GUIDES

How do you fix links to pages that no longer exist?

By Erik Mäkitalo, founder of Mandalytics · Updated 3 November 2026 · 5 min read

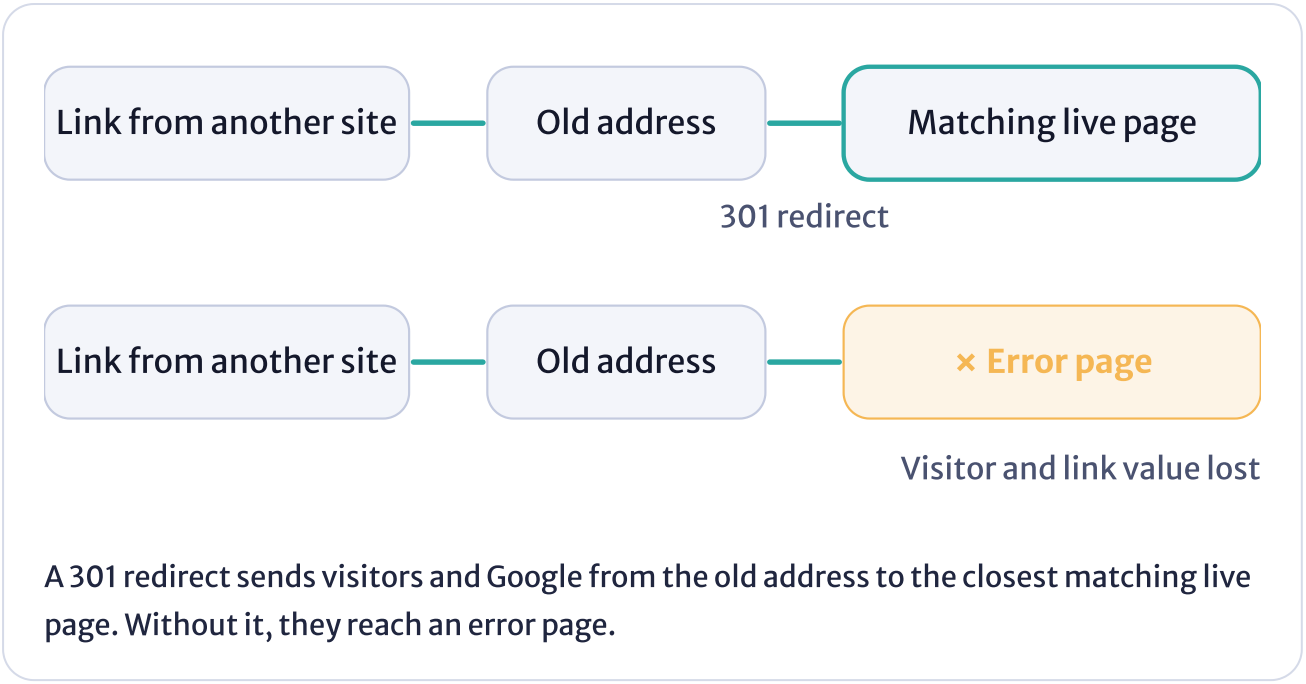
THE SHORT ANSWER

When a page is removed or its address changes, send the old address to the closest matching live page with a 301 redirect, and fix links on your own pages that lead nowhere. Otherwise visitors hit a dead end, and the value of links other websites give you is wasted. It is one of the quickest wins in SEO, and most platforms do it in a few clicks.

What is a 301 redirect?

A 301 redirect is a permanent forward from an old address to a new one. Visitors land on the new page without noticing, and Google moves the old address's standing to the new one. Without it, anyone who follows an old link, or a Google result that still shows it, gets an error page.

Use it when an address changes (after a redesign, for example), or when a page is removed but another page covers the same thing.



A 301 redirect sends visitors and Google from the old address to the closest matching live page. Without it, they reach an error page.

What should happen when a page is removed?

Situation	What to do
A matching page exists	301 redirect the old address to it
A product is gone but its category lives on	301 redirect to the category page
Nothing similar exists	Let the address show a helpful "not found" page. Do not redirect to the home page, as Google treats that as a soft error and it confuses visitors.

Always redirect to an equivalent live page, never to an unrelated one.

Which dead pages should I fix first?

1. **Pages other websites link to.** Each of those links is worth something, and a redirect keeps it.
2. **Pages Google still ranks.** People are still clicking them, and landing on an error.

3. **Broken links inside your own site.** Each link is a path for visitors and for Google. A dead end loses the visitor, and too many make a site look neglected. Edit the link to point to the right page, or remove it.

Your weekly report lists these pages with the best matching page for each, so you can copy the pairs into your redirect settings.

How do I set up a redirect?

On most platforms (Shopify, WordPress, Wix, Squarespace) there is a "Redirects" or "URL redirects" setting where you enter the old address and the new one. On WordPress, a redirect plugin does the same. If you run your own server, ask your developer to add 301 rules. Then open the old address yourself to check that it lands on the new page.

Frequently asked questions

Can I redirect everything to my home page?

It is better not to. Google treats mass redirects to the home page like errors, and visitors lose what they were looking for. Redirect to the closest matching page.

How long should a redirect stay?

Keep it for as long as people or other sites might use the old address, which in practice means leave it in place for good.

Want these steps as a weekly to-do list for your own site?

Reading this is already a step forward. Mandalytics checks your website in Google and in AI tools every week, then sends the five tasks that will bring you the most visitors, each with the reason why and the steps to do it. You learn as you go, and every small win brings more visitors, more customers and, in the end, more revenue.

See how Mandalytics works

Where this comes from

- Google: redirects and Google Search
- Google: creating helpful, reliable, people-first content