# How to Manage Inventory in WooCommerce

E-commerce & Online Stores · https://thewebops.com/help-center/e-commerce-online-stores/how-to-manage-inventory-in-woocommerce/

## Quick checklist (what we'll cover)

- Enable and configure stock management
- Update product stock and SKU
- Set up product categories and tags
- Import and export products in bulk

## 1) Enabling Inventory Management

WooCommerce allows both **global stock management** and **per-product stock control**.

### Global stock settings

1. Go to **WooCommerce → Settings → Products → Inventory**
2. Configure:
   - **Manage stock:** enable automatic stock management
   - **Hold stock (minutes):** how long to reserve stock for unpaid orders
   - **Low stock threshold / Out of stock threshold**
   - **Notifications:** enable stock email alerts for admin
   - **Out of stock visibility:** hide out-of-stock items from the catalog

Click **Save changes** when done.

### Per-product stock settings

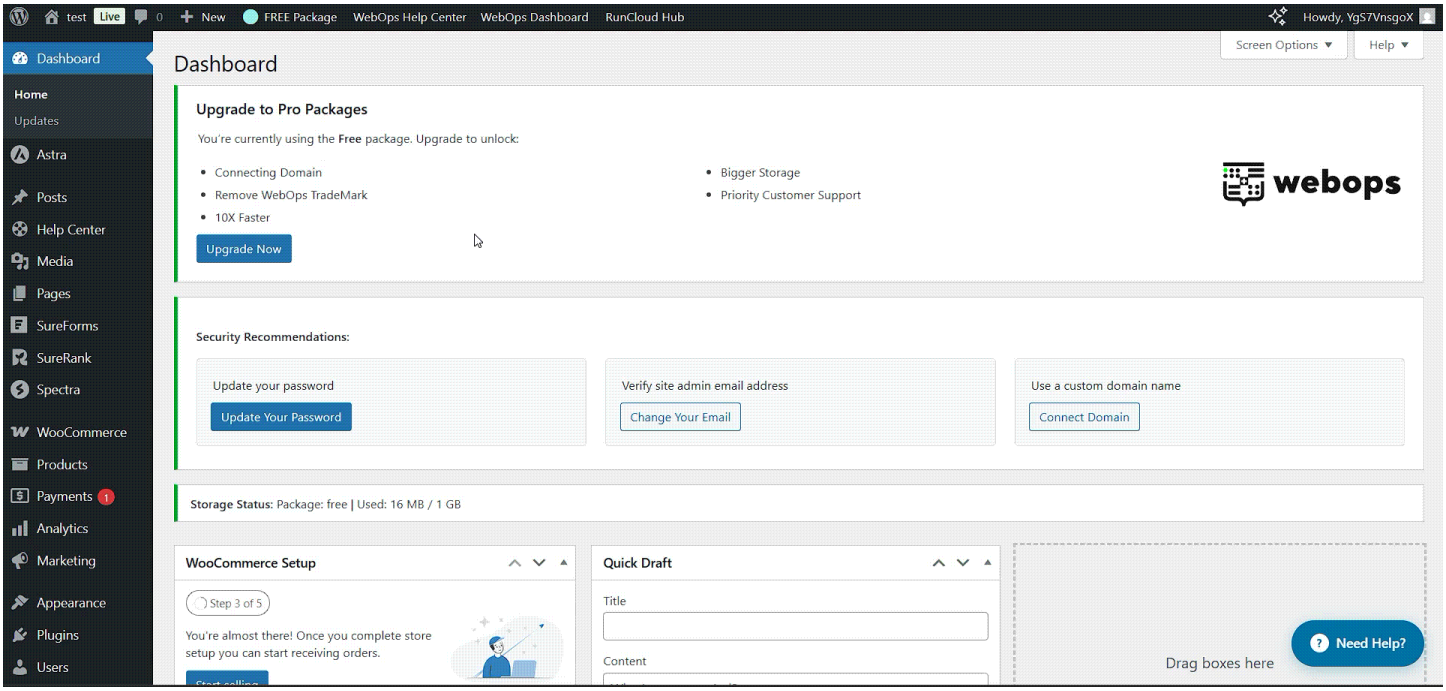
When editing a product:

- Go to **Product Data → Inventory**
- Options include:

- **SKU** (Stock Keeping Unit): unique identifier
- **Manage stock?** toggle on to track quantity
- **Stock quantity**: current stock number
- **Allow backorders:** choose if customers can order when stock is 0
- **Stock status:** In stock / Out of stock / On backorder

Click update or publish to **Save changes** when done.

Tip: Always use SKUs for easier tracking and syncing with external tools (POS, ERP, etc.).




## 2) Organizing Products with Categories and Tags

Well-structured categories and tags make products easier to find -- both for customers and for internal management.

### Product Categories

- Go to **Products → Categories**
- Add category name, slug (URL-friendly name), parent category (if any), and optional image.
- Example:
  - Parent: *Clothing*

- Subcategories: *Men*, *Women*, *Accessories*

Assign categories to products under **Product Data → Product Categories** or from the **right sidebar** in the product editor.

Best practice: Use broad parent categories and avoid creating too many subcategories unless truly needed.

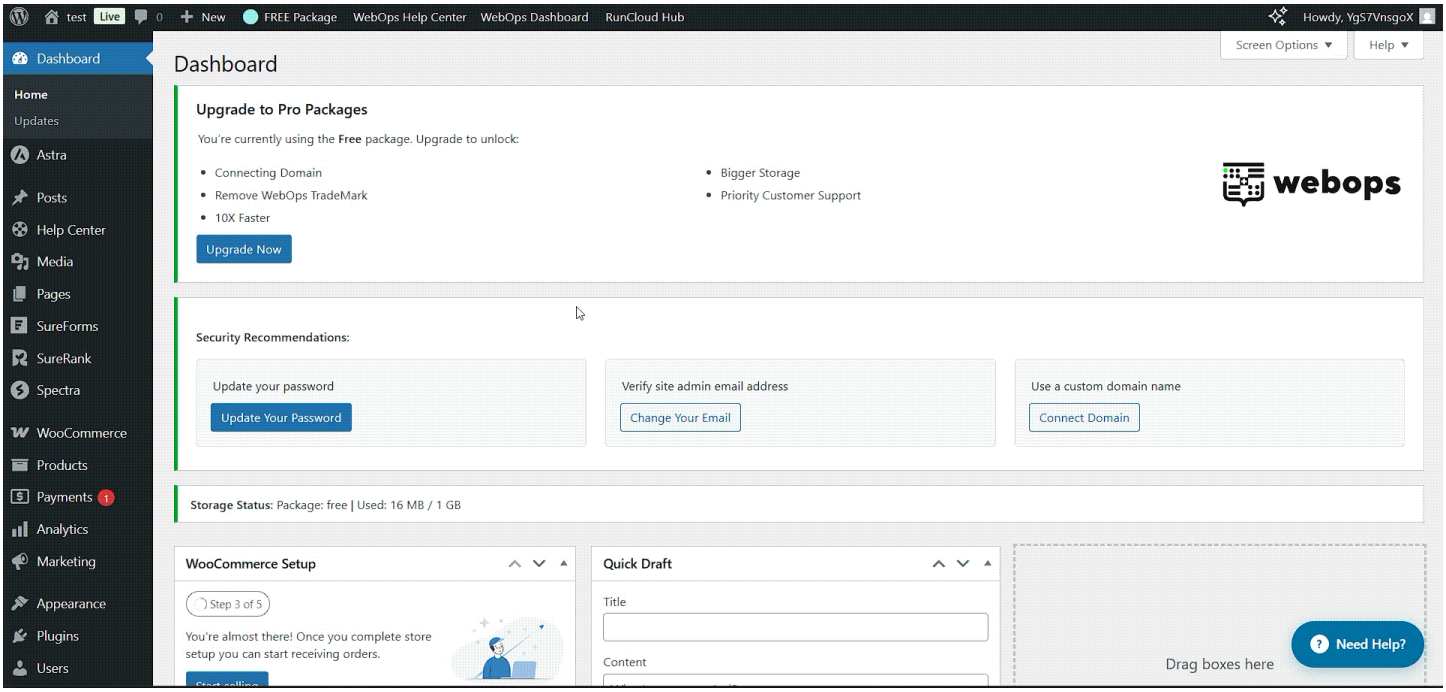
**Product Tags**

- Tags are optional but useful for grouping similar products or search filters.
- Add or select tags in the right sidebar under **Product Tags**.
- Example: "summer", "new arrival", "cotton".

Tags are flexible, while categories define your main structure. Use both strategically.

**Assigning Categories and Tags to Products**

- Go to **Products → All Products → Edit (any product)**
- On the right you will find boxes for product categories and product tags.
- Check on the category you want for the product.
- Type the tag you want for the product.
- Click update or publish.




## 3) Importing and Exporting Products in Bulk

WooCommerce includes a built-in CSV importer and exporter to manage products quickly.

### Exporting Products

1. Go to **Products → All Products**
2. Click the **Export** button (top of the page)
3. Choose which columns to export (e.g., name, SKU, stock, price)
4. Download the CSV file

### Importing Products

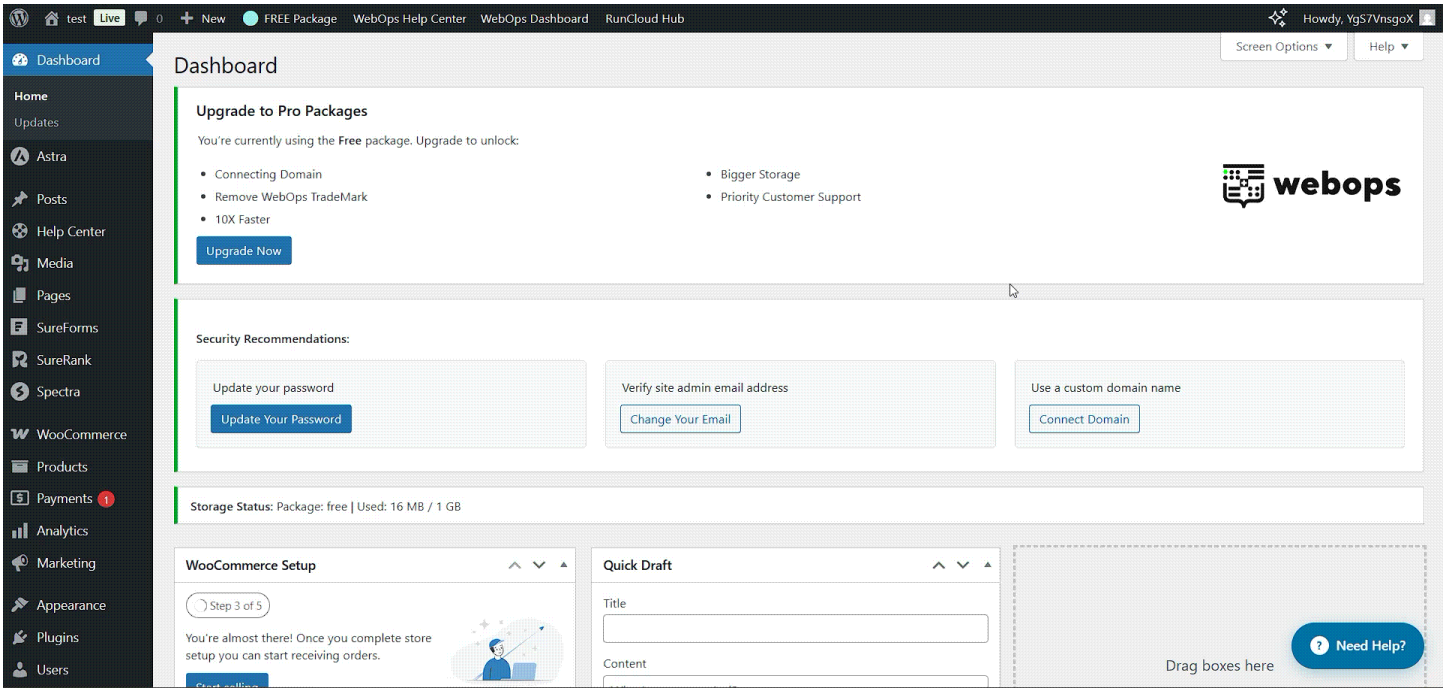
1. Go to **Products → All Products → Import**
2. Upload a CSV file with product data
3. Match CSV columns to WooCommerce fields (name, SKU, price, etc.)
4. Run the importer

Tip: You can use the exported CSV file as a template for future imports.

### Bulk Editing (alternative)

For small edits:

- In **Products → All Products**, select multiple items
- Choose **Bulk actions → Edit**
- Update stock, categories, or prices for multiple products at once




## 4) Common Troubleshooting & Tips

- **Stock not updating automatically?** Ensure "Manage stock" is enabled both globally and per product.
- **Duplicate SKUs?** Each SKU must be unique -- duplicates can cause syncing issues.
- **Import errors?** Verify the CSV format (UTF-8) and column names match WooCommerce fields.

## 5) Short FAQs

### Q: Can I manage stock for variable product variations?

A: Yes. Each variation can have its own stock quantity under *Product Data → Variations*.

### Q: Can I bulk import images?

A: Yes, include image URLs in the CSV file under the "Images" column.

### Q: Can I disable stock management for certain products?

A: Yes, uncheck "Manage stock?" per product -- it'll always appear as in stock.