



How to use your own domain

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Each knowledge base has its own unique KnowledgeOwl subdomain, like ours is "support.knowledgeowl.com". Your subdomain can be customized under **Settings > Basic**, in the Domain Settings section.

You can also set up a private domain (your own custom URL with no reference to KnowledgeOwl) and point that to your KnowledgeOwl subdomain. You or your webmaster will need to add a CNAME record for your subdomain. Once created, the private domain may take up to 24 hours to be fully synced.

If your private domain uses https:, you can use our integration with [Let's Encrypt](#) to provide an automatically renewed SSL cert for your knowledge base, too!

Here's the overall process:

1. Have your webmaster [set up a CNAME record](#) that points your private domain (such as help.mycompany.com) to your KnowledgeOwl subdomain shown on Settings > Basic (such as mycompany.knowledgeowl.com).
2. In **Settings > Basic**, [add the private domain](#).
3. Once the private domain has synced, generate a [Let's Encrypt SSL certificate](#). The domain can take up to 24 hours to sync, but usually it completes in a few minutes.
4. Once you've confirmed the private domain and SSL cert are all working properly, check a couple boxes to [ensure that all requests use your private domain](#), rather than the subdomain.
5. If you're using features that leverage reCAPTCHA, [add a reCAPTCHA key](#).

See below for more detailed information on each step and how to troubleshoot errors you might run into.

Create a CNAME record on your DNS

You will need to have your webmaster create a CNAME entry on your DNS that points your private domain to the KnowledgeOwl subdomain you use in **Settings > Basic**.

Example: help.mycompany.com CNAME record pointing to mycompany.knowledgeowl.com

Add a private domain

Once your webmaster has created a CNAME record to handle the relationship between your private domain and your KnowledgeOwl subdomain, you can add your private domain:

1. Go to **Settings > Basic**.
2. Click the **Add private domain** link next to **Private Domain**

Domain Settings

Sub-domain .knowledgeowl.com

Private Domain [Add private domain](#)

To set up a private domain, refer to [our documentation](#).

- Enable private domain link in the application
- 301 redirect all sub-domain requests to the private domain

Root Path help — mydomain.knowledgeowl.com/help
 home — mydomain.knowledgeowl.com/home
 docs — mydomain.knowledgeowl.com/docs

SEO Settings Generate a publicly available sitemap
 Ensure that page titles do not exceed 55 characters
 301 redirect URLs ending with a trailing slash to non trailing slash

Click the Add Private Domain link on Settings > Basic

3. This will open a **Private Domain Setup** popup. Enter the URL you'd like to use for your private domain. You can save at this point, but you'll also need to add an SSL certificate.

Private Domain Setup ×

ⓘ Set up a **CNAME** record that points your private domain to your subdomain: **mykb.knowledgeowl.com**
When it fully syncs, come back to generate a Let's Encrypt certificate.

Private Domain Name

[Request Let's Encrypt SSL Certificate](#)

[Cancel](#) [Save](#)

Sample private domain

Set up your SSL cert

If your private domain uses https: (most do, and it's a security best practice), you'll need to set up an SSL certificate. For your convenience, we have an integration with Let's Encrypt to set up an autorenewing certificate at no cost to you.



Don't want to use a Let's Encrypt SSL certificate? For our Business and Enterprise-level customers, we can upload your own SSL cert directly for you. If you are in one of these subscription tiers and want to use your own SSL cert, [contact us](#) for more info.

1. Go to Settings > Basic.

2. Click the wrench icon next to your private domain (or just continue from adding it in the previous steps!)

The screenshot shows the 'Settings' page for a Knowledge Base. The left sidebar contains navigation options: Basic (selected), Security, Search, Style, Article Ratings, PDF, Comments, Subscriptions, and Widget. The main content area is divided into two sections: 'Basic Settings' and 'Domain Settings'. In 'Basic Settings', the 'Knowledge base name' is 'Hiking with Sass', the 'Timezone' is '(GMT-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada)', and the 'Date Format' is 'American - MM/DD/YYYY'. In 'Domain Settings', the 'Sub-domain' is 'hiking-with-sass', the 'Private Domain' is 'help.hikingwithsass.com', and the 'Root Path' is 'help'. A blue wrench icon is next to the 'Private Domain' field, with a black arrow pointing to it. The 'Knowledge Base Protocol' is set to 'Force SSL links'.

3. This will open a Private Domain Setup popup.

Private Domain Setup ✕

i Set up a **CNAME** record that points your private domain to your subdomain: **mykb.knowledgeowl.com**
When it fully syncs, come back to generate a Let's Encrypt certificate.

Private Domain Name

[Request Let's Encrypt SSL Certificate](#)

[Cancel](#) [Save](#)

Sample private domain

4. Click the **Request Let's Encrypt SSL Certificate** button to set up an autorenewing certificate through **Let's Encrypt**.

Private Domain Setup ✕

i Set up a **CNAME** record that points your private domain to your subdomain: **mykb.knowledgeowl.com**
When it fully syncs, come back to generate a Let's Encrypt certificate.

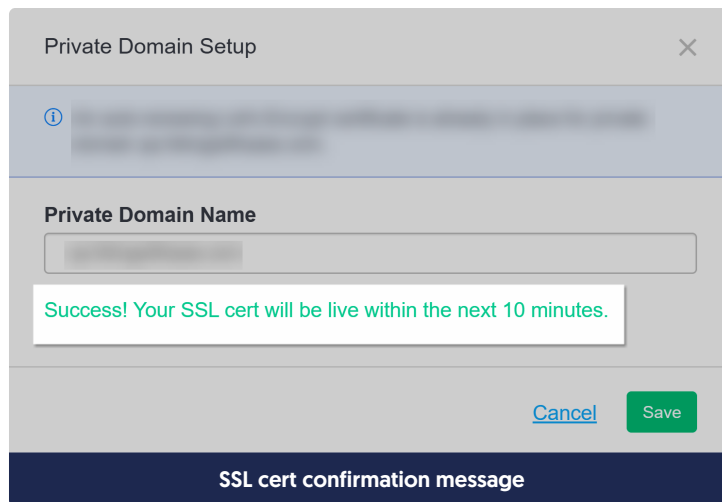
Private Domain Name

[Request Let's Encrypt SSL Certificate](#)

[Cancel](#) [Save](#)

Click the Request Let's Encrypt SSL Certificate button

5. If your CNAME record is properly formatted and has synced, you should see this success message:

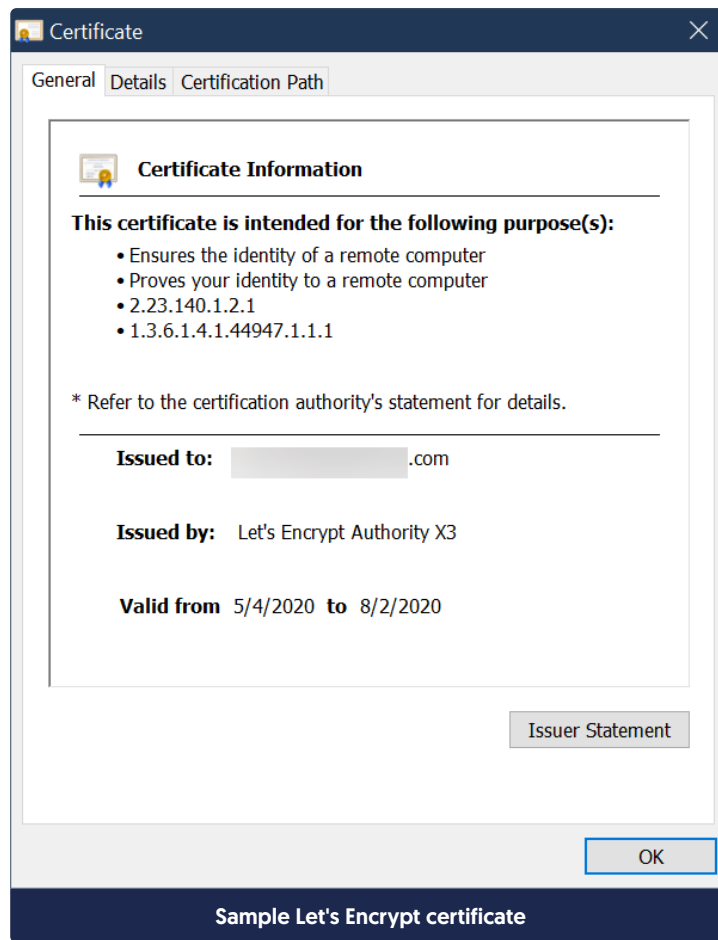


If you get an error message, click here to troubleshoot:

- [SSL cert troubleshooting: CNAME record has not fully synced](#)
- [SSL cert troubleshooting: CAA conflict](#)

6. Click Save.

The certificate should appear on your knowledge base within the next 10 minutes. Most browsers let you click the security icon to view the certificate. If this certificate has been applied, you'll see details for a Let's Encrypt Authority X3 certificate, similar to this:




Make all requests use your new private domain

When your private domain is set up and your SSL cert is working correctly, try navigating to your private domain and confirm your knowledge base is loading.

Once you've confirmed that, we recommend making two additional changes, both in **Settings > Basic** in the **Domain Settings** section, directly underneath your private domain:

Domain Settings

Sub-domain .knowledgeowl.com

Private Domain 

To set up a private domain, refer to [our documentation](#).

- Enable private domain link in the application
- 301 redirect all sub-domain requests to the private domain

1. Check the box next to **Enable private domain link in the application**. This will ensure that any time one of your authors clicks the **View KB** button in the top navigation or the **View Article/View Category** link in the

editor, they are taken to the private domain, not your KO subdomain.

2. Check the box next to **301 redirect all sub-domain requests to the private domain**. This will ensure that if anyone does have your KO subdomain link, they'll be redirected to the private domain. This setting also ensures that any pages of your knowledge base which are publicly available will only be indexed by Google or other search engines under the private domain, not the KO subdomain.

3. Be sure to **Save** your changes!

Add reCAPTCHA

If you've selected to use reCAPTCHA as your spam protection and set up certain features in specific ways, you may also need to add reCAPTCHA once you've added a private domain.

If you do, you'll see a warning in the Domain Settings section after you've saved your private domain settings:

Domain Settings



You must set up spam protection for your private domain due to one of these settings in use: unrestricted commenters, public subscriptions, and/or requiring Contact Form spam protection.
Enable spam protection by setting up reCAPTCHA keys or selecting our honeypot [below](#).

Sample warning in Domain Settings

You can add the reCAPTCHA Key and Secret further below in the **Spam Protection Settings** section.

If you're using [honeypot spam protection](#), you won't need to do anything extra.

If you're using reCAPTCHA spam protection with a KnowledgeOwl subdomain (such as my-amazing-kb.knowledgeowl.com), you don't need to configure your own reCAPTCHA.

However, if you're using reCAPTCHA spam protection and you've customized your knowledge base to use your own private domain, such as www.mykb.mycompany.com, you'll need to add your own reCAPTCHA to your site if you have any of these options enabled:

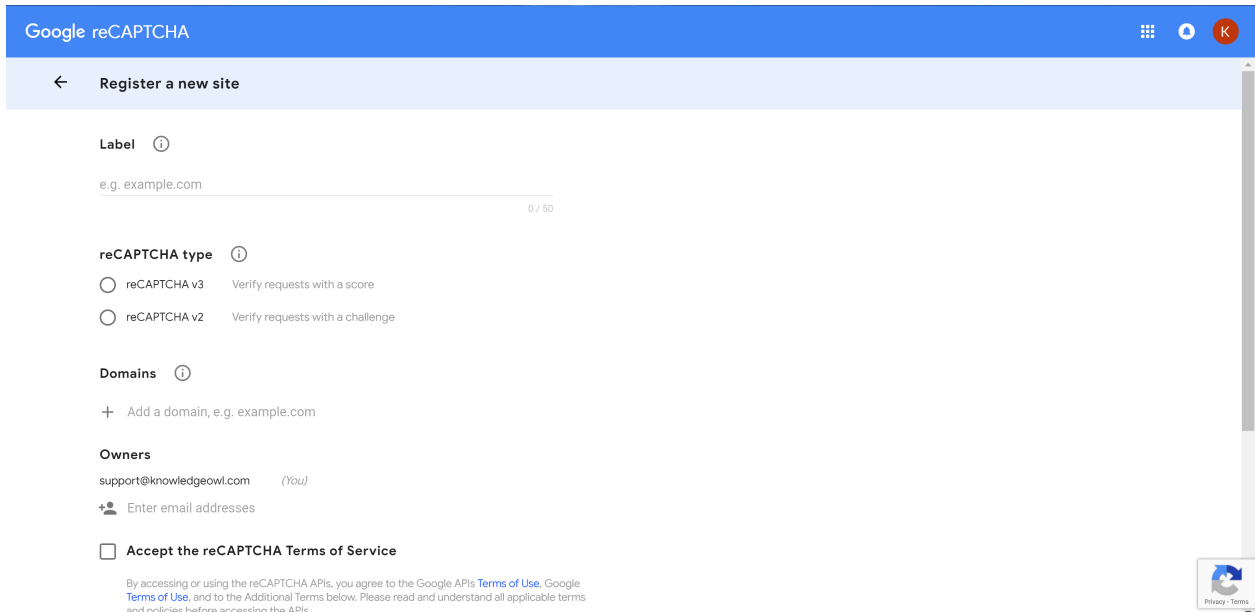
- **Settings > Comments:** The "Only allow logged in readers and authors to leave comments" box is unchecked (e.g. you allow unrestricted commenters)
- **Settings > Subscriptions:** The "Enable public subscriptions" box is checked (e.g. you allow [public subscriptions](#))
- **Contact Form:** The "Use spam protection on ticket submissions" box is checked
 - If you are using this setting and also using [Contextual Help Widget \(2.0\)](#), you'll also need to add a V3 reCAPTCHA to add reCAPTCHA to the Contact tab on the Widget.
 - If you are using this setting and don't have reCAPTCHA enabled, your contact form will display an [invalid domain error](#) to your end-readers.

What is reCAPTCHA?

Creating a new reCAPTCHA

To create a new reCAPTCHA, you'll need a Google account.

1. Go to <https://www.google.com/recaptcha/admin>
2. If you've never generated a reCAPTCHA before, this should take you directly into the page to create one. If you've generated a reCAPTCHA before, you'll need to click the + in the upper right to Create a new reCAPTCHA.



The screenshot shows the Google reCAPTCHA admin interface. At the top, it says 'Google reCAPTCHA' and 'Register a new site'. The form includes a 'Label' field with a placeholder 'e.g. example.com' and a character count '0 / 50'. Below that is the 'reCAPTCHA type' section with two radio button options: 'reCAPTCHA v3' (Verify requests with a score) and 'reCAPTCHA v2' (Verify requests with a challenge). The 'Domains' section has a '+ Add a domain, e.g. example.com' button. The 'Owners' section shows 'support@knowledgeowl.com (You)' and a '+ Enter email addresses' button. At the bottom, there is a checkbox for 'Accept the reCAPTCHA Terms of Service' with a small disclaimer text below it.

3. Pick a label for your reCAPTCHA. You might use the name of your knowledge base or the URL for it.
4. Select the reCAPTCHA type:
 - For use in your overall knowledge base, use reCAPTCHA v2. The "I'm not a robot" checkboxes work well.
 - For use in [Contextual Help Widget \(2.0\) Contact Form](#), use reCAPTCHA v3. See [Protect Widget 2.0 Contact Form with reCAPTCHA](#) for more information.
5. For domain, use the URL of your KnowledgeOwl knowledge base.
6. Your Gmail account will automatically be added as an Owner. You can add additional email addresses. If you'd like us to be able to help troubleshoot issues with your reCAPTCHA, add support@knowledgeowl.com as an owner.
7. You'll need to check the box next to **Accept the reCAPTCHA Terms of Service**.
8. You can choose to receive or opt out of alerts to owners. These alerts will notify you if Google detects problems with your site, such as misconfigurations affecting the reCAPTCHA or increases in suspicious traffic. We recommended receiving the alerts.

So a completed v2 reCAPTCHA might look something like this:

The screenshot shows the Google reCAPTCHA registration page for a new site. The page has a blue header with the text "Google reCAPTCHA". Below the header is a navigation bar with a back arrow and the text "Register a new site". The main content area is divided into several sections:


- Label:** A text input field containing "My KnowledgeOwl KB" with a character count of "18 / 50".
- reCAPTCHA type:** A section with three radio button options:
 - reCAPTCHA v3: Verify requests with a score
 - reCAPTCHA v2: Verify requests with a challenge
 - "I'm not a robot" Checkbox: Validate requests with the "I'm not a robot" checkbox
 - Invisible reCAPTCHA badge: Validate requests in the background
 - reCAPTCHA Android: Validate requests in your android app
- Domains:** A section with a plus sign and a text input field containing "knowledgeowl.com".
- Owners:** A section with a text input field containing ".com" and the text "(You)". Below it is a plus sign and the text "Enter email addresses".
- Accept the reCAPTCHA Terms of Service:** A section with a checked checkbox and the text "Accept the reCAPTCHA Terms of Service". Below it is a paragraph of text: "By accessing or using the reCAPTCHA APIs, you agree to the Google APIs [Terms of Use](#), Google [Terms of Use](#), and to the Additional Terms below. Please read and understand all applicable terms and policies before accessing the APIs." Below the paragraph is a dropdown menu with the text "reCAPTCHA Terms of Service".
- Send alerts to owners:** A section with a checked checkbox and the text "Send alerts to owners".

At the bottom of the form are two buttons: "CANCEL" and "SUBMIT".

9. Once you've entered all your selections, click **Submit**.

10. This will take you to a confirmation screen that will provide you with the **Site Key** and the **Secret Key** for your reCAPTCHA.

Spam Protection Settings



Select the desired method of spam protection for form submissions, should your knowledge base require it.

Default Method

Google reCAPTCHA
[Learn more about reCAPTCHA.](#)

Honeypot
[Learn more about honeypot spam protection.](#)

reCAPTCHA Key V2

reCAPTCHA Secret V2

reCAPTCHA keys are required when using reCAPTCHA on a [contact form](#), enabling public [subscriptions](#), or for Un-restricted [commenters](#). Keys can be obtained here: <https://www.google.com/recaptcha/admin>.

reCAPTCHA Key V3

reCAPTCHA Secret V3

V3 reCAPTCHA keys are required when using the [widget](#).

Add reCAPTCHA keys into the appropriate sections in Spam Protection Settings

3. When you're done making changes, click **Save**.

SSL cert troubleshooting: CNAME record has not fully synced

If your CNAME record hasn't been created yet, was just created and hasn't synced, or was improperly formatted, you might see this message:

The CNAME record for [redacted].com has not fully synced yet. ✕

Please ensure you have [added a CNAME DNS record](#) for this domain.

OK

Sample CNAME warning message

If you see this message, you may need to [create or update your CNAME record](#), or just wait a few more minutes for it to sync.

SSL cert troubleshooting: CAA policy does not allow

You may see a warning about a CAA policy not allowing certificates to be issued from Let's Encrypt:

The CAA policy for [REDACTED].com does not allow certificates to be issued from Let's Encrypt. ✕

Please refer to our [documentation](#) to resolve.

OK

Certificate Authority Authorization (CAA) records and policies determine which authorities are allowed to issue certificates for a given domain. If you see this warning, it means that it looks like your domain has a CAA which does not include Let's Encrypt as a valid authority.

To fix this error, contact your IT department/network admin and ask them to add `letsencrypt.org` to the current CAA policy or record. Once they've added Let's Encrypt as an authorized authority, come back and [request the SSL cert again](#).

Changing your private domain

If your company rebrands or changes up their website, you may need to change the private domain associated with your knowledge base. When you change your knowledge base's private domain, this will break links to your previous private domain.

To avoid breaking any existing bookmarks or links, you or your webmaster can set up a redirect in your domain registrar account to forward your previous private domain to your new private domain. That way, anyone visiting a link using the old domain will be forwarded to the right place.



Here are the basic steps for changing your private domain:

1. Have your webmaster [create a CNAME record](#) in the DNS settings for your new domain that points the new domain to your KnowledgeOwl subdomain shown in **Settings > Basic**.
Example: help.mycompany.com CNAME record pointing to mycompany.knowledgeowl.com
2. Have your webmaster set up a redirect from your previous private domain to your new private domain.
Example: redirect helpcenter.mycompany.com (your old private domain) to help.mycompany.com (your new private domain)
3. In the DNS settings for your previous private domain, have your webmaster remove the CNAME record that was pointing that domain to your KnowledgeOwl subdomain.
4. In your KnowledgeOwl account, navigate to **Settings > Basic**.

5. Click the wrench icon next to your current private domain.

Domain Settings

Sub-domain .knowledgeowl.com

Private Domain  

To set up a private domain, refer to [our documentation](#).

Enable private domain link in the application

301 redirect all sub-domain requests to the private domain



Root Path

- help — mydomain.knowledgeowl.com/help
- home — mydomain.knowledgeowl.com/home
- docs — mydomain.knowledgeowl.com/docs

Click the wrench icon to edit your current private domain

6. In the Private Domain Name field, replace the old private domain with your [new private domain](#).
7. Click the **Request Let's Encrypt SSL Certificate** button to [set up an autorenewing certificate](#) through Let's Encrypt.
8. If your new CNAME record is properly formatted and has synced, you should see this success message:

Private Domain Setup ×

Private Domain Name

Success! Your SSL cert will be live within the next 10 minutes.

[Cancel](#) [Save](#)

SSL certificate success message

9. Click **Save**.

Your knowledge base should now be using your new private domain and your SSL certificate will appear within the next 10 minutes. Any links to your old knowledge base private domain will redirect to the new domain.