique)

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SEO Description (150 to 160 characters, persuasive, includes the keyword)

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URL slug (short, lowercase, hyphenated)

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Confirm one H1 and a logical heading order

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Confirm one service per page (no keyword overlap between pages)

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### Exercise: Connect Search Console and Submit Your Sitemap

Establish your search baseline by connecting Google to your live site.

- Create a Google Search Console property for your domain and verify ownership via the Squarespace Google integration or a meta tag.
- Submit your sitemap by entering sitemap.xml in the Sitemaps report.
- Use URL Inspection to request indexing for your most important pages.
- Connect Google Analytics 4 by adding your Measurement ID in External API Keys, or confirm Squarespace Analytics is tracking.

### Exercise: Set Up Local Discovery

Earn local visibility beyond the website itself through your Google Business Profile and reviews.

- Claim and verify your Google Business Profile and complete every field, including services and photos.
- Confirm your business name, address, and phone are identical on the site, the profile, and any directories.
- Send a direct review link to three recent happy clients.
- Add a testimonials section or reviews widget to the site to mirror your reputation.

### Checklist: Findability and Speed Verification

- [ ] Unique SEO Title and Description set on every key page
- [ ] Clean, descriptive URL slugs on all pages
- [ ] One service per page with no keyword self-competition
- [ ] Sitemap submitted in Google Search Console and indexing requested
- [ ] Analytics connected (Squarespace and/or GA4)
- [ ] Google Business Profile claimed and completed; name, address, phone consistent
- [ ] PageSpeed Insights run; LCP under 2.5s and CLS under 0.1 on mobile
- [ ] Images compressed, fonts limited to two, heavy embeds trimmed
- [ ] Monthly 20-minute review scheduled to track and improve

## Bookings, Selling Services, and Going Live

Turn the site into a revenue engine with Acuity and Squarespace Payments, then run final checks and publish.

### Worksheet: Acuity Appointment Type Planner

Plan your bookable services before configuring Acuity. Fill in for at least your first three appointment types and your global rules.

Appointment type names (first three services)

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Duration of each

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Price and payment rule for each (full payment, deposit, or free)

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Intake form questions needed before each session

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Weekly availability (days and hours)

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Buffer time between bookings and minimum scheduling notice

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Calendar to sync (Google, Outlook, or iCloud)

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Reminder timing (e.g. 24 hours and 1 hour before)

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### Exercise: Set Up and Test Online Booking

Configure Acuity end to end and confirm a real client can book and pay without emailing you.

- Create your appointment types with durations, prices, descriptions, and intake forms.
  - Sync your calendar and set availability, buffer time, and minimum notice.
  - Enable confirmation, reminder, and follow-up emails (and texts where available).
  - Embed the scheduler with the Acuity Scheduling block or a Book Now button, then submit a real test booking and confirm the emails arrive.
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### Worksheet: Offers and Payments Setup Sheet

Plan how money flows before configuring payments. Cover your processors and at least one upsell offer. Payment processors to connect (Squarespace Payments or Stripe, plus PayPal)

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Per-service payment rule (full, deposit amount, or none)

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Package or bundle to offer (e.g. five-session pack) and its price

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Gift certificate or subscription offer (if any)

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One digital download to sell (title and price)

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Tax setup for your jurisdiction

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Refund and cancellation policy text

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### Checklist: Pre-Launch and Go-Live

- Custom domain connected with HTTPS and the padlock confirmed
- Right plan selected (Commerce tier if selling at any volume)
- Payment processor connected and a test order placed then refunded
- Real booking submitted through Acuity and confirmation received
- Every page proofread; all links, buttons, and navigation tested
- SEO titles, meta descriptions, favicon, and social share previews checked
- PageSpeed Insights and WebAIM Contrast Checker run and issues fixed
- Whole site tested on a real phone over cellular
- Published and the live URL opened to verify it loads
- Search Console and Analytics connected for post-launch monitoring

### Your Action Plan

1. Define your goal, client, and primary CTA with the Site Goal brief, then sketch and build your sitemap and navigation.
2. Start on Squarespace 7.1 in the free trial, pick a structure-matched template, and create your core pages.
3. Set your brand kit (two fonts, about five colors, three button styles) in Site Styles and apply it everywhere.
4. Build each page from clean Fluid Engine sections with a strong hero, and assemble a curated, captioned portfolio.
5. Optimize the mobile view and meet accessibility basics: tap targets, contrast, heading order, and alt text.
6. Complete the per-page SEO plan, connect Google Search Console, submit your sitemap, and connect analytics.
7. Claim and complete your Google Business Profile, request reviews, and verify Core Web Vitals on a real phone.
8. Set up Acuity appointment types, availability, intake forms, and reminders, then submit a real test booking.
9. Connect Squarespace Payments or Stripe, add a package or digital download, and place and refund a test order.
10. Connect a custom domain on the right plan, run the full pre-launch checklist, publish, and schedule a monthly review.











