



# Secrets

for Finding

*Cheap, Fabulous*

Images for Your Blog

[theSelfPublishingToolkit.com](http://theSelfPublishingToolkit.com)

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## Part One: Finding Inexpensive Images

### A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words

Images make your website an inviting, attractive place to be. They have the power to convince someone to compel a reader to read a post, to get to know you and to buy your book.

Images influence readers and increase the trust your reader places in you. The most read text on a website is the caption under your images. In fact, if you want people to do a particular thing on your site (like sign up for your mailing list) place an image of an arrow pointing to that particular activity. (You could also place a photo of a person looking at the form.) This is called line of sight and it works!

### Understanding Images

Images abound on the internet but you can't just grab any old image you want. Just like you own the copyright to your books, the image creator owns the copyright to their image. For use on a website or book cover, you need a **royalty free image**.

### Royalty Free Images

Royalty free (RF) refers to a copyright license giving you the right to use the image; it does not refer to the price of the image. Royalty free images are available for free and at a cost. The cost for an image can range in price quite dramatically, from a single dollar to over a hundred dollars.

All of the images used on your website, blog or book covers must be royalty free. You cannot grab any old image off of the internet or Google image search to use on your site. The image creator must give you permission to use the image. This is called licensing. All of the images you use on your site should be 'Royalty Free.'

Navigating the many options available for images can be confusing, which is why I put together this post. Images have become a promotional tool due in large part to [Pinterest](https://www.pinterest.com). Images you choose for your blog posts can now be ambassadors for you, your website and your books.

So where do you get these images? Quite a few sites exist for the sole purpose of providing images. Let's go over the types of images available and how to access them.

### A Quick Note About Image Size

Unless you are looking for an image for a book cover, you can focus on web resolution for your images. This means they are 72 dpi or size extra small. I usually look for images that are 300-400 pixels wide. Any larger than that and you'll need to resize them.

### Public Domain Images

You can use images in the public domain without permission from the creator. There are several sites that curate these images:

[Pixabay](https://www.pixabay.com)

[Comfight](https://www.comfight.com) (utilizes Flickr images)

***You are still subject to the licensing terms of these images and because they don't require model releases, it is inadvisable for you to use images with people in them on your website. I would also caution you about using any images from these sites for commercial purposes. The sole responsibility for use is on you and not the site that offered the image.***



### ***Free Images***

In addition to images in the public domain, you can also find free royalty free images on a variety of websites. Make sure you can trust any site you download a free image from because you are subject to that site's licensing terms. If you do not comply with them, you could be sued.

You can visit the following sites for free royalty free images:

[Dreamstime Free](#)  
[Stock Free Images](#)  
[stock.xchng](http://stock.xchng)

On the outside, free images sound great, but there are a few things that you should be aware of.

When you use a free image, the creator usually stipulates that credit must be given in the form of a link back to the original image. This is a pretty fair deal--they are letting you use the image in exchange for exposure. The downside of this deal is that if you want to use the image on Pinterest or Facebook or Twitter, instead of linking it back to your own website, you'll have to link it to the creator's site giving up your own exposure.

The other drawback is that free images have a low barrier of use, so they are more likely to be found in multiple places around the internet. Using them subtracts from the uniqueness of your brand. Free images are a good option if you need something quick and inexpensive for a small project.

The bottom line is that when you find a free image you want to use, you must read the licensing agreement and comply with it. If you are going to use free images, I would recommend you obtain them from a site that requires the image creators to provide signed releases from models so you don't unintentionally end up in the middle of a lawsuit.

## How to Find Great Images on a Budget

The best place to get images for your website is on a stock photo site that sells the image to you with a license for use. This doesn't mean you have to pay a fortune for an image. It's really easy to get images for around \$1 each on [Dreamstime](http://Dreamstime.com).

You can even feel good about helping to support other artists in business for themselves—just like you. Dreamstime has the same quality images you can find on some of the other higher cost sites, but with a lower price tag. This is because Dreamstime works on a sliding scale. The first person to purchase an image gets the lowest price. The price scales up with each purchase so the trick is to find recently uploaded images.

Let's get started!

## Finding Images on the Cheap

When you are looking for images, you'll probably want to compare and contrast your findings. [Dreamstime](http://Dreamstime.com) lets you create lightboxes to store your images while you are browsing.

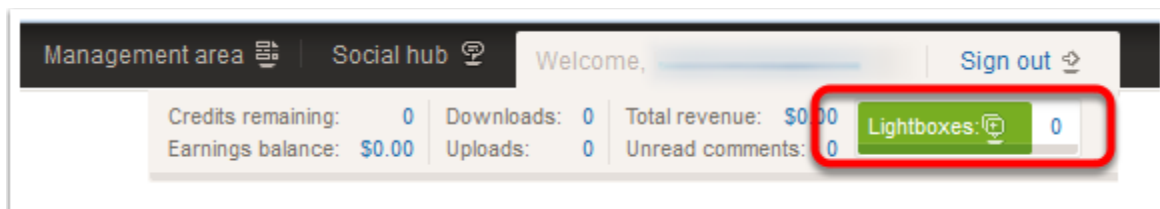
I keep ongoing lightboxes for all of the projects I am working on so I can drop images in whenever something catches my eye. Then when I am ready to write a post, the images are waiting for me and I don't have to spend time on the spot to find something that works.

I also keep a lightbox for books that I am working on. You can find a lot of great setting and character pictures as well as inspirational images to send to your cover designer (or use yourself) when you are ready to make a cover.

## How to Create a Lightbox

[Go to Dreamstime and login/create an account.](#) Once you've created your account, it will log you in immediately so there won't be a delay in using your account.

In the top right corner you'll see your management area. Click the **Lightboxes** icon.



You'll see the following form in the middle of the page.

- (1) Name your lightbox. I usually only name the Lightbox and leave the client field blank.
- (2) Click **Add Lightbox**.
- (3) Your Lightbox will appear below the form. Create as many as you need.
- (4) You can manage your Lightbox by clicking on these buttons.

Now that you have your Lightbox, let's go find some images to add!

**Create a new lightbox:**

1 Lightbox Name:  (enter a relevant name for your lightbox)  
Client Name:  (enter your client's name - optional)

2

Lightbox created.

Lightbox title	Client	Images	Created	Last Modified	Owner	
3 The Self Publishing Toolkit		0	04/09/2013	04/09/2013	Daphnedangerlove	<input type="button" value="View"/> <input type="button" value="Edit"/> <input type="button" value="Delete"/>

Just above your lightboxes, you'll see a search box at the top of the page. Enter your desired term in the box and click the pink **Search** box.

orial Illustrations & Clipart Industries IT & C Nature Objects People Technology Travel

Photos  Illustrations  Vector/RAW

Save settings Content filter  on  off  Royalty Free  Editorial  Exclusive  Only with people

\*Just a quick note about searches: sometimes you'll have to work with your search terms a bit to find what you want. 'Publishing' turned out to be too broad a term for what I was looking for, so I narrowed it to book publishing. Then once I got a good idea of what I was actually looking for, I narrowed it a few more times. You can click on the tiny gear icon (as outlined below) to set more specific parameters. Also be sure to look at image titles and keywords to get ideas for other search terms.

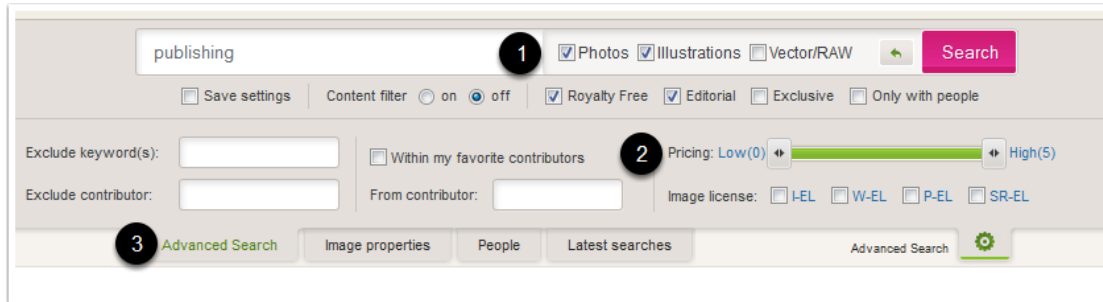
Photos  Illustrations  Vector/RAW

Save settings Content filter  on  off  Royalty Free  Editorial  Exclusive  Only with people

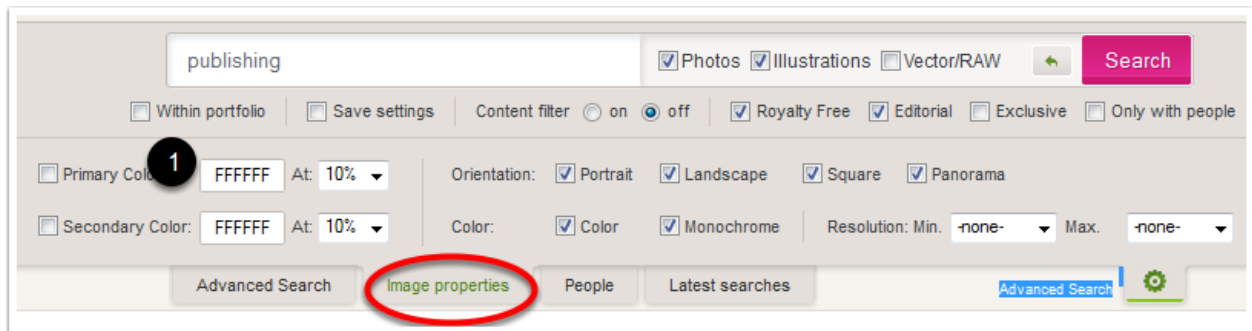
[Advanced Search](#)

Let's take a closer look at advanced search:

- (1) These checkboxes let you determine the kind of image you want. Depending on your project, you may want to narrow your search a bit. Make sure you keep a check in the **Royalty Free** box. You can also limit your search to images with people.
- (2) Here's where you determine what you want to pay. It defaults to high but I move it to low. You can find great images for \$1 because Dreamstime works on a scale. If you are the first person to buy an image, you get the lowest price. You'll also be given the option to refine your search based on price when your results display.
- (3) These tabs allow you define the colors, shape and orientation of your results. If you need a very specific image, check out these settings because they will save you time.

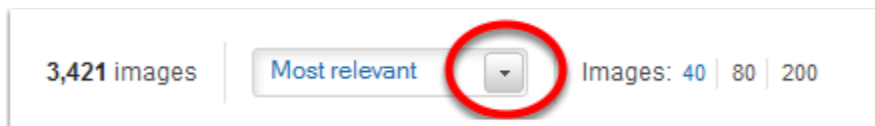


I find the **Image Properties** tab at the bottom of Advanced Search to be incredibly useful. If you want to stick to particular colors so the images either match or contrast with your site, (1) you can enter their color values.

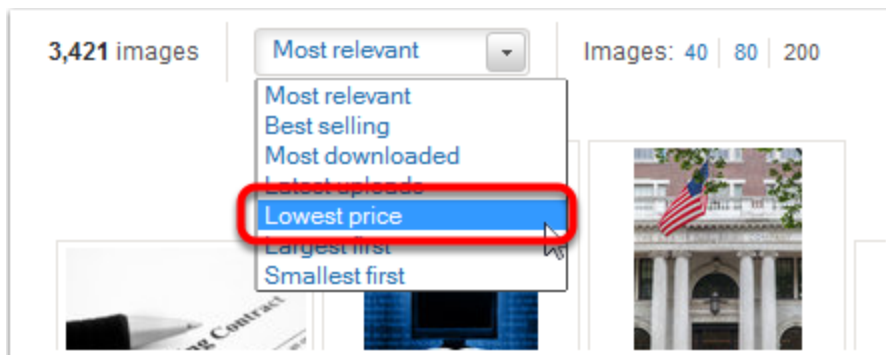


Now back to our original search...once you've click the pink **Search** button, Dreamstime will display your search results.

We're going to refine them using the drop down box below. This is located just above your search results in the top left (or top right, depending on your browser.) Click the arrow to display the options.



You'll see a list of choices. Choose **lowest price** from the list.



Dreamstime will re-organize the list to show you the lowest prices. (You could alternately choose latest uploads, which I do sometimes because the latest uploads are unlikely to have been previously

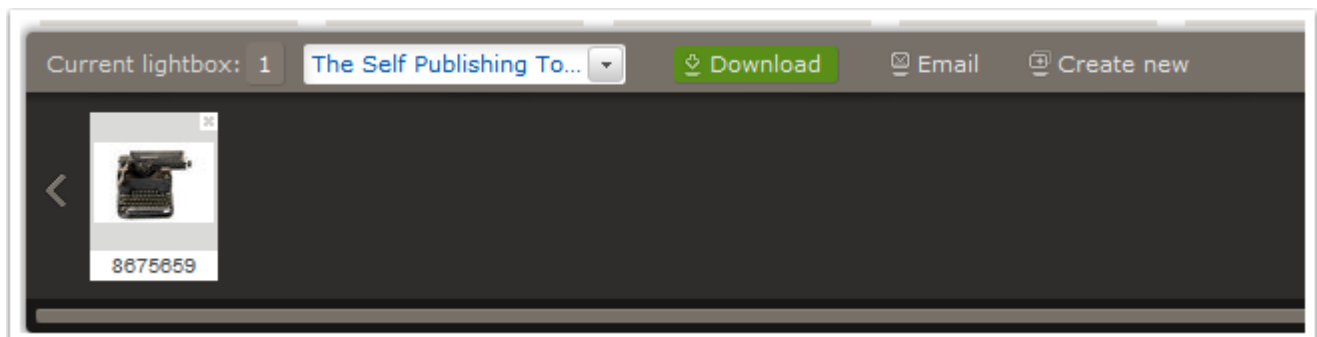
purchased so will be lower priced, but some photographers price their images higher initially so this isn't as reliable.)

(1) Any image that has 0 downloads is likely to be priced around \$1, which is always my goal for blog posts.

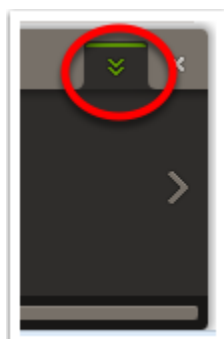
(2) If you want to save this image for later, you can click the green **Add to Lightbox** button.



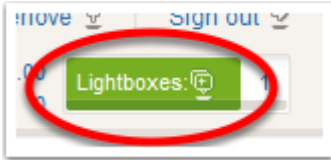
If you click **Add to Lightbox**, a grey menu like the one below will appear at the bottom of your screen and your photo will be added.



You can collapse the lightbox at any time by clicking the green downward arrows in the right corner of the lightbox.



If you wish to see your entire lightbox displayed on the screen at once, click the green Lightboxes icon in the top right corner of your browser window.



A list of your Lightboxes will appear and you can click on the one you want to see.

A screenshot of a table with three columns: 'Lightbox title', 'Client', and 'Images'. The first row contains the text 'The Self Publishing Toolkit', an empty cell, and the number '1'. A red arrow points from the left towards the first row.

Lightbox title	Client	Images
The Self Publishing Toolkit		1

Now, back to our image. (It doesn't matter if you view the image in your search results or lightbox for this step.)

If you hover your mouse over the image, it will give you more detail. As you can see, this image is Level 0 which means that it will cost 1 credit for extra small image. This is the size that is perfect for blog post or website use.

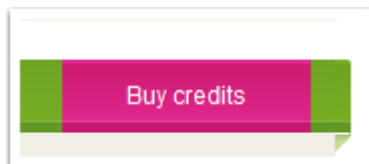


Click on the image and you'll get the price breakdown.

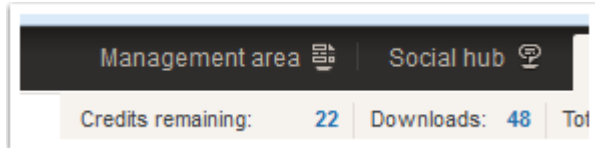
At this point, you can add the image to your lightbox (see the next step to create one) or download it if you'd like to purchase it.



[Dreamstime](http://Dreamstime) works on a credit system. This means that you buy a set of credits up front and then spend them on images however you like. In order to purchase credits, all you need to do is click on the pink **Buy credits** button in the green menu bar at the top of the browser window.

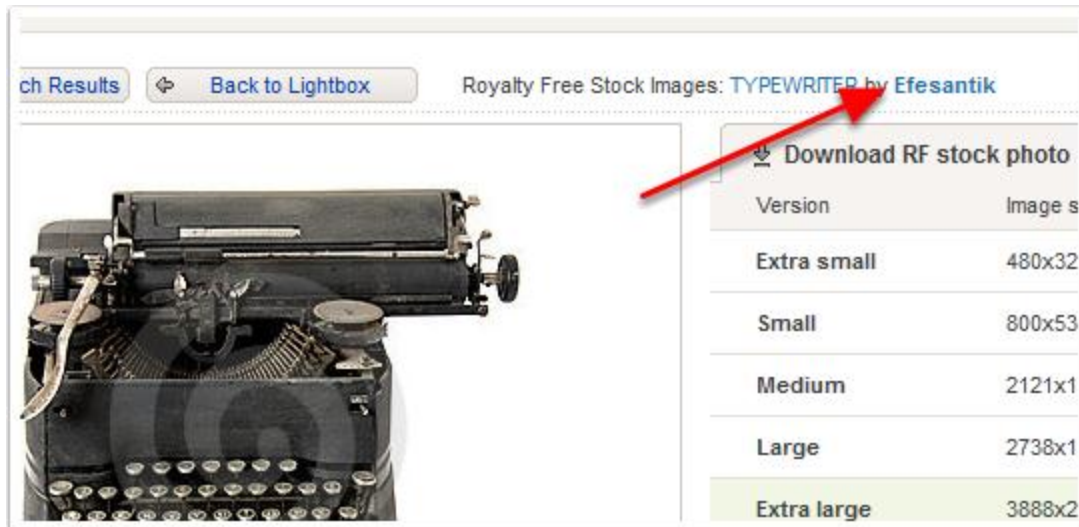


Once you have your credits, your balance will show in the top right corner of your screen.

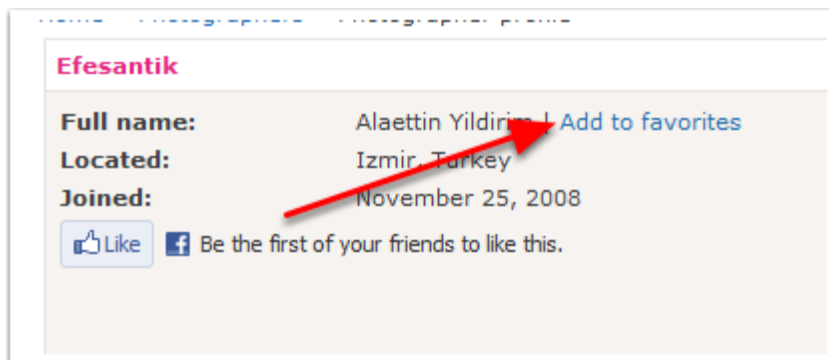


### *How to Favorite a Photographer*

Another way I save on images is to bookmark my favorite photographers. That way I can check their portfolio regularly and be the first to get their latest images at the lowest price. You can find the photographer by click on the image. Just above the image, you'll see the name of the image and the photographer:



Click that link. The photographer's bio page will show up. Click the blue **Add to favorites** link.



Dreamstime will display a list of your favorite photographers on your account page which you can reach by clicking on your user name in the Management Area at the top right of the browser window

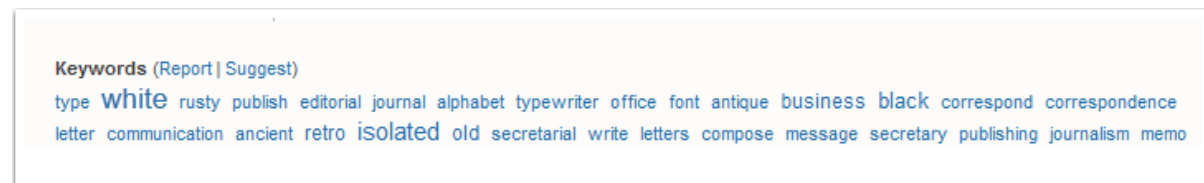


### *What to do if you fall in love with an expensive image..*

[Dreamstime](#) does a great job of suggesting similar images when you click on something you like, but often those images are priced out of my range. Because there are so many photographers and graphic

artists on Dreamstime, is possible to find a similar image at a low cost. The first thing I do is click on the photographer and look at their current images. Sometimes they'll do a set of similar images, so I'll check to see if I can get one of those at a better price.

If that doesn't work, I'll use the same keywords in the image that I like to see if I can find another photographer with similar work. You can find this information on the image's detail page. Just click the image you like, scroll down and you'll see the keywords:



## Part Two: How to Insert an Image & Optimize an Image with WordPress

Now that we've got an image, let's insert it into a WordPress post and optimize it for the search engines.

With [Pinterest](https://www.pinterest.com) making images into such a big deal, I'd recommend branding your images before you add them into a post. This means is that you're going to add your website URL to the image so it looks something like this:



The above image not only has my website on it, but it also has the title of the post. Putting this on Pinterest would be a great way to promote my post. Adding text to an image is both quick and painless.

Head over to [PicMonkey](https://www.picmonkey.com). This is a super easy to use photo editor that is way too much fun to use. No registration is required. Just click **Edit a Photo**.



To upload your image, just navigate to where you saved it on your hard drive. Click open and your photo will be displayed on the screen.

Here's the image I am going to use:

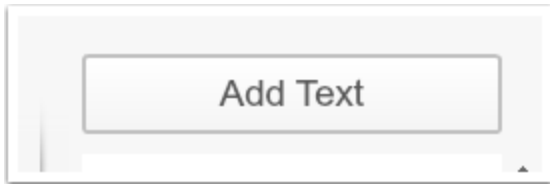


*For this tutorial, I am going to focus on adding text to the image. If you are interested in how to do some advanced editing and image creation, [contact me](#) and I'll put together another tutorial.*

To add text, click the **P** in the left menu.



Click **Add Text**. (When choosing fonts, select something bold and easy to read for best results.)



If you want to resize or move your text, just click on the text box and hover your cursor over it.

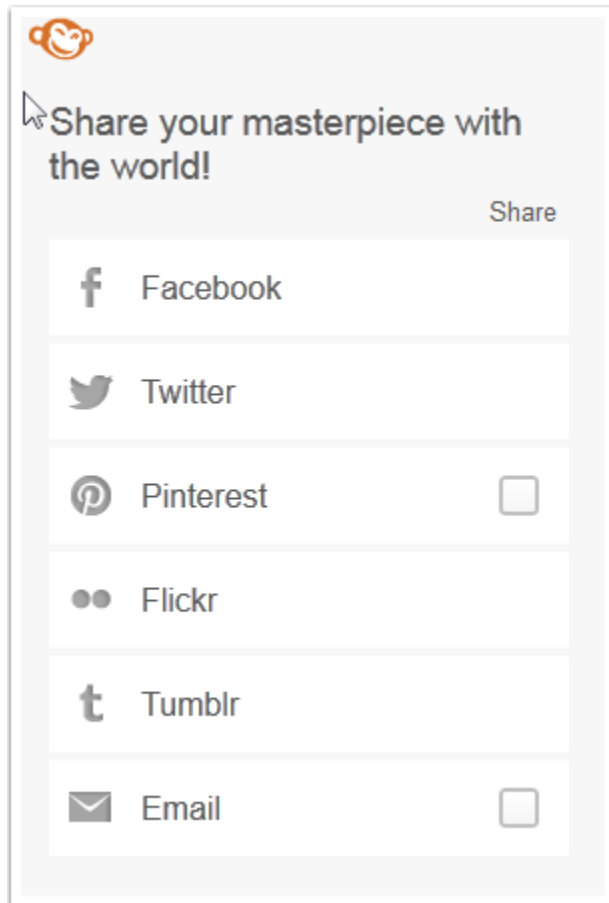
- (1) Arrows in a circle will rotate the image. (Grab the circle that is sticking up out of the middle top.)
- (2) Arrows in the form of a crosshair will move the image.
- (3) Click and drag to resize horizontally and vertically. Likewise, you can drag anyone of the corners to resize horizontally and vertically at the same time. (Arrows will appear when you hover your mouse.)



[PicMonkey](http://PicMonkey) gives you a ton of other options to personalize your images so you might want to spend so time looking at your options. 80% of the content on Pinterest is currently re-pins, so the market for fresh content is wide open.



You can also directly share to Social Media sites from PicMonkey. In some cases you may want to pin images directly from your website so when people click on them, they go to your website.



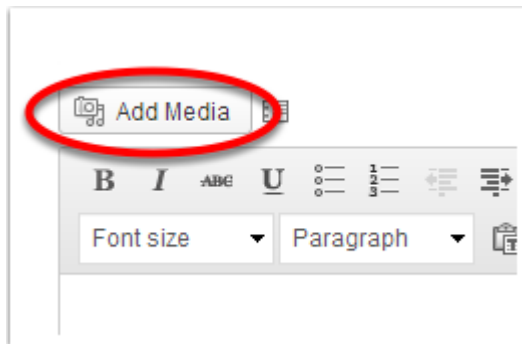
## Part Three: Uploading Your Images to Your WordPress Site

Since we are going to upload this image to our own website, you'll need to save it first.

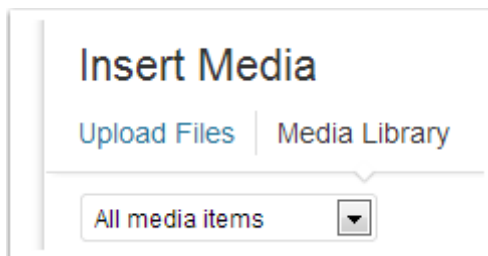
Click **Save** at the top of the edit window. Give your image a name and save it.



Next, you'll need to login to your WordPress dashboard and open your post or create a new one. Click **Add Media**.



Your media library will pop up and you'll be able to upload a file. Click **Upload Files**.




Click **Select Files** or drag and drop your image into the window. When the upload is complete, your image will display in the media library.



In the right sidebar, you'll see a light grey menu called **Attachment Details**. It's important to fill out this information for maximum search engine benefits. Google indexes everything and your image could bring traffic to your site and book sales to your bank account.

- (1) Title your image with keywords from your post.
- (2) Captions are the most read text on a webpage, so if you want a visitor to know something, put it here.
- (3) Alt text is for people who do not display images so use text that communicates the point of your image. Include a keyword or two.
- (4) Description helps you to remember which image this is and what you did with it. If I use an image on an external site but host it myself, I always note that here.
- (5) This field allows you to decide where in your post you want your image to appear.
- (6) You can choose where you want your image to link in this field. You can link it to your post page or if you wrote about a resource or book, you can link directly to that item.
- (7) WordPress will resize your image for you if it is too big. Usually I use mine at full size, but there may be times when you need to resize it quickly.

### ATTACHMENT DETAILS



**SPTK\_colored-pencils.png**  
April 14, 2013  
480 × 319  
[Edit Image](#)  
[Delete Permanently](#)

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**1** Title

**2** Caption

**3** Alt Text

**4** Description

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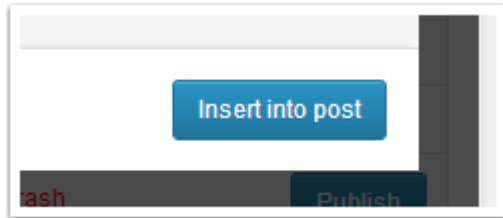
### ATTACHMENT DISPLAY SETTINGS

**5** Alignment

**6** Link To

**7** Size

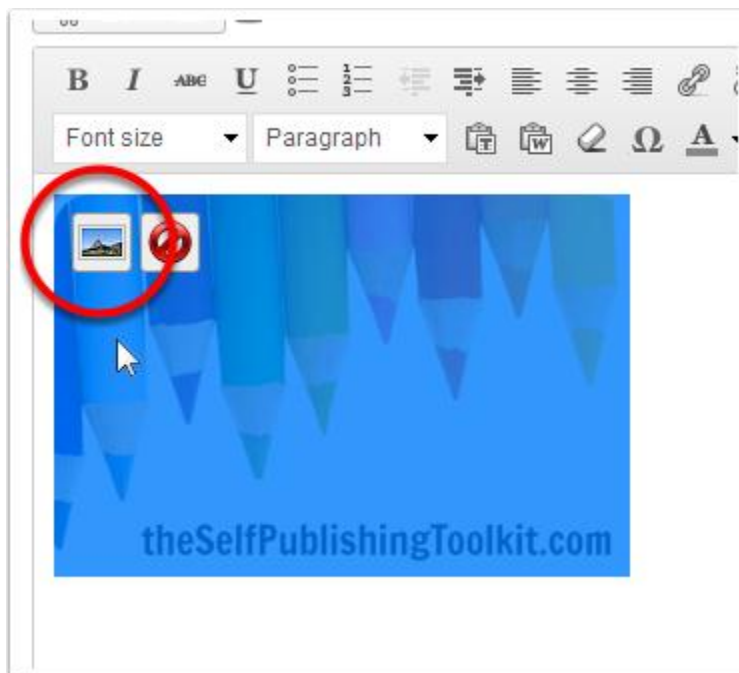
Once you've got all your fields filled out, click **Insert into post**.



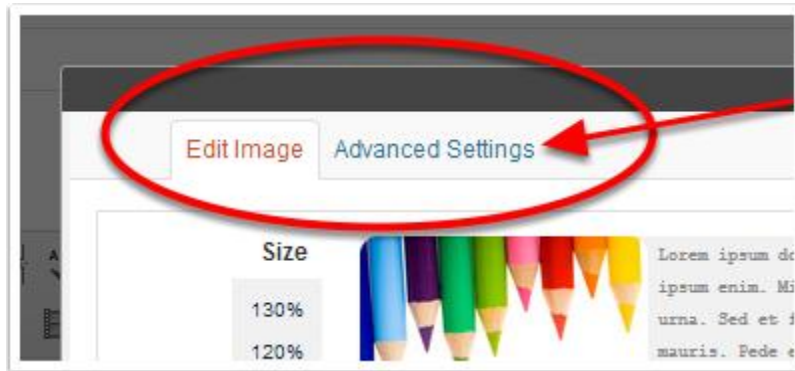
Your image will appear in your post.



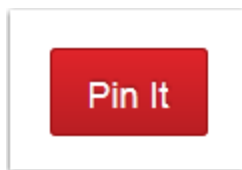
If you need to change anything, just click on the image, then on the landscape icon and the **Edit Image** dialog will pop up.



In this dialog, your settings are split into two tabs, so if you can't find what you are looking for on the first tab, check **Advanced Settings**.



Once you've published your post, you can then use the [Pin it button](#) to pin your image and post to [Pinterest](#).



And you're done!

If you found this post helpful, please share it with your fellow authors. Thanks!