

THE CREATOR KICK OFF KIT



A Step-by-Step Beginner's Guide to Starting YouTube

2027 EDITION

Created by KC | Shoes Off with KC

You don't need a fancy camera or anyone's permission to start. What you do need is a spark and maybe someone to remind you that your voice matters, your story counts, and it's never too late to begin.

*This guide isn't about going viral. It's about finally starting.
Made for beginners. No experience needed.*

www.shoesoffwithkc.com

WELCOME

You don't need a studio. You don't need expensive equipment. You don't need to understand algorithms, editing, SEO, or half of the words people use when they talk about YouTube.

What you do need is an idea, something you want to share, and maybe someone to remind you that you can learn the rest as you go.

I created Shoes Off with KC because I was tired of waiting for "perfect." One of the biggest things I've learned is that you figure out a whole lot of this **after you start**.

That's why I created this guide. I'm going to walk you through the process one step at a time, in regular everyday language. No assuming you already know where everything is. No making you feel silly because you've never heard of a thumbnail or CTR.

This isn't about becoming famous or going viral. **It's about finally starting.**

So kick those shoes off...

and let's do this.

- KC

THIS GUIDE IS FREE. REALLY.

Use it. Print it. Write all over it. If it helps you and you'd like to support Shoes Off with KC, you can choose to make a donation, but you never have to pay to use this guide.

START HERE

Before you spend a dime, hear me on this one: **you can start a YouTube channel with the phone you already own.**

You do NOT need:

- An expensive camera
- A professional microphone
- A studio
- Fancy lights
- A website
- Expensive editing software
- Thousands of followers
- To know exactly what you're doing

Eventually you may want some of those things. Great. But don't let buying stuff become your excuse for not starting.

By the end of this kit, you'll know how to:

- Choose a channel direction
- Pick a channel name and handle
- Create and set up your channel
- Create basic branding
- Plan and record your first video
- Edit it simply
- Create a title and thumbnail
- Upload and publish
- Understand basic analytics
- Decide what to make next

YOUR ONLY JOB RIGHT NOW

Don't try to become a YouTuber today. Your goal is simply to take the next step.

YOUR 20-STEP KICK OFF CHECKLIST

1. Choose your channel direction
2. Choose your channel name
3. Create your Google account
4. Create your YouTube channel
5. Reserve your name on other social
6. Write your channel description
7. Create your banner
8. Choose your profile picture
9. Choose a realistic schedule
10. Brainstorm video ideas
11. Outline or script your video
12. Choose where you'll record
13. Gather simple equipment
14. Record your first video
15. Edit your video
16. Write your title
17. Create your thumbnail
18. Upload & publish
19. Watch, learn & check analytics
20. Repeat - one video at a time

STEP 1 - WHAT WILL YOUR CHANNEL BE ABOUT?

You may hear people call this your **niche**. That's simply a way of asking: "What kind of things are you going to make videos about?"

ASK YOURSELF

What do I know? What have I experienced? What could I talk about for hours? What do people already ask me for help with? What do I enjoy?

LEAVE YOURSELF SOME ROOM

You don't necessarily have to squeeze yourself into one tiny box. A broader theme can give you room to grow while still helping viewers understand why they should come back.

KC'S TIP

What brings you joy often shows on camera. Choose a direction you can imagine talking about more than once.

CHECK IT OFF

- I can describe who I want to help, entertain, or connect with.
- I have 3 subjects I could make videos about.

STEP 2 - CHOOSE YOUR CHANNEL NAME

Your channel name can be your name, a business name, or something creative. Keep it easy to say, spell, remember, and type.

CHECK BEFORE YOU COMMIT

Search YouTube for the name you're considering. Also think about your **handle** - the unique @name people use to find and mention you.

YOUR HANDLE

Handles are unique and begin with @. Try to keep your handle close to your channel name when possible.

KC'S TIP

Don't spend three weeks chasing the perfect name. YouTube allows channel names and handles to be changed, although limits apply.

CHECK IT OFF

- I searched my name on YouTube.
- I chose a channel name.
- I chose or have an idea for my @handle.

STEP 3 - CREATE YOUR GOOGLE ACCOUNT

A Google Account is what you'll use to sign into YouTube. I recommend keeping your creator activity organized instead of mixing everything into your everyday personal email.

CONSIDER A CREATOR EMAIL

You might create an address related to your channel name. This can keep YouTube notices, creator tools, and future business messages easier to find.

SECURITY FIRST

Use a strong, unique password. Add recovery information and turn on the security protections Google offers.

KC'S TIP

Your public YouTube channel name does not have to match your Google Account name.

CHECK IT OFF

- My creator Google Account is ready.
- My password is strong and unique.
- My recovery/security settings are set.

STEP 4 - CREATE YOUR YOUTUBE CHANNEL

This is the big moment, but the actual setup is short.

CURRENT OFFICIAL SETUP

Sign in to YouTube on a computer or mobile website. Select your profile picture, then **Settings**. In Account, choose **Add or manage channel(s)**, then **Create a channel**. Choose a profile picture, enter your name and handle, and select **Create channel**.

THEN STOP FOR A SECOND

You just created a YouTube channel. Seriously. You can worry about banners, thumbnails, analytics, and everything else next.

KC'S TIP

You don't need to finish every setting in one sitting.

CHECK IT OFF

- MY CHANNEL IS CREATED!

STEP 5 - RESERVE YOUR NAME ON OTHER SOCIAL PLATFORMS

You do not need to be active everywhere. But if you think you may someday use Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, or another platform, consider reserving the same or similar name.

KEEP IT SIMPLE

Use a consistent name and profile image when practical so people can recognize you.

DON'T CREATE MORE WORK

Reserving a name does not mean you have to start posting there today.

KC'S TIP

Start with YouTube. Other platforms are optional tools, not another full-time job.

CHECK IT OFF

- I checked the platforms I care about.
- I reserved my name where it makes sense.

STEP 6 - WRITE YOUR CHANNEL DESCRIPTION

Your description should quickly tell a new visitor what your channel is about and why they may want to stay.

A SIMPLE FORMULA

Try: **Who this is for + what you make + what they can expect.** Example: "Real-life videos for people navigating midlife, learning new things, and finding more joy in everyday life."

WHERE TO EDIT IT

In YouTube Studio, open **Customization**, then **Profile**. Your channel description is part of your public profile.

KC'S TIP

Write for a human first. Clear words about your actual topic matter more than stuffing in keywords.

CHECK IT OFF

- My first sentence clearly says what my channel is about.
- My description sounds like me.

STEP 7 - CREATE YOUR BANNER

Your banner is the large image across the top of your channel. It should help a visitor understand your channel at a glance.

SIZE IT CORRECTLY

YouTube recommends **2560 x 1440 px**. The minimum upload size is 2048 x 1152 px. At that minimum size, keep important text and logos inside the 1235 x 338 px safe area because banners crop differently across devices.

WHAT TO INCLUDE

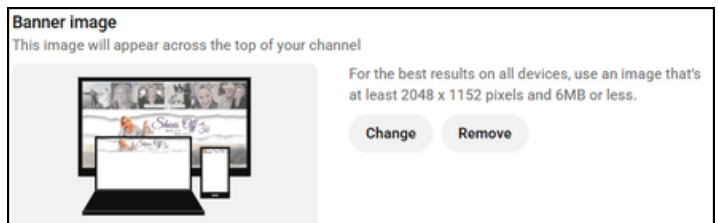
Your channel name is enough. You may also add a short promise or posting schedule if it truly helps. Keep it readable and uncluttered.

KC'S TIP

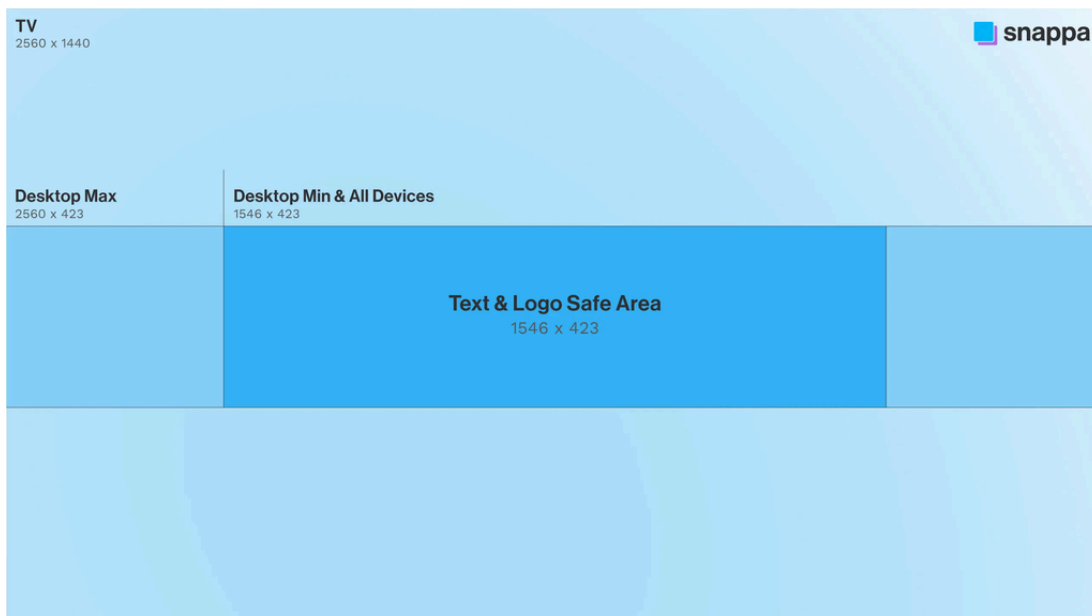
Canva is an easy free option. After uploading, check your banner on your phone and computer because cropping varies by device. *You can save the template below to Canva. Add it to your image on top and then change the transparency level to see your banner behind it for sizing. Just delete it from the top when done!

CHECK IT OFF

- My banner is readable.
- Important text stays near the center.
- I checked how it looks on more than one screen.



Save this image below to check your banner sizing the easy way! 2560 x 1440 px recommended, 2048 x 1152 minimum, 6 MB or less, and Logo should be within the dark center area!



STEP 8 - CHOOSE YOUR PROFILE PICTURE

Your profile picture appears in many places, including your channel, comments, and around your videos. Make it recognizable even when it is tiny.

FACE OR LOGO?

A clear photo of your face can feel personal. A simple logo can work well for a business or brand. Either is fine. Create it at 800 x 800 pixels (ideal), but not less than 98 x 98 pixels. Shape: Square (1:1), Format: PNG or JPG, Maximum File Size: 4 MB or less

KEEP IT CLEAN

Choose a square image with a simple background and enough contrast that it still works at a small size.

KC'S TIP

Don't cram words into a tiny profile image. Recognition matters more than detail.

CHECK IT OFF

- My image is clear at a small size.
- It fits the personality of my channel.

Picture

Your profile picture will appear where your channel is presented on YouTube, like next to your videos and comments



It's recommended to use a picture that's at least 98 x 98 pixels and 4MB or less. Use a PNG or GIF (no animations) file. Make sure your picture follows the YouTube Community Guidelines.

Change

Remove

STEP 9 - CHOOSE A REALISTIC SCHEDULE

Consistency can help viewers know when to expect you, but a schedule should support your life and not take it over.

START SMALL

One good video every week, every other week, or even on a dependable monthly rhythm can be better than promising more than you can sustain.

QUALITY OVER PANIC

If a video needs another day, take another day. Your schedule is a tool, not a punishment.

KC'S TIP

Choose the schedule you can keep on a busy week, not the schedule you imagine keeping on your easiest week.

CHECK IT OFF

- I chose a realistic starting schedule.
- I know which day/time I usually have available to create.

STEP 10 - BRAINSTORM VIDEO IDEAS

Good ideas often start with real questions, problems, stories, and curiosity.

LISTEN FOR QUESTIONS

What do friends ask you about? What did you recently learn the hard way? What do you wish someone had explained to you five years ago?

USE SEARCH FOR RESEARCH

Search YouTube and Google to see how people phrase questions. Communities such as Reddit can also reveal what people are confused about, but use them for learning, not for spamming your channel.

KC'S TIP

Don't ask, "What can go viral?" first. Ask, "What could be useful, interesting, comforting, funny, or worth watching?" Remember that people connect to EMOTION!

CHECK IT OFF

- I wrote at least 10 possible video ideas.
- I circled the 3 I would be most excited to make.

STEP 11 - OUTLINE OR SCRIPT YOUR VIDEO

You do not have to memorize a script. In fact, many people sound more natural with a short outline.

A SIMPLE VIDEO OUTLINE

1. **Hook:** tell viewers what they're about to get. 2. **Middle:** teach, show, tell, or demonstrate. 3. **Close:** wrap it up and give them a natural next step.

AI CAN HELP - BUT KEEP YOUR VOICE

Tools can help organize ideas, create questions, or clean up an outline. Read it aloud and change anything you would never actually say.

KC'S TIP

People came for the topic, but connection comes from you. Don't edit your personality out of your own video. I like to include important keywords about the video in the first sentence and throughout. People connect to EMOTION, not a robot.

CHECK IT OFF

- I know what my first 20-30 seconds will accomplish.
- I have bullet points or a script I can comfortably follow.

STEP 12 - CHOOSE WHERE YOU'LL RECORD

You can make a video almost anywhere. A quiet room, kitchen, porch, office, backyard, or parked car can all work.

LOOK BEFORE YOU RECORD

Check what is behind you. Remove anything private, distracting, or something you simply don't want online.

LISTEN TOO

A beautiful room with loud HVAC, traffic, or an echo can be harder to watch than a plain room with clean sound.

KC'S TIP

A real setting can feel more welcoming than a perfect studio. Use what fits the video.

CHECK IT OFF

- My background is safe and not distracting.
- I checked the sound before recording the whole video.

EQUIPMENT: START WITH WHAT YOU HAVE

You can spend thousands of dollars on creator gear. You do not need to.

START HERE	NICE LATER - NOT REQUIRED
Smartphone	External microphone
Window light or a lamp	Small LED light
Something stable to hold the phone	Tripod
Quiet room	Acoustic treatment
Free/basic editing app	Paid editing software

THE BEST FIRST UPGRADE

If people can see you well enough but struggle to hear you, improve your audio before chasing a more expensive camera.

STEP 13 - GATHER YOUR SIMPLE EQUIPMENT

For your first video, keep your setup boringly simple. Phone. Light. Stable position. Understandable sound.

PHONE

Clean the camera lens always. Put the phone at or slightly above eye level for a talking video. Use enough storage space and battery.

LIGHT

Face a window when possible instead of putting the bright window behind you.

SOUND

Record a 10-second test and listen with headphones before recording the whole thing.

KC'S TIP

The test clip is one of the easiest ways to save yourself from discovering bad audio after a 20-minute recording.

CHECK IT OFF

- Lens cleaned.
- Phone stable.
- Light checked.
- 10-second audio test completed.

STEP 14 - RECORD YOUR FIRST VIDEO

Pressing Record can feel much bigger than it actually is. Your first video does not need to look like your 100th video.

BEFORE YOU START

Turn off notifications or use a mode that prevents interruptions. Frame yourself. Take a breath. Look at the camera lens when you want eye contact.

IF YOU MESS UP

Pause, smile, and say the sentence again. You can remove the mistake when you edit. You do not have to restart the entire video.

KC'S TIP

Talk to one person, not "the internet." Imagine one friendly viewer sitting across from you. Know who you are talking to. Who is the person you want this video to resonate with. Keep them in mind.

CHECK IT OFF

- I recorded a test.
- I recorded my first full video.
- I did not restart every time I stumbled.

STEP 15 - EDIT YOUR VIDEO

Editing is simply deciding what stays and what goes. Start with the basics.

FIRST EDIT

Trim dead space at the beginning and end. Remove long pauses, major mistakes, interruptions, and repeated sections.

THEN WATCH IT

Ask: Does this move? Is anything confusing? Is there a section I would skip if I were the viewer?

DON'T OVERDO IT

You do not need constant zooms, sound effects, transitions, and graphics. Clean and easy to follow is enough.

KC'S TIP

For a beginner, a finished simple edit is better than an unfinished masterpiece. I use the CapCut app.

CHECK IT OFF

- Beginning and ending trimmed.
- Big mistakes removed.
- Audio is understandable.
- I watched the final export once.

STEP 16 - WRITE YOUR TITLE

Your title and thumbnail usually work together to help someone decide whether to watch.

BE CLEAR FIRST

A viewer should have a reasonable idea what they'll get. For searchable how-to videos, use the words a real person might type.

ADD CURIOSITY WITHOUT TRICKING PEOPLE

Curiosity is useful. Misleading viewers is not. Make sure the video actually delivers what the title promises.

KC'S TIP

Write 5 possible titles before choosing one. Your first idea isn't always your best one. Remember, people connect to emotion. See sizing chart below for each device. Titles can contain up to 100 characters, but viewers may not see the entire title.

CHECK IT OFF

- My title accurately represents the video.
- A stranger could understand what the video is about.
- I wrote more than one option.

Device	Approx. title characters visible
 Desktop	60–70
 Phone	48–55
 Tablet	roughly 55–65
YouTube maximum	100

Hook in roughly the first 50-55 characters!

STEP 17 - CREATE YOUR THUMBNAIL

Think of your thumbnail as the tiny poster for your video. YouTube says the title and thumbnail are among the most important information viewers use when deciding what to watch.

KEEP IT SIMPLE

Use one strong image or idea. If you add words, keep them large enough to read on a phone.

DON'T COPY THE TITLE WORD-FOR-WORD

The title can explain one part while the thumbnail adds emotion, context, or a second reason to click.

CHECK IT SMALL

Shrink the design on your screen. If you can't understand it quickly, simplify.

KC'S TIP

YouTube notes that most of its best-performing videos use custom thumbnails. But "custom" does not mean complicated. I like to create mine in Canva first and then upload it to Chat GPT to make enhancements but always say "Do Not Change my face, I do not want it to look AI generated it"

CHECK IT OFF

- Thumbnail is easy to understand at phone size.
- Text, if used, is large and short.
- Title + thumbnail tell one clear story.

STEP 18 - UPLOAD & PUBLISH

You're ready. Uploading has several screens, but you can take them one at a time.

BASIC FLOW

In YouTube Studio, choose **Create** and then **Upload videos**. Select your video file. Add your title and description, choose or upload your thumbnail, and complete the audience and other required details.

CHECK BEFORE PUBLISHING

Review the title, thumbnail, description, audience setting, visibility, and any checks YouTube shows you. You can publish immediately, keep it private/unlisted, or schedule it when those options are available.

ABOUT TAGS

Don't spend an hour stuffing tags. YouTube says title, thumbnail, and description are more important for discovery, and tags usually play only a minimal role except for things such as commonly misspelled terms.

KC'S TIP

Before you click Publish, watch the first minute one more time and make sure your title and thumbnail match what viewers actually get. I prefer to upload Private with a Schedule date and time (next day at earliest).

CHECK IT OFF

- Title added.
- Description added.
- Thumbnail added.
- Audience/visibility reviewed.
- Published or scheduled!

STEP 19 - WATCH, LEARN & CHECK ANALYTICS

After publishing, give the video room to breathe. Then use YouTube Studio to learn, not to punish yourself.

START WITH A FEW NUMBERS

Impressions tell you how often YouTube showed your thumbnail in certain places. **Click-through rate (CTR)** tells you how often those impressions became views. **Audience retention** helps show where viewers stayed or left. **Watch time** tells you how much time people spent watching.

LOOK FOR CLUES, NOT VERDICTS

A lower number does not automatically mean the video was bad. Topic, audience, traffic source, timing, sample size, and many other things can affect performance.

KC'S TIP

Analytics should help you ask better questions. They should not decide whether you're allowed to be proud of making the video. I had a "How To" video with very low views for 6 months (less than 1,000) and then took off and is now has over 33,000 views and growing daily!

CHECK IT OFF

- I waited before judging the video.
- I looked for one thing I can learn.
- I wrote one idea to test next time.

STEP 20 - REPEAT - ONE VIDEO AT A TIME

Congratulations. You did the thing most people keep saying they'll do someday: you started.

YOUR NEXT VIDEO

Use what you learned, but don't reinvent everything. Improve one or two things at a time.

KEEP A SIMPLE CREATOR NOTE

After each upload, write: What worked? What felt hard? What did viewers respond to? What do I want to try next?

KC'S TIP

This is a journey, not a destination. Your job isn't to make every video perfect. Your job is to keep learning without losing the reason you wanted to create in the first place.

CHECK IT OFF

- I published my first video.
- I chose my next idea.
- I am officially a creator.

SOFTWARE: YOU DON'T NEED A GIANT TOOLBOX

Pick one tool for each job and learn it before adding five more.

JOB	SIMPLE STARTING POINT	WHAT IT'S FOR
Channel management	YouTube Studio	Uploads, analytics, comments, channel settings
Graphics	Canva or another design tool	Banner, thumbnails, simple graphics
Video editing	Phone editor or an editor you use now	Trim, arrange clips, captions, basic audio
Notes/scripts	Notes app, Google Docs, or paper	Ideas, outlines, scripts

KC'S RULE

If a new app saves you time, great. If learning it becomes the whole project, go back to the tool you already know. Many apps are free and can always pay for in the future if you like it and desire more features.

CONTENT IDEAS: YOUR FIRST 20

Don't wait until upload day to decide what to make. Build a small idea bank.

1. What do people ask me how to do?

2. What did I learn later in life that I wish I'd known sooner?

3. What mistake could I help someone avoid?

4. What can I demonstrate step-by-step?

5. What story taught me something?

6. What do beginners in my topic misunderstand?

7. What can I compare?

8. What can I review from real experience?

9. What question keeps appearing in comments or groups?

10. What could I explain in plain English?

Now turn your answers into 20 possible titles:

01. _____
02. _____
03. _____
04. _____
05. _____
06. _____
07. _____
08. _____
09. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____
16. _____
17. _____
18. _____
19. _____
20. _____

MAKING MONEY ON YOUTUBE - 2027

You do **not** need to worry about monetization on Day 1. But because you're going to hear a lot of different numbers online, here's the important change for 2027.

BEGINNING FEBRUARY 1, 2027

For new applicants seeking YouTube Partner Program ads and Premium revenue sharing, YouTube says the entry threshold is **1,000 subscribers** plus either **8,000 qualified watch hours in the last 365 days** OR **20 million qualified Shorts views in the last 90 days**.

Why have you heard "4,000 watch hours"? Prior to February 1, 2027, the full ads/Premium entry threshold for new applicants was 1,000 subscribers plus 4,000 valid public watch hours in the previous 12 months, OR 10 million valid public Shorts views in 90 days.

YouTube says the 2027 higher entry thresholds apply to **new applicants**; creators already in YPP are not removed simply because they do not meet the new entry threshold.

YouTube also says the earlier-access requirements for fan funding, YouTube Creator Partnerships, and YouTube Shopping remain at **500 subscribers** plus either **3,000 qualified watch hours in the last year** or **3 million qualified Shorts views in 90 days**, subject to YouTube's other eligibility requirements.

DON'T LET THESE NUMBERS SCARE YOU

Your first goal is not 1,000 subscribers, 8,000 hours, or 20 million views. Your first goal is to make something useful or meaningful and press Publish.

Requirements and features can change. Always check YouTube's official Help Center before making a business decision based on a threshold.

WAIT...WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

Channel

Your public home on YouTube where your videos, name, profile, and other channel information live.

Niche

The main subject, audience, or theme connecting your content.

Handle

Your unique @identifier on YouTube.

Title

The headline for a video.

Thumbnail

The image people see with your video before deciding whether to watch.

SEO

Search engine optimization - making content understandable and findable for relevant searches.

Impressions

How often YouTube showed your video thumbnail in counted locations.

CTR

Click-through rate - the percentage of counted impressions that turned into views.

Watch Time

The amount of time viewers spend watching your content.

Retention

A way to understand how much of a video viewers keep watching and where they leave.

Subscriber

Someone who chooses to subscribe to your channel.

Monetization

Ways a creator can earn money from content, including eligible YouTube features and outside revenue sources.

BEGINNER SAFETY & SCAM CHECK

Creating publicly can be wonderful, but protect your personal information from the beginning.

- Use a strong, unique password and account security protections.
- Think before showing mail, addresses, school names, license plates, work badges, calendars, or documents on camera.
- Be careful with emails claiming to be brands, sponsors, copyright services, or YouTube support.
- Don't open unexpected attachments or sign into accounts through suspicious links.
- Decide what parts of your family and private life are simply not content.
- Remember that a public video can be copied, clipped, shared, and viewed outside the audience you imagined.

PAUSE BEFORE YOU PANIC

Scam messages often create urgency: 'Act now,' 'your channel will be deleted,' or 'download this file.' Slow down and verify through your actual YouTube/Google account and official support pages.

YOUR FIRST 30 DAYS

WEEK	FOCUS
1	Finish channel basics. Brainstorm 10-20 ideas. Choose your first video.
2	Outline, record, edit, and create your title + thumbnail.
3	Publish. Reply to genuine comments. Write down what you learned.
4	Create your next video. Improve one thing - not everything.

AT THE END OF 30 DAYS, ASK:

What did I enjoy most?

What was harder than I expected?

What did viewers respond to?

What do I want to make next?



CONGRATULATIONS

YOU STARTED.

Enjoy this ride, my friend.

Be patient with yourself and with the process. You are going to learn things by doing them that no guide, including this one, can teach you ahead of time.

Your first video doesn't have to prove anything. Your tenth video doesn't have to look like someone else's 500th.

This is a journey, not a destination.

Wishing you the very best in your new adventure. Be sure to subscribe as I am adding step-by-step videos as well if you are a visual learner.

Yours truly,
KC

