



OWN YOUR PRESENCE / GUIDE 2 OF 5

Set up an **Instagram** Business account

From a brand-new account to a professional profile with contact buttons, insights and the option to sell — without needing a Facebook Page first.

TIME NEEDED

30–40 minutes

COST

Free

SKILL LEVEL

Complete beginner

YOU'LL NEED

Email + phone

Sedjro Digital
sedjrodigital.com

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READ THIS FIRST

How Instagram is put together

Instagram works differently from Facebook, and in one important way it's simpler: there is no separate business page. You have **one account**, and you switch it into professional mode.

Step one

Create a normal Instagram account in your **business name**. There is no "sign up as a business" option — everyone starts the same way.

Step two

Switch that same account to a **professional account**. Free, instant, and reversible. Nothing is lost — same username, same posts, same followers.

TWO THINGS PEOPLE GET WRONG

You do not need a Facebook account or Page. That requirement was dropped. You can run a full Instagram business account without ever touching Facebook. Connecting one is optional and covered in Part 5.

Your account is not a "personal" account you have to hide. Unlike Facebook, the account you create *is* the business account. Put your business name on it from the start.

The one decision that matters: Business or Creator

When you switch to professional, Instagram asks you to choose between **Business** and **Creator**. This is the only genuinely consequential choice in this whole guide, and most tutorials skate past it.

	BUSINESS	CREATOR
Best for	Shops, salons, restaurants, trades, agencies, anything with customers	Influencers, coaches, artists, public figures building a personal brand
Music you can use	Commercially licensed tracks only — no trending chart music	Full music library, including trending audio
Contact info	Full set — email, phone, address with directions	Optional, and can be hidden entirely
Scheduling tools	Full access — works with Later, Buffer, Hootsuite and similar	More limited
Inbox	Standard	Primary / General / Requests tabs, saved replies

THE MUSIC TRADE-OFF IS REAL

Trending audio drives a lot of reach on Instagram, and Business accounts can't use it. If your marketing depends on jumping on trending sounds, **Creator** may serve you better despite the name. If you sell a product or service, have a location, or want to schedule posts in advance, choose **Business** — the address, directions and scheduling access are worth more than the music.

Switching between the two later takes about a minute and costs nothing, so this is not a decision to lose sleep over.

CONTENTS

What's in this guide

Work through it in order the first time. After that, use this page to jump straight to the part you need.

PART 1	Before you start	Checklist, sizes and character limits
PART 2	Create the account	Phone and computer, step by step
PART 3	Secure it immediately	Two-factor authentication
PART 4	Switch to professional	The main event — 5 minutes
PART 5	Finish the profile	Bio, links, and connecting Facebook
PART 6	What to do next	Insights, shopping, verification
PART 7	When things go wrong	Every common error, and the fix

Before you start

Must have

- ☐ **An email address you control.** Use a business address if you have one.
- ☐ **A phone number.** Technically optional at signup, but add it — it's how you get back in if you're ever locked out.
- ☐ **Your business name** and a **username** you'd like. Have two or three backups ready; good ones go fast.
- ☐ **Your real date of birth.** See the warning in Part 2 — this matters more than you'd expect.

Strongly recommended

- ☐ **A profile photo** — 320 × 320 pixels, cropped to a circle
- ☐ **A bio, written in advance** — you get 150 characters, and writing it on the spot produces bad ones
- ☐ **Your links** — you can add up to five
- ☐ **Your business category** — you'll pick from a list of over a thousand
- ☐ **Contact details** — email, phone, and address if customers visit you
- ☐ **Three to nine posts ready to go** — an empty profile converts nobody

Sizes and limits, all in one place

Profile photo	320 × 320 px	Displayed as a circle — keep the important part centered. Uploading at 1080 × 1080 also works and future-proofs it.
Bio	150 characters	Including spaces, emoji and punctuation.
Username	30 characters	Lowercase letters, numbers, periods and underscores only. No spaces or hyphens. Must be unique.
Display name	30 characters	Spaces and emoji allowed. Does not need to be unique. This is searchable — put your business type here.
Links in bio	Up to 5	Each can have its own title. The top one shows; the rest appear behind "and 4 others".
Post caption	2,200 characters	Only the first ~125 show before "more" — front-load the important part.
Hashtags	5 maximum	Reduced from 30 in 2025. See the note below.
Square post	1080 × 1080 px	Safe default.
Portrait post	1080 × 1350 px	Instagram's preferred size — takes up more screen.

Story / Reel

1080 × 1920 px

Keep text away from the top and bottom ~250 px — buttons cover those areas.

THROW AWAY THE HASHTAG ADVICE YOU'VE READ

Instagram now caps hashtags at **five per post**, down from thirty. Any guide telling you to stuff thirty hashtags into a caption or first comment is out of date and the advice now actively hurts. Pick five that genuinely describe the post.

PART 2

Create the account

ON A PHONE — THE USUAL WAY

- 1 Install **Instagram** from the App Store or Google Play.
- 2 Open it and tap **Create new account**.
- 3 Enter your **full name** — for a business, this is your business name as you want it displayed.
Add what you do if there's room: "Marie's Kitchen | Dallas Bakery". This field is searchable, and it's the difference between being found and not.
- 4 Create a **password**. Long, unique, and not reused from another site.
- 5 Enter your **date of birth**. Your real one.
- 6 Choose your **username**. Instagram suggests one — replace it with yours.
Match your other social handles if you can. Avoid trailing numbers; they read as spam and lower trust.
- 7 Enter your **email address or phone number**.
- 8 Instagram sends a **6-digit code**. Enter it. Codes expire after roughly fifteen minutes — if yours has, request a fresh one.
- 9 Accept the **Terms of Use and Privacy Policy**.
- 10 Skip the prompts to find contacts and follow suggestions. You can do that later.

IF THE SCREENS APPEAR IN A DIFFERENT ORDER

Instagram continually tests variations of this signup flow, so you may be asked for your email before your name, or vice versa. The information requested is the same either way — just work through the screens as they come.

ON A COMPUTER

- 1 Go to **instagram.com** and click **Sign up**.
- 2 Fill in the single form: **mobile number or email, full name, username, password**.
- 3 Click **Sign up**.
- 4 Enter your **date of birth** → **Next**.
- 5 Complete the **CAPTCHA** if one appears.
- 6 Enter the **confirmation code** from your email or phone → **Next**.

ENTER YOUR REAL DATE OF BIRTH

Since May 2026, Meta uses automated systems to estimate a user's age from what they post and how they behave — **even when an adult birthday is on file**. Accounts judged to belong to under-18s are placed into restricted "Teen Account" protections, which quietly limits your reach and your ability to receive messages. Correcting it afterwards means submitting government ID or completing a facial age check. A guessed birthday is one of the most common reasons a new business account underperforms for no visible reason.

Add both an email and a phone number

Signup only requires one. Add the other as soon as you're in. When something goes wrong — and eventually something will — having two verified ways to prove the account is yours is the difference between a ten-minute recovery and losing it.

PART 3

Secure it immediately

Do this before you post anything. Instagram business accounts are stolen constantly, and it's nearly always an account with no second layer of protection.

THE MENU PATH IS GENUINELY DIFFERENT BY DEVICE

This is not an error in this guide — Instagram really does put it in two different places.

ANDROID AND WEB

Profile → ☰ menu → Accounts Center → Password and security → Two-factor authentication

IPHONE AND IPAD

Profile → ☰ menu → Settings → Security → Two-factor authentication → Get Started

You'll be offered three methods:

Authentication app	Choose this. A free app — Google Authenticator, Authy, or the one in your password manager — generates a new code every 30 seconds. Works with no signal and can't be intercepted.
Text message	Easiest to set up, weaker in practice, since phone numbers can be hijacked. Still far better than nothing.
WhatsApp	Codes delivered to WhatsApp. Fine as a backup method.

TWO REASONS THIS BELONGS HERE AND NOT AT THE END

First: a brand-new account with a fresh password is the easiest kind to take over. Second: **two-factor authentication is a requirement for Meta Verified** later on. Turning it on now saves you doing it under pressure.

Save the recovery codes Instagram gives you somewhere that isn't your phone.

PART 4

Switch to a professional account

TAP PATH — PHONE

Profile → ☰ menu → Settings and privacy → For professionals → Account type and tools → Switch to professional account

IF THE MENU SAYS SOMETHING SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT

Depending on your app version, the settings entry at the top of the menu reads either **Settings and privacy** or **Settings and activity**. They're the same thing. Look for the **For professionals** section once you're inside.

- 1 Follow the path above and tap **Switch to professional account**.
- 2 Read the benefits screen and tap **Next** or **Continue**.
- 3 **Choose your category.** Start typing what you do and pick the closest match from over a thousand options — Local Business, Restaurant, Clothing Brand, Photographer, Fitness Coach, and so on.
You can choose whether this shows publicly on your profile. Showing it is usually helpful — it tells visitors what you are in one glance.
- 4 **Choose Business or Creator.** The comparison table at the front of this guide covers the trade-offs. When in doubt: if you sell something, choose **Business**. Tap **Next**.
- 5 **Promotional emails.** This defaults to opted-in. Uncheck it unless you want Meta's marketing.
- 6 **Contact information.** Add your business email, phone and — if you have a Business account and customers visit you — your address. These become tappable buttons on your profile.
Adding an address turns on the **Directions** button, which opens the customer's maps app. For a physical business this is one of the most-used buttons on the whole profile.
- 7 **Connect a Facebook Page.** This step has a **Skip** option and skipping is perfectly fine. Part 5 explains what connecting gets you and how to do it later.
- 8 Done. Your account is now professional.

ON A COMPUTER

CLICK PATH

instagram.com → More (☰, left sidebar) → Settings → For professionals → Account type and tools → Switch to professional account

The choice applies to your whole account, so switching on a computer changes it everywhere. If you can't find the option on desktop, do it in the phone app instead — it's always there.

What actually changed — and what didn't

This is worth being honest about, because a lot of the reasons people used to give for switching no longer apply. Since March 2026, **any public account** gets Insights, post scheduling and trending audio. So what does a professional account still give you that a public personal account doesn't?

- **Contact buttons** — email, call, directions, right on your profile
- **A category label** under your name
- **Full access for scheduling tools** like Later, Buffer and Hootsuite
- **Advertising** — you cannot run ads without it
- **Instagram Shopping** and product tagging
- **Meta Business Suite** — unified inbox and cross-posting
- **The Professional Dashboard**, and eligibility for monetization features

That's still a strong list for a business. It's just no longer true that "you need it for analytics".

Finish the profile

Write a bio that does one job

You have 150 characters. Don't waste them on adjectives. A bio that works answers three things:

- **What you do** — plainly, in the words a customer would use
- **Who or where for** — a city, a niche, a specialism
- **What to do next** — pointing at your link, your DMs, or your booking page

Weak: "Passionate about hair. Bringing beauty to the world one client at a time. ✨ DM for info"

Works: "Protective styles & braids in East Dallas. Booking 2–3 weeks out. Tap the link to reserve your slot ↓"

Add your links — you get five

TAP PATH

Edit profile → Links → Add external link

Paste the full address including **https://**, then give each link a short title. The first one displays on your profile; the rest sit behind a "and 4 others" tap. Order them by what you most want people to do.

Should you connect a Facebook Page?

Connect it if...

You want to post to both at once, handle Facebook and Instagram messages in one inbox, or run Instagram ads. One Instagram account links to exactly one Facebook Page.

Skip it if...

You're only on Instagram and have no plans to advertise. Nothing about your Instagram account is limited by not connecting. You can always do it later.

EASIEST WAY, FROM INSTAGRAM

Profile → Edit Profile → Public business information → Page → Continue → log into Facebook → choose your Page

Guide 1 in this series covers creating the Facebook Page itself. You can unlink at any time from the same screen.

Post before you promote

A professional profile with no posts converts nobody, and Instagram's systems treat a brand-new empty account that suddenly starts following hundreds of people as a spam signal. Publish three to nine posts that show what you actually do — your work, your space, your product — before you start pushing traffic at it.

What to do next

The Professional Dashboard

Found **under your bio on the phone app**, or in the left sidebar at [instagram.com](https://www.instagram.com). It's your control room, in four sections:

- **Track your performance** — your 30-day view count and a link to full Insights
- **Grow your business** — ads, shopping setup, saved replies, branded-content approvals, monetization eligibility
- **Stay informed** — Instagram's own tips and feature announcements
- **Competitive Insights** — benchmark yourself against other accounts (increasingly requires a Meta Verified subscription)

Insights — what the numbers mean

Rebuilt in April 2026 into three tabs. What to actually look at:

Views	The headline number. Impressions and plays were merged into this single metric in 2025, so older tutorials referring to both are out of date.
Skip rate	How quickly people swipe away from a Reel. The most useful single number on the platform — a high skip rate means your opening two seconds aren't working.
Share rate	How often people send your post to someone else. Weighs heavily in what Instagram decides to show more of.
Views over time	Performance across weeks and months, not just the first day. Useful for spotting posts that keep working.
Audience tab	Who follows you and when they're active. Check it before deciding when to post.

Instagram Shopping — read this before you plan around it

IN-APP CHECKOUT NO LONGER EXISTS

Meta removed native checkout from Instagram Shops during 2025. You can still set up a shop and tag products, but **the purchase completes on your own website**. Any guide describing customers buying without leaving Instagram is describing a feature that has been switched off.

If you still want a shop, you'll need: a professional account, a supported country, a **verified domain** of your own, and **physical goods that ship** — digital products and most services are excluded. Setup runs through Commerce Manager and review can take up to four weeks.

The blue badge, honestly

There are two routes, and neither is a growth strategy.

- **Meta Verified** — a paid monthly subscription. Roughly \$11.99/month on the web, more through the app stores because of their fees; business tiers cost more and vary by country. You get the badge, impersonation protection and access to human support. Requirements include being 18+, a real name matching government ID, a profile photo showing your face, and two-factor authentication already switched on.
- **The free legacy badge** — still granted to genuinely notable brands and public figures, but it gives you the badge alone with none of the support or monitoring.

Neither will make your business succeed. Good posts and fast replies will. Consider the subscription if impersonation is an actual problem for you, or if losing your account would be catastrophic and the direct support line is worth the fee.

When things go wrong

PROBLEM

WHAT TO DO

The username I want is taken	Add a period or underscore, your city, or what you do — mariebakes.dallas rather than mariebakes47 . Trailing numbers read as spam accounts and cost you trust. Instagram does not release usernames on request, even from inactive accounts; the only exception is a formal trademark infringement report if you own the trademark. Choose carefully — changing later breaks every link anyone has saved.
"We couldn't create your account" or "Try again later"	A general block, usually triggered by several signups from the same network in a short window. Stop retrying — repeated attempts extend the block. Wait 24 hours, then change one meaningful thing: a different email, a different network (switch between Wi-Fi and mobile data), or sign up at instagram.com instead of in the app. Update the app and restart your phone first.
"Email or phone already in use"	It's attached to an existing account, possibly one you forgot. Use Forgot password to recover it, remove the email or phone from it, or simply use a different address.
The code never arrived	Check spam first. Confirm the country code if you used a phone number. Codes expire after roughly fifteen minutes — request a fresh one rather than retyping an old one. If one channel keeps failing, switch to the other.
"Action blocked" when liking or following	You've been doing something faster than a human would. Stop entirely for a day or two — it usually lifts on its own. Continuing to try extends it.
Nobody sees my posts any more	Usually <i>reduced distribution</i> — your content isn't being shown to non-followers. This is what people mean by "shadowban". It's not permanent. Check Settings → Account → Account Status , which tells you plainly if something is restricted and why. Post compliant content consistently and it recovers over a few weeks.
My account got disabled	Follow the on-screen prompts at login, or go to Settings → Account → Account Status → Request a Review . Replies land in your Support Inbox . Appeals now happen almost entirely in-app; the old standalone appeal forms you'll find linked in older articles no longer apply.
A brand-new account got restricted almost straight away	The classic trigger is a new account doing heavy activity immediately. Warm it up: complete the profile fully, post a few real things, follow a modest number of relevant accounts spread over several days. Switch to professional <i>after</i> the account has some genuine history — not in the first ten minutes.
My account is being treated as a teenager's	Meta's age-estimation systems flagged it. You can correct it by submitting government ID or completing a facial age estimation check. Prevention is much easier than the cure — enter your real date of birth at signup.

TWO "FIXES" THAT MAKE THINGS WORSE

VPNs and burner phone numbers. Search results are full of both. They violate Instagram's terms, they make your account look *more* suspicious to automated systems, and recycled disposable numbers permanently lock you out of your own account recovery. If you're blocked, wait it out.

REFERENCE

Quick summary

Phone vs computer

TASK	BEST ON	WHY
Creating the account	Either	Desktop puts it all on one form; the app spreads it over screens.
Two-factor authentication	Either	Different paths per device — both are in Part 3.
Switching to professional	Phone	Always available there. Desktop sometimes hides it.
Writing the bio & adding links	Computer	Far easier to type and proofread.
Posting Stories	Phone only	Desktop can't post Stories natively.
Posting Reels	Phone	Desktop support is limited.
Reading Insights	Phone	The full three-tab view lives in the app.
Shopping setup	Computer	Commerce Manager is a desktop tool.

The whole thing, in order

- ☐ Gather your details, photo, bio and links
- ☐ Create the account with your business name and your real birthday
- ☐ Add both an email and a phone number
- ☐ Turn on two-factor authentication and save the recovery codes
- ☐ Switch to a professional account and choose Business or Creator
- ☐ Pick a category and add your contact details
- ☐ Write your bio and add up to five links
- ☐ Post three to nine things that show what you do
- ☐ Connect a Facebook Page only if you'll actually use it
- ☐ Check Insights after two weeks — look at skip rate and share rate first

A NOTE ON DATES

Written August 2026. Instagram renames menu items and reshuffles settings often. If a screen doesn't match this description exactly, look for wording that means the same thing — the underlying steps rarely change.

You own this. That's the point.

Your account, your audience, your customer relationships — created by you, controlled by you, with no monthly fee to anyone for the privilege of existing online. Nobody can take it away, raise the rent on it, or switch it off.

THE FULL SERIES — ALL FREE

GUIDE 1 Facebook Business Page

GUIDE 2 Instagram Business Account

YOU ARE HERE

GUIDE 3 TikTok Business Account

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