

OUT-OF-STOCK SEO CHECKLIST

- **Do not delete** out-of-stock pages entirely or create any 404 errors.
- **Do not 301-redirect** (permanently) product pages, unless the product is being discontinued. In the case of being discontinued, a 301-redirect, ideally, should point to an upgraded, replacement, or similar product
- **Do not 302-redirect** (temporarily) product pages. This option could be feasible under normal circumstances, but is less feasible given the volume and time-sensitivity of fluctuating inventory during COVID-19.
- **Keep Availability schema markup** updated to indicate “InStock” and “OutOfStock” items. While this is a best practice to always follow, it may be an obsolete strategy if your inventory is fluctuating heavily and quickly during COVID-19. Google needs time to re-crawl pages to accurately display availability in search results, so this is not a viable option when timing is sensitive.
- **Do not default users to a Buy Online, Pick Up in Store (BOPIS) purchasing option** if it will ultimately take users to a Cart or Checkout page that will indicate that the product is actually unavailable in-store, too. Regularly test this process to ensure a positive customer experience.
- On product detail pages, list availability at the user’s **preferred store location and nearby stores**. eCommerce stores can feature this information, even without the BOPIS option, while still adding language to indicate that in-store availability may change.
- Give users an **option to be notified** via email or text when an item is back in stock to be purchased online.
- Allow users to **pre-order** products, if applicable.
- **Feature similar products** only if those products are likely in stock to be purchased online.
- Add **“in-stock” and “out-of-stock” labels** that are visible both on product detail pages and category listing pages.
- **List “in-stock” pages first** in the category listing view. “Out-of-stock” pages should not be removed from these views. Typically, pages should be removed from filter views when they do not meet a filter’s requirement (e.g. size, color, brand, etc.). Given the current state of online inventory, it is better to still display these products with “out-of-stock” labels, as mentioned above, to represent the normal selection.
- Allow users to **filter for in-stock products**. This filter view should be unavailable to crawlers so they will continue to pass link equity to all pages.
- Include language on product detail and product category pages to **indicate when an item is expected to be back in stock**, even if that information is unknown (e.g. “We do not know when this product will be available.”).