



# Natural Moms Blogging Guide

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## Are you blogging yet?

If not, did you know that blogging can be a fun way to express yourself, make (and keep in touch with) friends and even earn money? And if you're already blogging, are you getting the results you want?

I always say that blogging keeps me sane – it's a great way to document the highs and lows of motherhood and share tips and advice with other moms in the “blogosphere”.

This report will teach you some of the basics of blogging so you can get started with your new blog sooner rather than later. And if you already have a blog, but you know that you could be getting more from your blog (either more traffic or more income), this report will help you learn to blog more effectively too.

We're going to answer some common questions that moms ask about blogging. Hopefully by the end you'll be inspired to start a blog of your own or make your existing blog even better.

## What is a Blog?

If you're reading this, you probably already know what a blog is since you probably picked this guide up by reading my blog at [Natural Moms Talk Radio](#). But just in case someone forwarded this report to you, I'll go ahead and define the word blog. The term blog comes from two words: ‘web log’.

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Technically, a blog is an online journal driven by a script and a database. The blog script provides you with an online dashboard for typing in your journal entries and the database stores your words.

But don't worry about technologically intimidating terms like 'script' and 'database' – it's not as bad as it sounds. If you have ever used a web based email system like Gmail or if you've ever created an ebay auction– you're tech savvy enough for a blog. You don't have to know how it all works (I certainly don't and I have 5 blogs!).



### ***So what is a blog really?***

It's **whatever you want** it to be.

It can be an online journal. It can be your web based diary (either private or public). It can be your monthly web article archive or weekly newsletter repository. It can be a kind of digital baby book or scrapbook in which you share updates about your kid's lives. It can be an online recipe keeper. A blog can include whatever you would like it to include: words, sound, video, pictures, etc.

It can be very personal or it can be quite businesslike.

Words like 'journal' and 'diary' have a private feel, yet a blog is (usually) public. This creates a unique culture among bloggers. People tend to be more personable and transparent on a blog, even if the topic is business.

### **What makes a Blog different from a 'regular website'?**

Assuming that a 'regular website' is referring to a static HTML site, it is the database driven content that really sets it apart.

The lines between blogs and other types of websites are blurring as more work at home Moms choose to build their site with blogging software. While many blogs are designed to look like a web journal, more and more are being designed to look like a regular website.

Because the content you enter into the blog is stored in a database, it can be distributed as a data feed. RSS is the feed that most blogs employ. (RSS stands for Really Simple Syndication.) With RSS, your content can be viewed through



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any RSS reader (such as the Google reader) or aggregator on another website or on a computer or portable device.

Another benefit to being database driven is that the script can accept and display comments on specific posts and can detect when other sites link to one of your blog posts.

## What kind of Blog should I use?

There are several blog scripts available for use, including:

- Blogger – Blogger is owned by Google and it is free to use. You can publish the blog on their site (blogspot.com) or publish the content to your own hosting account (if you're searching for an awesome webhost, I use and LOVE [MomWebs](#). They're budget priced but high on customer service and reliability). So it will look like this: [www.yourblogrocks.com/blog](http://www.yourblogrocks.com/blog) instead of [www.yourblogrocks.blogspot.com](http://www.yourblogrocks.blogspot.com)
- Wordpress – Wordpress is also free to use, and you can have a blog on their site (wordpress.com) or grab the open source script (wordpress.org.) for use on your own hosting account. (This *is my preferred blogging* tool!)
- Typepad – Paid service (typepad.com) I can't offer any advice on Typepad but some people love it. I've just never used it so I have no experience with it.

There are bloggers using every type of blog script who swear by their tool of choice and list off great features that keep them loyal. So your own choice will be a personal one.

For me, it's Wordpress ☺

Wordpress is feature rich yet also easy to use. It is an Open Source script. This means that anyone can take the source code and edit it. A community of creative and talented people are constantly improving the code and releasing updates for free.

Wordpress is also more flexible. It works with a variety of 'plug ins' which are like hacks for the base code of the script. When uploaded and activated, they make the blog script work differently. Don't worry if all of this sounds confusing. You don't have to know how it works right now (or ever!) in order to have fun using Wordpress.

Just take my word for it. Almost everyone I know who started out with a blogger blog has moved to Wordpress. The ones who haven't are using Wordpress for their new blogs. ☺

## Where should I host my Blog?

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The best course of action is to publish your blog on its own domain and host it in a hosting account you have set up. So, grab a domain name for \$8.10 already! I get mine from [www.InternetBasedMomsHosting.com](http://www.InternetBasedMomsHosting.com).

It's so much easier to remember a unique domain name instead of a subdomain (which is what you'll get if you have the blog hosted for free). Plus you can pick something catchy that tells your readers what you're all about, instantly.

If you have an existing website, by all means install the blog script into a sub-directory on that site. If you have cPanel with your website hosting, it's as easy as the click of a mouse. Just log into your cPanel and click on Fantastico and follow the instructions. You could also ask your web hosting company to do it for you.

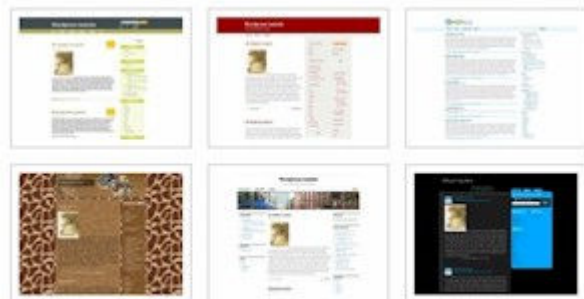
I use a company called [MomWebs](http://MomWebs) to host my sites. They are inexpensive, VERY reliable and the customer service is out of this world! I have used other companies but ended up dropping them and switching all my sites to MomWebs because they just plain rock.

Ok enough of the technical stuff, now for the fun part.

## What should my Blog look like?

First impressions are important. When your visitor clicks on your blog you want them to get a good feel for who you are and what you're all about. Your blog "skin" lets them know what to expect.

The 'look' of a blog is determined by its theme. A theme is a set of page templates and a CSS style sheet. (CSS stands for Cascading Style Sheet). Together the templates and the style sheet tell the database how to display its data.



This is what makes a blog so darn cool. At any time you can change the whole look of your website by simply changing the theme and there are hundreds of free themes and many paid themes available to choose from.

If you're familiar with php code and CSS you can tweak a theme to look a certain way. Change a color here and a width there. If you're not well versed with these codes you can hire a designer to do this for you. I can recommend Jen Houck of [www.internetmarketingchic.com](http://www.internetmarketingchic.com) She is a work at home Mom of two little girls and always does great work for me. My most recent blog redo was done by [FreshNets](http://FreshNets) (tell them Carrie sent you!).

With the right expertise you can make your blog look anyway you like.

The first customization task you can undertake is to have a custom header graphic created for the top of your blog. Your 'blog bling' could include:

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- A link to your RSS feed with instructions on how to use it.
- Mailing list sign up forum.
- About Me page with background info about you.
- Links to your favorite blogs (called a blogroll).
- Widgets/Gadgets that promote Social Networking sites that you belong to.
- Links that let readers submit you to Social Bookmarking sites (like StumbleUpon)

You might also want to get some kind of spam protection on your blog. Sad but true, the more popular your blog gets, the more likely the nasty spammers will come along with their gross comments. Head them off at the pass with some spam protection. FreshNets can fix you right up. ☺



## What should I be blogging about?

There are moms who immediately take to blogging like a fish to water. They know just what to do write about every day. And the computer gets booted up frequently (sometimes, while the laundry sits unfolded. Who, me!?) ☺

If that's not you – don't fret about it too much. You will get the feel for it as time goes by and there are some strategies I'll mention later to help get those blogging wheels turning in your brain.

Keeping your purpose in mind will make this part easier. Are you blogging to keep a digital record of your kid's cute antics? Then post when you feel like it.

If you are blogging to promote your business, it's a slightly different animal. Look at your blog as both a marketing and a relationship building tool, with your priorities being people first and product second. But keep your posts frequent, at least once a week, to keep people interested.

Or perhaps your blog is a bit of both – you are mostly writing about being a mom, but extra money certainly wouldn't be a bad thing. In which case, mix it up a little. Keep it conversational and friendly but don't be afraid to recommend a product or two along the way. More on this later.

**You can - and should be - personal on your blog.** That doesn't mean you have to tell everyone what you had for lunch ... unless your blog is all about cooking, in which case you probably should!

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Blog readers want to have a glimpse into your personal life, even if yours is a business blog. Share plans for an upcoming vacation. Let readers learn about what motivates you as a person. People like to do business with people who share their values and ethics. Knowing you're a real person helps them trust you and builds a relationship. People like to do business with people they like. ☺

Don't go overboard though. Your business blog is not a venue for venting about your personal problems. Potential clients and customers do not want to hear about your financial troubles!

And show good common sense about what you say even on your personal blog – your words will be on record on the internet where they can be read by people all over the world, so keep it nice.

## **What if I get writer's block?**

If you're like most moms who start a blog, you will from time to time have a bit of writer's block. Good news- it will likely go away, and you'll find yourself thinking of new things to blog about frequently. In fact blogging becomes quite addictive!

This was certainly true of me. When I began blogging, I would often struggle with things to blog about. Now, I have the problem of not having enough time to post on all the things I want to talk about!

Here are a few tips to get you through that initial dry spell until you find your blogging voice.

### **1) Subscribe to other blog feeds for your industry/target market.**

If you have a blog about breastfeeding, you'll want to have other similar (preferably high traffic) blogs on your RSS reader. It's a good way to keep abreast (pun absolutely intended!) of what's going on in the collective consciousness of people. Just do a Google search for blog + topics of choice, and you'll come up with plenty.

Keeping up with other blogs in your niche means that you can link to their posts (and you should always link to a blog that inspires your own post!) and add your own thoughts on the subject.

### **2) Look at magazines and newspapers in your niche**

Again, going back to the breastfeeding theme, read parenting magazines. Magazines are a great place to look for inspiration...the articles are mostly short, pithy, "quick fix" and solution oriented (similar to blog posts). They also change to reflect what's going on in the world and with your target market.

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Keeping up with the news is also a good idea...you can find news feeds to add to your RSS reader too. When something is happening in the world that impacts your readers/target market, blog it.

### **3) Keep a notebook (or file on your desktop) of blog fodder**

When a thought or sentence hits you, write it down immediately. These sentences can be lengthened into blog posts. The more you do this, the more aware you will become of the unlimited topics you can blog about, even in your niche. Use the “drafts” feature in your blog to keep these ideas safe until you can write more about them.

### **4) Milk Your Content**

If you're publishing a newsletter and write articles, then blog a short intro paragraph along with a link to the rest of the content on your website. Anywhere else you're writing, you should be using some of that content on your blog. If you even answer an email to a customer, paste that answer into your blog (leave out their name unless you have permission) and publish it as a “question from readers” post.

### **5) Product Reviews**

Review products that you've tried and books you've read that relate to your niche. Anything that would help your blog readers make a decision (and we all need that help in a world with too many choices!) is a good thing. You can also offer to review products that other business owners mail to you on your blog.

### **6) Involve Your Visitors**

Your newsletter subscribers and blog readers can be marketing partners and content generators for you. When they email you with a question, ask their permission to post it (along with the answer) on your blog. Or specifically ask for questions and feedback and encourage them to email you directly. Then you can get your other readers involved in helping the person who asked the question. People love to give advice and your blog readers are no different. Connect your readers together to create a mini community on your blog.

### **7) Guest Bloggers and PLR**

If you're feeling stuck, try inviting a friend to guest post for you. This could be someone who is a frequent commenter on your blog or it could be someone you admire who writes to a similar audience as you.

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PLR refers to private label rights content. Simply put, this is content that you pay for that you can edit and use as you wish. You can publish private label rights articles, recipes, tips, and more on your blog as-is, or you can rewrite it a little to make it sound more like you. You can bunch it up into a free report to give away or even create a product to sell to monetize your blog further!

There are several PLR sites that have good content. For food related content, there's [Yummy PLR](#). For natural mom articles, recipes and product reviews, there's [Natural Mom PLR](#) (ahem – this one is especially good if you ask me. ☺)

For health and mom related content, there's [All PLR](#) and [Easy PLR](#). Take a look and see if any of the content fits with your blog's focus. PLR is great to have handy when you're extremely busy or have a bad case of blogger's block.

Trust me – it won't be long until you have much more to say than you have time to type it. ☺

## **How often should I blog?**

As often as you have something interesting to say! There really aren't any hard and fast rules on this. Some very successful bloggers post several times a day and some post just a few times a month.

The more you blog, the more you'll bring yourself back to reader's minds so be sensitive to that. Don't come back to the forefront of their thoughts with a boring post or they'll think you're boring!

Keep in mind your particular motivation for blogging too. If you love writing and yours is a mommy/advice/funny/resourceful kind of a blog, go ahead and be prolific. The same is true of recipe blogs or any other blog that offers a lot of free content to its readers. I have some blogs (quite a few actually!) that I visit daily. I can hardly get my day started without reading my favorite blogs.

But if your blog serves the purpose of updating your customers when you have new products, a daily post is probably overkill. A weekly post might be better, and mix it up with a little Q and A, some personal information and tips on using your products too.

## **How can I make money with my Blog?**

It's not possible for me to cover every aspect of earning money with a blog in this short report, but I have a few other resources I can recommend for more information. But making money with a blog isn't complicated at all.

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## **In a nutshell, you make money with your blog the same way you make money with any other site.**

Here are the basic ways you make money with a blog:

- Selling your own products
- Selling other's products for a commission
- Selling advertising space

All the ways you can earn money from your blog fall under these three main categories.

Selling your own products would be fairly obvious. If you have physical or digital products that you sell online, you will want to direct your posts to your offerings.

Selling other's products for commission would include affiliate marketing and things like Direct Sales and network marketing. Affiliate marketing might be a new term. It refers to earning money through making product recommendations and earning commissions when your readers buy the product. There are also affiliate programs that pay for clicks (like Google AdSense, which pays you when people click on ads from your site) and for leads (when someone signs up to get something free).

I have a free ecourse that will help you learn more about affiliate marketing: how to find products your readers will be interested in, how to get readers to click on your affiliate links, how to get more traffic to your blog and more: [Natural Mom Affiliate Marketing](#)

Here is another ecourse that will help you learn the tips and tricks to maximize your earnings with AdSense: [Natural Mom AdSense](#). AdSense can be a little tricky on a blog, but with a few pointers you can earn a nice income each month from Google. My Google check pays all my regular monthly bills. ☺

Selling advertising space is when you invite people to buy ads on your blog. You can manage this yourself - accepting the payments and adding the text or graphic ads to your blog, or use a service like BlogHer or BlogAds. Or you can use something like Scratchback, which is like a fancy tip jar. <http://scratchback.com>

You can sell advertising effectively on your blog once it starts getting enough traffic.



Keep in mind that if you're a work at home mom and are blogging about your products and services and inviting readers to subscribe to your mailing list, your blog will

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consistently add to your bottom line. It can also be used to build a second stream of income through the promotion of affiliate programs.

If your goal with your blog is to earn money, it's important to have a focus. Try to set yourself apart from the other bloggers out there. That doesn't mean you have to have a totally unique idea – there probably aren't any unique ideas left, and if it's too "out there" it's probably a bad idea!

If you're a natural mom, you could focus in on a topic that is near and dear to you, such as:

- Green/Eco friendly living
- Breastfeeding
- Natural birth/homebirth/ unassisted birth

You could even go deeper with your focus, so for example if you are starting a blog on healthy eating, why not dig a little deeper and focus on: whole foods nutrition, or sugar free eating, or gluten free living, or native nutrition? Of course you can go a little wider with some of your posts, but having a tightly focused niche means it's easier for you to serve the needs of your market.

It's actually a good thing if you find lots of other bloggers doing something similar to you. It means there is a proven audience for what you want to talk about. It also means you have other bloggers to connect with, befriend and partner with. Start reading other blogs in your niche and leaving comments. Sign up for their RSS feed and keep up with what they're doing. It's a good thing to have friends in the blogosphere.

## **How do I get people to comment on my Blog?**

When you have a business blog, do you want to have a lot of interaction from readers? Well, yes! Comments show that you have readers who resonate with your message and your products and services. Frequent comments suggest that your blog has a lot of readers and thus suggests that you are popular.

You can encourage blog comments by closing your blog posts with questions and requests for opinions. Make sure the link to make a comment is obvious. If you reach a market that isn't very online savvy, be sure to clearly display a 'How to Comment' tutorial on the blog.

When a reader does comment, be responsive even if you just post to say thanks for commenting. This encourages others to post as well.

Sometimes people are shy about being the first to comment on a new post. Perhaps you could team up with another blogger and agree to comment on each other's blogs. Once you get that first comment, more often follow. You can also "bribe" people into commenting by linking to your frequent commenters, or by giving away free things randomly to people who comment.

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## What could I be missing about my Blog?

Likely, the most common ‘missed aspect’ of blogging is what takes place elsewhere. In order to be a great blogger, you have to leave your blog on a regular basis and go out to visit other people’s blogs.

Search for blogs on similar topics and read recent posts. If you have something useful to add or you want to give them a quick kudos, leave a comment. In most cases you’ll be given space to share your own blog URL when you leave your remarks.

Add your favorite blogs to your blog roll which is a list of links on your sidebar. Some of these bloggers will return the favor.

You should take every opportunity to share the link to your blog. Add a link to your main page and include the URL in your email signature. If you’re active on Social Networking sites, many of them ask for your blog URL.

If you find a blogger that you find really interesting you could invite them to be a guest blogger on your blog. This means that they write a full post that you share in their name on your blog. They may invite you to be a guest blogger on their blog in return, but if they do not – be patient. The blog love will come back to you.

Another way to share readers is to initiate a cross blog conversation where you carry on a one on one conversation, almost as if you were emailing each other privately, only you post the letters on your blogs so that readers have to follow both blogs in order to catch both sides of the story.

Depending on your market and surrounding online community there are some other fun ways to cooperate with other bloggers through blog carnivals and cooperatives but there are many types of businesses that would not be served well through participation in these projects so use your best judgment. One such would be [BlogCarnival](#). Submitting some of your well written posts to a carnival can ensure you some extra traffic and new readers.

Another way to get traffic to your blog is to use Twitter. Twitter is a social networking site and many have described it as a “microblog”. Basically, it’s a quick way of letting others know what you’re up to. Here is my Twitter page: <http://www.twitter.com/carrielee>

Bloggers use Twitter to update people when they’ve added a new post.

One of my favorite ways to get blog traffic is with article marketing. Article marketing means that you write articles that others can publish on their sites – along with your author bio, which includes a link to your site.

This is a great way to get incoming links to your blog, get noticed as an expert (or at least as someone with something interesting to say!), and get blog readers.

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To learn more about article marketing, visit [Natural Mom Article Marketing](#). (Is there an echo in here? ☺)

That's it. We've answered ten of the questions moms ask about blogging. Are you ready to start blogging or put your blog into hyperdrive?

Here are some of my favorite blogging resources that will help you do just that.

[Blogging Starter Pack](#) – Lynette Chandler of TechBasedMarketing put this awesome tutorial together and it's a lifesaver for any blogger who wants to get the most out of their blog! One of my favorite features of this pack are the video tutorials. They literally show you step by step how to set up and edit your blog so that it does what you want it to do. Every blogger needs this!

I've already mentioned this but it bears repeating: I LOVE [MomWebs](#) hosting. Their prices are right for us moms – but they don't skimp on customer service, and I've found them to be extremely reliable too.

[Natural Mom Private Label Rights](#) – This site that I co own with another natural mom blogger, Tiffany Washko, offers high quality content for the natural mom. If you're ever stumped about what to blog about, PLR is a lifesaver. You can edit it to make it your own and publish it on your blog to boost traffic and readership.

Have fun blogging!



Carrie Lauth

p.s. I couldn't sign off without inviting you to visit some of my blogs, now could I? I talk about work at home mom and internet marketing topics here:

<http://www.carrielauth.com/blog> and I talk about motherhood here:  
<http://www.naturalmomstalkradio.com/blog>

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