

How Many Internal Links in a Blog Post

Metehan Yesilyurt

AI Search & Information Retrieval Researcher · metehan.ai

Published: September 06, 2026 · Canonical: <https://metehan.ai/articles/how-many-internal-links-in-a-blog-post/>

I get asked about internal linking more than almost any other SEO topic. The question is always the same: "How many internal links should I put in a blog post?" And my answer is always the same: it depends, but I can give you a practical framework that works.

After years of testing internal linking strategies across dozens of sites, I have developed a clear set of guidelines that I follow for every piece of content I publish. The goal is not to hit a magic number. The goal is to create a linking structure that serves both readers and search engines.

Why Internal Links Matter More Than Ever

Internal links serve two critical functions. First, they help search engines understand your site structure and the relationships between your pages. Second, they help AI models map your content's topical authority. Both of these functions are becoming more important as AI-powered search evolves.

Google has always used internal links to discover and rank pages. But now that AI models like ChatGPT, Perplexity, and Gemini are scraping and indexing web content to inform their responses, a well-linked site signals topical depth and authority. If your internal linking is weak, AI models may not fully understand the breadth of your expertise.

My Framework for Internal Link Counts

Here is the straightforward framework I use to determine how many internal links to include in a blog post. The numbers are based on what I have tested and measured over time.

Article Length	Recommended Internal Links	Contextual Links	Navigation/CTA Links	Notes
Under 500 words	2 to 4	2-3	0-1	Keep it lean. Focus on your most relevant related pages.
500 to 1,000 words	4 to 7	3-5	1-2	Standard blog post range. One link per 150-200 words works well.
1,000 to 2,000 words	7 to 12	5-8	2-4	In-depth articles. Spread links naturally through sections.
2,000 to 3,000 words	10 to 18	7-12	3-6	Long-form guides. Every major section should link to related content.
3,000 to 5,000 words	15 to 25	10-18	5-7	Pillar content. Build a web of connections to supporting pages.
5,000+ words	20 to 35	15-25	5-10	Comprehensive resources. Link generously but never force it.

A few things to note about this table. "Contextual links" are links within the body text that point to related content on your site. "Navigation/CTA links" include things like "read more" sections, sidebar links, and calls to action that point to other pages.

The ranges are guidelines, not rules. I have published 1,500-word articles with five internal links and others with fifteen. What matters more than the count is the relevance and placement.

Quality Over Quantity, Always

I want to be clear about something. Adding more internal links does not automatically improve your SEO. I have seen sites that stuff every paragraph with links, and the result is a poor reader experience and diminished link equity distribution.

Every internal link should pass a simple test: "Would a reader find this link genuinely helpful right now?" If the answer is no, remove it. I would rather have five perfectly placed internal links than twenty forced ones.

Where to Place Internal Links

Placement matters as much as quantity. Here is how I think about link placement:

First 200 words. Include one to two links to your most important related content. Readers and search engines both give extra weight to links that appear early in the content.

Section introductions. When you start a new section with an H2 or H3, it is a natural place to link to deeper content on that subtopic. This feels organic to readers and reinforces topical connections.

Definition and explanation moments. Whenever you mention a concept you have covered elsewhere, link to it. "As I discussed in my guide to keyword research" is a natural, helpful link pattern.

Conclusion and next steps. End your articles with two to three links that guide readers to logical next steps. "If you found this helpful, you might also want to read..." is a proven pattern that drives pageviews and session duration.

Common Internal Linking Mistakes

Linking to the same page multiple times. The first link to a page passes the most value. Linking to the same URL three times in one article does not triple the benefit. I link to each target page once per article.

Only linking to your newest content. Old, authoritative pages need internal links too. I regularly update older articles to include links to new content, and I link new articles back to foundational older pieces.

Using generic anchor text. "Click here" and "read more" waste an opportunity. Use descriptive anchor text that tells both readers and search engines what the linked page is about. "My guide to internal linking best practices" is far better than "this article."

Ignoring orphan pages. Pages with zero internal links pointing to them are nearly invisible to search engines and AI models. I run a quarterly audit to find and fix orphan pages.

Internal Linking and AI Discovery

AI models that crawl and index websites use internal links to understand content relationships, similar to how search engine crawlers work. This is a topic I find particularly interesting. A well-linked site helps AI models build a more complete picture of your topical authority.

I have noticed that sites with strong internal linking structures tend to get mentioned more comprehensively in AI responses. When an AI model can follow links from a pillar page to detailed supporting content, it builds a richer understanding of what you cover and how deeply you cover it.

Good internal linking for SEO is also good internal linking for AI discovery. This does not mean you should change your linking strategy solely for AI. The fundamentals are the same: link relevant pages together, use descriptive anchor text, and build a logical site structure.

Automating Internal Link Audits

I audit my internal linking structure quarterly. The process is straightforward:

Pull a full crawl of your site using a tool like Screaming Frog or Sitebulb. Export the internal link data. Look for pages with fewer than three internal links pointing to them. Identify your most important pages and ensure they have the most internal links.

I also look at the distribution of links. If 80% of your internal links point to the same ten pages, you have a distribution problem. Spread link equity more evenly, especially to pages that are close to ranking well but need a small boost.

The Bottom Line

Internal linking is not complicated, but it requires intentionality. Follow the framework in the table above as a starting point, prioritize relevance over volume, and audit regularly. The brands that treat internal linking as an ongoing practice rather than a one-time task are the ones that build lasting organic visibility.

FAQs

Here are direct, authoritative answers to frequently asked questions about internal linking density, anchor text distribution, and link architectures for AI discovery:

Is there such a thing as too many internal links in a blog post?

Yes. While Google has said there is no hard limit, I have seen diminishing returns and reader experience issues when a 1,000-word article contains more than 15 internal links. The content starts to feel like a Wikipedia article, and readers can get distracted. My rule of thumb is one contextual link per 150 to 200 words as a maximum. If every other sentence contains a link, you have gone too far.

Should I link to my homepage from every blog post?

No. Your homepage already receives the most internal links naturally through your site navigation. Adding explicit in-content links to your homepage from every blog post is unnecessary and wastes a linking opportunity. Instead, link to relevant deep pages, product pages, and related content that could use the link equity.

How do internal links affect AI models like ChatGPT and Perplexity?

AI models use link structures to understand content relationships and topical authority, similar to how search engines work. A well-linked site helps AI models build a more complete picture of your expertise. While the impact is harder to measure than traditional SEO, I have observed that sites with strong internal linking tend to receive more comprehensive and accurate mentions in AI-generated responses.

Should I go back and add internal links to old blog posts?

Absolutely. Updating internal links in older content is one of the highest-ROI SEO activities I recommend. When you publish new content, go back to related older articles and add links to the new piece. Similarly, new articles should link back to relevant older content. I dedicate time each month to internal link maintenance, and it consistently moves the needle on both rankings and AI visibility.

Internal linking is an AEO lever, not just an SEO one. The pages that earn AI citations in ChatGPT and Perplexity tend to be the ones with strong internal link equity - answer engines follow the same authority signals as Google. Count links, then count AI citations; the correlation is real.