

## Paid Author Guidelines For YouAligned

*Thank you for your interest in becoming a paid YouAligned.com contributor! We're grateful to have you. Please take time to read and familiarize yourself with the guidelines below. As a paid contributor, we ask that every article you submit adheres to these guidelines, as well as the [General Writing Guidelines](#).*

*As you know, here at YouAligned we say, "Yoga is our passion. Your health and wellness are our obsession." We take yoga, spirituality, and healthy living very seriously, but we want our articles and overall tone to be honest, inspiring and fun!*

*We are committed to helping our readers thrive through mind-body-soul wellness. As an online platform with a broad reach, we are equally committed to leading with integrity by only publishing quality, research-backed content that is inclusive, accessible, accurate, and empowering. Thank you for being a part of the team to enact our mission.*

### Requirements for Paid Writers

- Submit polished final draft articles ready for publication
- Consistently high-quality submissions
- Meet deadlines and communicate with your editor when you need an extension
- SEO keyword research and inclusion within the article (info below)
- Share every article on your social media channels and tag us @YouAligned #YouAligned

### Content Requirements

Please be sure you have reviewed our [Terms and Guidelines](#) from the [Contribute](#) page. By submitting an article, you are agreeing to these terms.

Before you submit each article, please ensure it meets the additional requirements below:

- Title should contain your primary keyword, be clear, engaging, concise, and less than 115 characters (not words... *characters, or each individual letter*)
  - If you're looking for inspiration, check out our homepage article titles to see the tone, style and length
  - **Example:** Here's How to Make a Turmeric Golden Milk Latte (Recipe)
- Article length:
  - Video lead-in: 300-500 words
  - Recipe: 300-500 words
  - Yoga tutorial: 800-1200

- Lists: 500-1000
- In-depth informational: 1000-2500
- Include a 135-155 character meta description for your article that includes your primary keyword (separate from your introduction)
  - Please reference the SEO section below for further guidance
  - You can use this [WordCounter](#) tool
- Link to a minimum of 3 relevant YouAligned articles within the article
  - Two article links should be standalone, as a recommended read that relates to that section of your article (please hyperlink the title and denote these **in red**.)
    - Example: Want more ways to reduce your stress? Read: **5 Quick Stress-Busting Techniques**
  - One (or more) article links can run in-text (please hyperlink and denote these within your article **in red**)
    - Example: When it comes to our overall health, it's important to find ways to **reduce our stress**.

## Formatting Guidance

Please do not add special formatting to your google doc (i.e. formatting tools such as justified alignment, double spacing or paragraph styling such as headlines, subheadlines). Instead simply bold titles, subheadings, etc.

Article Structure: Include an introduction that clearly states the objective of the piece, the main body of the article, and a 2-3 paragraph conclusion.

- Separate your article into short, concise 3-4 sentence paragraphs. In an effort to support the user experience, especially on mobile, we request that sentences be no longer than 360 characters long
- For better readability and organization, include several subheadings that include your keyword and tell the reader what to expect from that section
- Titles, headings and subheadings are title case (<https://capitalizemytitle.com/>)
- Your document should include: article title, your name, keyword(s), SEO title, and meta description
  - At the top of your submission document, above the title, please include your favorite quote to let us know you've read these guidelines
- PLEASE proofread your writing before submitting. Spell check and please look for any extra spaces between words or sentences you may have missed while editing.
  - Pro tip: Read your article aloud. Does it read seamlessly? Are any phrases clunky or unclear?

- If your article has 3 or more typos, it may be declined for publication. Only submit a polished final draft.
- Due to the volume of submissions we receive, we request you only submit finalized articles for our review. If any questions come up while you're writing, please email your editor.
- Reference external sources, especially when using numbers, facts and research. Link the relevant text **in red**.
  - YouAligned is always looking for **writers to contribute!**
  - When referencing a study or scientific/medical claim, please use a scholarly / peer-reviewed source. A few good resources: NCBI, PubMed, Google Scholar.
  - Avoid referencing Wikipedia and always try to find the original source.
- **Quoting Sources:** Articles are stronger when they include references that support the information you are sharing. Whether you want to share a direct quote, paraphrase a short section of outside information, or summarize a chapter from a book etc., these are all welcome additions – when done correctly. Failure to properly cite a source could be considered plagiarism. Please note, all sentences, including direct quotes, should not exceed 360 characters in length if possible (this supports the reader's experience, especially on mobile). Please highlight the source or author in **red**, as demonstrated above.
  - Direct quote: Place the entire quoted information in quotation marks and include the full name of the original source. Also include a link (when relevant) to where you found this information. As Brené Brown says, "Integrity is choosing courage over comfort."
  - Paraphrasing: This is when you take a passage of the information you are citing and rewrite it in your own words. You will still cite where the information came from.
  - Summarizing: The most straightforward of the ways to cite outside information, this is when you recap the main *concept* or takeaway of the source's information in your own words through your own interpretation of it. You will still cite where the information came from.

## SEO + Readability

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is an important tactic to connect with people searching for specific content. If you know how to optimize your content with keyword research, do it!

**Please use the guidelines below to make your article readable and searchable:**

## Keywords

**Please use a keyword or phrase 6-8 times across your title, introduction, subheadings and within the body of your article.** You can work with your editor to determine primary and secondary keywords or phrases. Weave this keyword throughout, including it in the title, intro, and subheadings. You are welcome to make a keyword recommendation or work with your editor to determine keyword(s); you can reference this free keyword search tool: <https://keywordsheeter.com/>. You can also use google search and check “related searches” at the bottom of the page results to see what else might be relevant.

Before writing, please discuss and determine your keyword(s) with your editor.

## Meta Description

Write a meta description (also called a lede or lead) that is 135-155 characters (not words... *characters*) and includes your keywords and a strong call to action.

For example, if your keyword is “turmeric,” then your introduction paragraph would be: Turmeric is known for its antioxidant and anti-inflammation properties. Add turmeric to your diet with this Golden Milk Latte Recipe.

Meta descriptions do NOT appear on the published page but the meta shows up in search engines or list formats. Do not copy/paste text from the article – write the meta specifically for this purpose.

## Plagiarism and Duplicate Content Is Bad for Everyone

We only publish original content that has not been submitted or published elsewhere, including a personal blog etc. If two websites publish the same content, it hurts both site’s rankings.

If you’d like to share an article you’ve published on YouAligned on your personal website, please be sure to use a [canonical tag](#) and email your editor for additional instructions before sharing.

We have a zero tolerance plagiarism policy. We check every article for plagiarism. If any part of an article has been plagiarized, it’s an immediate decline. This is why it’s important to practice proper citations of source information. Writers who plagiarize will not be invited to write for us again.

## Writing Voice

- Avoid passive voice

- Example of passive voice: “I am planning on going to the store.” VS active voice: “I plan to go to the store.”
- <https://www.grammarly.com/blog/active-vs-passive-voice/>
- Use Associated Press (AP) style (except use the Oxford comma!)
  - <https://www.grammarly.com/blog/what-is-the-oxford-comma-and-why-do-people-care-so-much-about-it/>

## **Paid Article Submission Checklist**

- ☐ Sign up for a Gmail account, if you don't have one already
- ☐ Is your content original and unpublished elsewhere?
- ☐ Does your article have a conclusion?
- ☐ Is your keyword/phrase used 6-8 times within your article?
- ☐ Remove unnecessary passive voice (try using the free [Hemingway Editor](#))
- ☐ Does your article comply with AP style guidelines?
- ☐ Do you link to at least 3 YouAligned articles?
- ☐ Do you have reference links to support research, facts and figures?
- ☐ Do you have a short and engaging title that is less than 115 characters?
- ☐ Do you have a meta description that is between 135-155 characters, contains your focus keyword and has a call to action?
- ☐ Are your paragraphs short and concise? Are your sentences short (and if possible, less than 360 characters long)?
- ☐ Did you include original, supporting, professional photos (if applicable)?
- ☐ Are the hyperlinks and relevant text highlighted in red?

## **Paid Photo Guidelines**

- All photos taken landscape
- High-quality resolution, in focus, clear and crisp
- Clear background that doesn't detract from the focus of the photo
- Unedited + uncropped
- Use natural / bright lighting (by a window and/or lots of lights behind camera)
- Fully demonstrates the pose (no part of your body is cut off etc)
- Include full yoga mat in frame (no part is cut off or out of frame)
- Label photos by name
- Include in doc and send in separate email

## **Writing Resources**

- Hemingway Editor (we love this tool for checking passive voice!): <http://www.hemingwayapp.com/>
- Capitalize My Title (check your title and subheadings for AP style): <https://capitalizemytitle.com/>
- Associated Press (AP) Stylebook: <https://www.apstylebook.com/>
- Associated Press (AP) at Purdue Online Writing Lab: [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue\\_owl.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html)
- WordCounter (for checking word and character count): <https://wordcounter.net/>
- Grammar Girl Quick and Dirty Tips: <http://www.quickanddirtytips.com/grammar-girl>
- Article on the ideal length of everything from titles to subheadings and more: <https://blog.bufferapp.com/the-ideal-length-of-everything-online-according-to-science>

## The Types of Articles We Are Looking For

We love lists, question-solution oriented articles, as well as inspirational, self-improvement, how-tos, news and current events, and even humor. Please review our General Guidelines for examples. We also invite you to check out sites such as MindBodygreen, Yoga Journal or Well+Good for inspiration. Lastly, we kindly ask you to search YouAligned; we usually prefer new content to add depth to existing subjects with *low* article volume, vs. adding *another* article to an already well-covered topic.

## Compensation

We pay via PayPal. Please be sure your editor has your current PayPal email address.

We pay at the first of each month for any articles that have been reviewed and approved the previous month. For example, if you submitted two articles in June that were reviewed and approved for publication, you will be paid for both on July 1.

Please note that as a small editorial team, our review process typically takes between 2-4 weeks, so we cannot guarantee we will be able to review your article the same month it was submitted (but trust we will always do our best!).

## This is Our Number 1 Most Important Rule

You **MUST** have fun with your writing. If you find yourself mad at your computer please stop what you are doing, take a deep breath and go do something that makes you smile. ☺

The articles you write are going to inspire, uplift, entertain and educate thousands of readers from around the world. What you're doing is important, and we value the wisdom and guidance you have to share with our readers.

Remember – if you're bored when you're writing, readers are going to be bored when they're reading. Have fun writing and it will show in the final product!

*Have any questions about these guidelines? Please email your editor and let them know. We are always happy to help and appreciate your time and contributions! Thank you!*