FOR JAKE · FROM MARK · PART 2 · AUG 2026

Website Design With Claude, The Playbook

Part 1 (jakesiedman.daxos.us) got Claude Code running on your computer. This page is how I actually design websites with it. Every rule here comes from months of building and rebuilding my own company's site, daxos.com, and about a dozen other pages. Copy the method and skip my mistakes.

Prefer paper? Download this page as a PDF.

THE ONE IDEA EVERYTHING ELSE HANGS ON

Never ask Claude for one design. Ask for numbered versions, pick a winner, and refine the winner. Claude is not a mind reader, but it is tireless. One design gives you something to criticize. Five designs give you something to choose. My current company homepage went through five full versions on a test site; version 5 is what is live today. The picking is the design work, and you are the only one who can do it.

THE SIX RULES I ENDED UP WITH

1 Two copies of the site, always

A **test copy** and the **live site**. Claude changes the test copy. You look at it. Only when you say "go live" does it touch the real thing. I learned this the hard way: an experiment once landed on my live company site and had to be rolled back in a hurry. Say it to Claude once and make it permanent: **"never change the live site without my okay."**

2 Backup before every change

Have Claude save a dated copy of any file before it edits it, into a `backups` folder. Costs nothing, and the one time you need it, it saves the whole site. Mine has saved me more than once.

3 Versions come in batches, on one preview page

Ask for **5 versions on a single page with buttons to switch between them**, numbered V1 to V5. Same words, same photos in all five; only the look changes. One page beats five links because you can flip between them in one place and compare.

4 One kind of change per batch

Colors and fonts are one batch. Page layout is a different batch. If both change at once you cannot tell what you like. When I redesigned one of my apps I did 20 color-and-font versions and 20 layout versions as two separate rounds, and the choosing was easy.

5 Give feedback by naming winners plus a direction

The magic sentence is: **"V3 is the best. Make 3 more like V3 but warmer. Keep the structure."** Name what won, say one direction to push, and add my favorite guardrail, word for word: **"deviate, but don't go crazy."** Each round narrows. Two or three rounds is usually enough.

6 Finish with real content, on a phone, then verify

Filler text lies. A design only counts once it holds your real photos, your real prices, your real phone number, and looks right on a phone screen, since that is where customers will see it. After anything goes live, one last ask: **"check every link and every image and tell me if any are broken."** Claude will actually test them all.

PROMPTS TO COPY WORD FOR WORD

Take my website and make 5 design versions of it on one preview page, numbered V1 to V5, with buttons at the top to switch between them. Keep every word and photo exactly the same. Only change the look.

V3 is the winner. Make 3 more versions based on V3, warmer colors and bigger photos. Keep the structure the same. Deviate, but don't go crazy.

Show me the final version with my real photos and real prices, once as it looks on a computer and once as it looks on a phone.

It's live. Now check every link and every image on the site and tell me if any of them are broken.

THE .MD FILE: TEACH CLAUDE YOUR RULES ONCE

Claude reads a file called **CLAUDE.md** in your project folder every time it works there. Put your rules in it once and you never repeat them. Mine holds the test-before-live rule, the backup rule, and my company's look, and Claude follows them without being asked.

Here is a starter written for your business. Download it, drop it in your website folder, and fill in the parts in [brackets]. Or easier: paste the link to Claude and say "set this up as my CLAUDE.md."

Download CLAUDE.md starter

A SKILL TO INSTALL

A **skill** is a saved playbook Claude can run by name. This one makes Claude do everything on this page automatically: batches of numbered versions on one preview page, backups, real content, one question per round, link checks at the end. Install it once and just say "make me versions of my site."

To install, tell Claude Code: *"Download https://siedmanwebsites.daxos.us/website-versions-skill.md and install it as a skill called website-versions."*

Download the website-versions skill

PUTTING SITES ON YOUR OWN DOMAIN, THE SHORT VERSION

This is how I put a page like this one on the internet in about a minute, and you can have the same setup. The short list:

1. Make a free account at **cloudflare.com** and buy a domain there, about $10 a year, say **finishingtouchnc.com**.
2. Tell Claude Code: *"I bought a domain at Cloudflare. Walk me through creating an API token, then save it so you can publish pages to my domain whenever I ask."* An API token is a password that lets Claude act on your Cloudflare account. It will walk you through every click.
3. From then on it is one sentence: *"put this page at estimates.finishingtouchnc.com."* Claude uploads the files, wires the address, and hands you a live link.

Hosting itself is free. The only money in the whole loop is the $10-a-year domain. Every quote, gallery, or before-and-after page you make becomes a link you can text to a customer.

YOUR HEAD START

You already have a website. In April I had Claude build a one-pager for The Finishing Touch: your services, a photo gallery from the pictures you sent, a before-and-after section, and your contact info. The files are saved on my server. The old link went dead when hosting lapsed, but the site is intact and I can hand it to you or put it back online in minutes; just ask.

Your first exercise: once Claude Code is set up from Part 1, get those files from me, put them in a folder, and run the first prompt on this page against your own site. Five versions, pick a winner, one refinement round, back online. You will have done a full professional design cycle on day one.

The only real failure mode is vagueness. "Make it better" gets you mush. "V2, but with the photos twice as big" gets you exactly that. When you don't know what to say, say which version you would show a customer and which you wouldn't, and let Claude figure out the difference.