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A shop with thousands of products is slow: where the time goes

Products & Catalogue

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A shop with thousands of products is slow: where the time goes

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With fifty products, almost any hosting plan will carry a shop. With thousands, what was hidden comes out: the **database** queried again and again, the search and filters, the images, the background requests. There is no magic switch; there is an order to look in, from cheapest to dearest.

Where the time usually is

Place	Symptom	What to do
Category pages	The listing is slow to open	Page cache, for visitors with no session. See **cache rules**.
Search and filters	Search is slow or leaves the server out of breath	Limit the number of filters; a dedicated search plugin helps from a certain size.
Images	The page weighs more than it should	Right size, right format, lazy loading. See **product images**.
Background requests	The dashboard and cart are slow for no reason	See **admin-ajax eating your resources**.
The database	The products screen is slow	Find the slow queries and clear what is left over: see **slow queries** and **cleaning the database**.
Plugins	Each one adds queries	Switch one off at a time and measure.

A clue to which side the problem is on: if cached pages open fast and only the dashboard and the cart are slow, the weight is in the queries and PHP, not in the images or the network. If everything is slow, including the home page seen while signed out, look first at page weight and at the distance to the visitor (**fast for you, slow for everyone else**).

In this order

1. **Measure before you touch anything.** Pick three pages (home, a large category, a product) and note the time. See **how to measure speed**.

2. **Update the PHP version.** On a shop the difference shows: see **changing your PHP version without breaking the site**.

3. **Switch on the page cache** on the server and exclude cart, checkout and account: **LiteSpeed Cache**.

4. **Clean up the images.** Every image uploaded generates several; thousands of products generate tens of thousands of files, and accounts have a file-count limit (inodes): **the limits nobody advertises**.

5. **Check PHP memory and time.** Big imports and reports fail here first: **PHP limits**.

6. **Review the plugins.** The ones that run on every page weigh most.

On our shared servers there is no persistent object cache.
What speeds a shop up here is the page cache and good configuration; an object cache (Redis, for instance) is for a VPS of your own, where you install and maintain it. Do not install a plugin that promises one on a plan that lacks it.

When configuration runs out, resources begin.
If, after all this, the shop still drags at peak hours, the limit is the machine and not WordPress. See **shared hosting vs VPS** and our **VPS servers** page.

NEED A HAND?

Tell us the shop address, a time when you saw it slow and how many products it has. We will measure on our side what the account is using.

Open a support ticket →

Where to see it in your account

A big catalogue usually hits a limit you can read in your account instead of guessing. In cPanel, the Statistics sidebar shows space, files (inodes), databases and e-mail accounts in use. Resource Usage shows CPU, memory, entry processes and I/O, and when the account reached its limit. If, after caching and cleaning the database, Resource Usage still shows the account touching its limits at busy hours, the shop has outgrown shared hosting.

Then there are two steps. A higher plan gives more space (Business plans go from 50 to 200 GB), but for CPU and memory the sure step is a VPS: KVM with full SSH access, from VPS1 (1 vCPU, 2 GB RAM, 40 GB NVMe) to VPS6 (32 vCPU, 64 GB RAM, 1,280 GB NVMe). We do not promise a number of products per plan: it depends on the shop. Tell us what Resource Usage shows and we will suggest the next step.

SEE ALSO

- **The site is slow: what actually makes a difference**
- **Shared hosting vs VPS**
- **VPS servers**

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