

Hello! I am so excited that you are about to get a new, beautiful blog!

First, I'm going to give you a quick crash course in how blogs work, and then we can have a nice little chat about your blog's new face!

When you signed up for a Wordpress account, you created a blog on Wordpress.com. This means **Wordpress.com hosts your blog**. It's a free, limited service.

In order to proceed with your new makeover, you have two options to choose from: **stay** on Wordpress.com and upgrade your account, or **move** to a self-hosted Wordpress.

If you want to **remain** on Wordpress.com, you must upgrade your CSS package. The [Custom Design](#) upgrade costs \$30 a year, and allows you access to much of the code responsible for design. You (and I) will be able to edit the CSS, but not your HTML or PHP (think ACTUAL structure of your blog), putting a limitation on some design changes and all functionality changes.

If you want to **move** to a self-hosted Wordpress, they average between \$4 and \$8 a month. I personally recommend [HostGator.com](#) (The Hatchling plan), as they have an option to pay month to month, and have the best customer service. *You will not need to upgrade your Wordpress account or purchase the Custom Design upgrade if you choose to self-host.* From there, the Wordpress platform will need to be installed, your blog exported and imported to your new Wordpress, and your domain set up to point to your new hosting space. If you use HostGator, I will handle all of it for you for free!* When you self-host, you will log into your blog the exact same way you did previously. Your dashboard will also look the same.

I personally recommend self-hosting, particularly if in the future you need "website space" to host additional files, webpages, or secondary blogs. You will have access to all plugins and widgets, and will be able to monetize and/or advertise on your blog. Your page rank in web search engines will not be absorbed by the Wordpress network, and your blog will be easily searchable. Domains are easier to set up and control, and I strongly recommend self-hosting for photographers, designers, organizations and small business owners.

I am happy to help answer any additional questions about either option you may have.

Now that you've made your decision, please upgrade your Wordpress account or purchase a hosting plan. Let me know what you choose!

***If using HostGator.com, please use my affiliate link: <http://secure.hostgator.com/~affiliat/cgi-bin/affiliates/clickthru.cgi?id=laurendubinsky> and use this code: LAUREN25PERCENTOFF**

I charge \$50 to install Wordpress, export your old blog/import your new blog, and set up domain name re-direction. If you purchase hosting from HostGator using my affiliate link, I'll do it for **free!** You will also save 25% with my coupon! If you prefer to save \$10, use LAUREN10DOLLARSOFF

Understanding Domains, Hosting, and the Internet.

Imagine your blog as an apartment in an apartment complex. You get your own apartment number, but you still share a primary address with everyone else in the complex. You also can't do much with your yard, and you don't get your own parking spot. And you aren't allowed to paint the walls. You don't own, you just rent. **This is your blog if you're at yourblogname.wordpress.com.**

Now imagine you outgrow the space. You really need your own parking spot, yard, and basement. You don't have enough organizational space, and having an option to add on a bedroom later would be really nice. So, you buy a house. **This is why you'd buy a hosting plan. To own your property, and to have unlimited space. And to have the option of having your own street address!**

So, you've found an awesome house and bought it, but then you realize none of your friends can come visit unless you have an address, so you go buy a mailbox. **This is what happens when you purchase your own domain name.**

Order of business:

- 1) **Purchase a domain name.** I recommend godaddy.com.
- 2) **Purchase hosting space.** I recommend hostgator.com*
- 3) **Send me logins** for both accounts.
- 4) I will set up your domain with your hosting account.
- 5) I will install Wordpress on your new hosting space.
- 6) I will import your old blog into your new Wordpress blog.
- 7) Time to design!

Notes and Tips:

Make sure you purchase your domain name **before** purchasing a hosting plan. If you already have a domain, awesome! Email me the login for your account & tell me which company you purchased it from. When you purchase your hosting plan, it will ask you to register your domain name. *Follow the instructions, and stop and ask for help if you need it.* Better safe than sorry.

You will not lose any content in moving from one blog to another. I will handle all importing/exporting carefully and completely.

To help you more with the "lingo," a **server** is the physical location of the hosting space you've purchased. It's like a harddrive, but online, and owned by a company. Every server has a **nameserver**, which is the server's personal addresses. It usually looks something like "ns1.hostgator.com." When I set up your **domain**, I tell the domain company what your nameservers are, in order to point your new domain to your hosting space.

***If using HostGator.com, please use my affiliate link:** <http://secure.hostgator.com/~affiliat/cgi-bin/affiliates/clickthru.cgi?id=laurendubinsky> and **use this code:** LAUREN25PERCENTOFF

